

Meeting of: Audit & Accounts Committee

Date: 29th July 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, Executive & Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01706 252423

Email: glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk

ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
A.	BUSINESS MATTERS	
A1.	Apologies for Absence	Glenda Ashton, Executive & Democratic Services Officer 01706 252423 glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk
A2.	Minutes of the last meeting To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 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 a matter which the Council may be able to assist with. A time limit of 3 minutes applies for each question and you are only able to address the meeting once.	Glenda Ashton, Executive & Democratic Services Officer 01706 252423 glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk Please register an agenda related public question by emailing glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk

ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
	To register for public question time your question must be received no later than 12noon one clear working day prior to the meeting by emailing democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk Please give your full name, telephone number and include a copy of your question. 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).	no later than 12noon on Tuesday 28th July 2026
C.	Chair's Update To receive communications from the Chair	Councillor Driver
D.	ORDINARY BUSINESS	
D1.	Annual Fraud Report 2025/26	Carol Walker Fraud and Compliance Officer carolwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D2.	Review of Committee Terms of Reference	Kimberly Haworth Head of Financial Services/s151 Officer kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D3.	Adoption of Statutory Accounts for financial year 2025/26	Kimberly Haworth Head of Financial Services/s151 Officer kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D4.	Internal Audit Charter	Mark Baskerville Lancashire County Council Auditors mark.baskerville@lancashire.gov.uk
D5.	Internal Audit Annual Report 2025/26	Mark Baskerville Lancashire County Council Auditors mark.baskerville@lancashire.gov.uk
D6.	Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27	Mark Baskerville Lancashire County Council Auditors mark.baskerville@lancashire.gov.uk
D7.	External Audit Progress Report	Jimly Johny Forvis Mazars Auditors jimly.johny@mazars.co.uk
D8.	Corporate Risk Management Report Quarter 4 2025/26	Kimberly Haworth Head of Financial Services/s151 Officer kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
E.	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS 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 item of business since it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act.	
E1.	Standards Complaints update (verbal)	Councillor Driver
E2.	Whistleblowing update (verbal)	Councillor Driver

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Huntington', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rob Huntington
Chief Executive

Date Published: 21st July 2026

MINUTES OF: THE AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 18th February 2026

PRESENT: Councillor Driver (Chair)
Councillors Eaton (sub), Hodgkiss (sub), Payne, Procter and M Smith
Simon McManus, Co-opted Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Warren, Director of Resources (s151 Officer), RBC
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services, RBC
Andy Dalecki, LCC Internal Auditors
Mark Baskverville, LCC Internal Auditors
Katie Kingston, Forvis Mazars External Auditors
Glenda Ashton, Committee Officer, RBC

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Walmsley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Kenyon, Norton and Woods.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

There was no update.

7. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE QUARTER 3 2025/26

The Director of Resources outlined the report which asked the Committee to note the Council's Corporate Risk Register, risk consequence, mitigation action and residual level of risk.

Risk 3 'Incident resulting in Death or Serious Injury or HSE Investigation' was the only high risk. It was noted that actions following the cemetery incident would be completed by the end of Quarter 4 2025/26.

The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

Risk 1 Sustainability of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- Service Areas were considering the use of technology and reviewing outdated processes to make efficiencies.
- The Council was considering commercial opportunities, reviewing fees and charges and seeking to source any external funding available to raise income.
- The sale/lease of Council owned land would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Property Team. An external valuation or tender process would take place to ensure best value.

Risk 3 - 'Incident resulting in Death or Serious Injury or HSE Investigation'

- Provisions had been made in the budget to reinstate dangerous cemetery memorials. This would be undertaken on a risk-based basis. Costs may be covered where there were no surviving family members.
- Actions from the cemetery incident were expected to be completed by the end of Quarter 4 2025/26.

Risk 10 – Waste Transfer Station

- Bids had been received for the build. Barnfield would be given first option due to the joint venture agreement in place with the Council, however other bids would be considered if their submission was in excess of the budget.

Officers were thanked for a clear, well written report.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee noted the Council's Corporate Risk Register for Quarter 3 2025/26.
2. Members noted the risk consequence, mitigation action and level of risk as detailed in Appendix 1.

7. REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2026/27

The Director of Resources outlined the report which asked the Committee to review the Policy and Procedures and make any necessary recommendations to Council.

The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- The Council's Levelling Up Fund needed to be spent by the end of the next financial year; a significant amount had been allocated for the Waste Transfer Station.
- A number of projects would come to an end during 2027/28 as the Council approached Local Government Reorganisation.
- The Climate Change expenditure was for decarbonisation initiatives including work at Marl Pits Leisure Centre.
- The Council would seek to borrow monies internally to avoid external borrowing. A number of capital receipts were expected which would mitigate the need to borrow.
- The team actively monitored interest rates including the Council's investments and external borrowing.
- A system was in place to take card payments for revenues and benefits. However, an in-house system for other payments was not feasible. Staff had received effective training to handle card details.
- The Finance Team were thanked for their work.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee reviewed the Treasury Management Policy and Procedures for 2026/27.
2. No recommendations were made to Council.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026

The Audit Manager, Lancashire County Council, outlined the report which asked the Committee to consider the Internal Audit Progress report for 2025/26.

The 2026/27 Audit Plan was in draft form and would be available to the Committee in due course. The Management Team were considering if this could be reviewed and agreed by the Committee before its next meeting in July.

The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- There would be flexibility in relation to additional audit days during 2026/27.
- It was positive to hear that a number of staff had been recruited to the audit team.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee considered the Internal Audit report on progress to deliver the 2025/26 audit plan.

9. AUDIT STRATEGY AND COMPLETION REPORT 2024/25

The Audit Manager, Forvis Mazars, outlined the report which asked the Committee to consider the Strategy and Completion Report for 2024/25.

The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- Governance arrangements with Rossendale Leisure Trust were part of the Leisure Review.
- The Leisure Review was almost completed and the report was expected imminently.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee considered and noted the External Audit Strategy and Completion Report for 2024/25.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the items involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

11. STANDARDS COMPLAINTS UPDATE (VERBAL)

An update was provided in relation to Standards Complaints.

RESOLVED:

- That the update was noted.

12. WHISTLEBLOWING UPDATE (VERBAL)

An update was provided in relation to Whistleblowing.

RESOLVED:

- That the update was noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.10pm

Signed (Chair)

Date

Report Title:	Annual Fraud Report 2025/26		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Fraud & Compliance Officer	Cabinet Portfolio	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan	☐ General Exception	☐ Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:			
Required:		No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Carol Walker	Telephone:	01706 252582
Email:	carolwalker@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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the work undertaken in the previous financial year in relation to fraud and compliance activities, including the success that has been achieved in identifying fraud.
- 1.2 This work has resulted in a financial saving to the Council and partner organisations.
- 1.3 The Fraud and Compliance function provides assurance that if major fraud is attempted, there are systems in place to identify and prevent it.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Committee notes the contents of the annual update report.

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs. There is a duty to have effective controls and procedures in place to prevent, detect, deter and investigate fraud and error in Council Tax Support, Council Tax, Business Rates and other areas of the Council as required.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 3.2 The Fraud and Compliance Officer acts as Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for:
- The provision of information to the DWP.
 - Liaising with the Police and other local authorities/agencies by dealing with requests for information under the Data Protection Act and other legislation.
- 3.3 This is work which would otherwise have been allocated to the benefit assessment team.
- 3.4 The Council is an active member of NAFN (National Anti-Fraud Network). NAFN's key services include:
- Acquiring data legally, efficiently and effectively from a wide range of information providers.
 - Acting as the hub for the collection, collation and circulation of intelligence alerts to varying different teams within the Council, which could be targeted by providing them with fraud prevention information and details of the latest scams.
- 3.5 The Council works closely with Lancashire, Greater Manchester and some Cheshire local authorities and meets regularly with other counter fraud practitioners to discuss common counter fraud issues and best practice, including organising any specialised training required together, to save our respective local authorities money.

NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE

- 3.6 The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise conducted by the Cabinet Office, to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. Data is collected from around 1,200 participating organisations across public and private sectors including government departments. Data matching compares sets of data electronically, such as the payroll or benefit records, against other records obtained to see how far they match. The data matching focuses on identifying anomalies between the records, which could indicate fraudulent claims.
- 3.7 In February 2025, the NFI released its biannual set of data matches to all Councils for review and they will from time-to-time update these adding extra matches. In total NFI had released 261 matches to the Fraud and Compliance Office, over 20 report types.
- 3.8 Manual checks comparing each match against Council records was undertaken. The Fraud and Compliance Officer has checked all 261 matches. Of these 34 matches required further review. To date 18 matches are on-going, 16 have been closed, 10 with a positive outcome creating £22,980.34 in CTS adjustments, two CTS £70 civil penalties have been raised, plus a £26,926.13 Housing Benefit [HB] overpayment and a £50 Housing Benefit HB civil penalty was raised.
- 3.9 In one instance, a case had been referred to the DWP twice, once in the 22/23 batch of NFI matches and also more recently following the current matches. In both instances the match related to [different] student grant awards. A DWP Investigator advised the matches would not be investigated. Therefore, the Fraud and Compliance Officer dealt with the matter. The case resulted in the HB overpayment of £26,926.13 and a £50.00 HB civil penalty being added.
- 3.10 Of the 2022/23 NFI matches, there is one case outstanding, this has been jointly investigated with a Criminal Investigation Officer from the DWP. The case is currently awaiting its next court

hearing at Burnley Crown Court, in May, 2027. The case is being prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] on behalf of the DWP and the Council.

FRAUD AWARENESS TRAINING

3.11 Fraud awareness is mandatory for all staff.

3.12 Fraud awareness sessions occur on a rolling basis for Revenues, Benefits and One Stop Shop staff.

SURVEILLANCE

3.13 Surveillance is only authorised in appropriate cases where considered necessary and proportionate, in line with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). During 2025/26 no cases were identified for surveillance.

SPECIAL EXERCISES

3.14 No special exercises were conducted during 2025/26.

PERFORMANCE AND STATISTICS

3.15 During 2025/26 147 allegations of fraud were received from various sources. The number of referrals increased in all areas except for HB where they declined, this is due to HB claims transitioning onto UC. Other LA fraud, involves other areas of the Council which were targeted, other than Revenues and Benefits.

Fraud Area	Number of Referrals
Council Tax Support	76
Housing Benefit	4
Council Tax [single person discount/exemptions etc.]	67
Business Rates [grant fraud/small business rate relief fraud etc.]	6
Other LA Fraud	10

[Of note, some allegations refer to more than one type of fraud].

3.16 These referrals were received from

Source	Number of Referrals
Anon Referral	8
Assessment Team	8
Council Tax Team	4
DWP	0
LA Staff [Internal]	20
NFI	34
One Stop Shop	2
Online Referral Form	62
Other LA Staff	3
SAT Team	5
NNDR Team	1

3.17 The types of fraud relating to these allegations.

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Allegation	Number of Referrals
C/Tax - Other	8
C/Tax - Property Not Listed For Rating	1
Ctax - Exemption fraud	3
C/tax - Liability Fraud	3
C/tax - SPD Fraud	59
CTS - Living Together	21
CTS - Not Resident	8
CTS - Other Fraud	5
CTS - Undeclared Capital	5
CTS - Undeclared Income	7
CTS - Undeclared Land/Property	2
CTS - Undeclared Non-Dependant	24
CTS - WWIR	9
HB – Undeclared Non-Dependant	1
HB - Not Resident	1
HB - Other Fraud	1
HB - Undeclared Capital	1
NNDR – Liability Fraud	1
NNDR - Undeclared business premises	4
NNDR – Empty Exemption	1
Other LA Fraud – Household Support Fund Fraud	8
Other LA Fraud – Employee Fraud	1
Other LA Fraud – Grant Fraud	1

3.18 During the 2025/26 year 44 cases were referred to the DWP for their consideration. This includes 16 cases identified from the NFI matches.

3.19 The DWP's Criminal Investigation Team issued 0 requests for information in relation to their investigations linked to HB fraud, however they gave feedback on 3 referred cases. There were 0 requests from the DWP's Compliance Team, however they gave feedback on one case referred. This is significantly less than pre pandemic years. This is mainly due to HB being phased out, in the majority of claims.

3.20 Following the Fraud and Compliance Officers involvement/investigations, the following overpayments/adjustments were identified

Area	Value	Number of cases
Council Tax Support adjustment	£25,030.14	13
Single Person Discounts withdrawn	£7,309.76	8
Council Tax Liability added	£5,321.53	2
Housing Benefit overpayment	£30,744.52	3
NNDR adjustment	nil	0

3.21 This year, 4 x £70 Council Tax, 5 x £70 CTS and 2 x £50 HB penalties were applied following fraud investigations.

3.22 An additional methodology to identify counter fraud performance is also in place. This is because when a claim for an allowance, discount, reduction, benefit or exemption ends or reduces as a result of an intervention by the Fraud and Compliance function, the value of the intervention is actually not just the amount of any overpayment that has occurred. It is

recognised that there is also a “future” saving, resulting from preventing further incorrect payments being made. In these cases, the weekly amount of reduced entitlement that is applied following a counter fraud intervention is multiplied by 52. It is reasonable to believe that the award would have continued for an average of one year, had no intervention taken place. This was agreed as an appropriate performance measure by the Lancashire and Greater Manchester Fraud Investigators Group.

- 3.23 The weekly figure for the Council is £182.57, giving estimated “future” savings from 2025/26 activity of £9,493.64. It should be noted that “future” savings can only be estimated, but do help demonstrate another benefit to the Council of undertaking counter fraud work. This saving is only calculated against Council Tax Support.
- 3.24 The “Analyse Local” System is used to identify properties that are missing from the rating list or are undervalued. Typically, the cases identified through Analyse Local are those in remote locations, unreported alterations to existing sites and internal changes which have an effect on rental value. They tend to be scenarios which are not picked up through the general property inspection regime. During 25/26 the use of Analyse Local to assist in business rates forecasting generated a total additional rateable value of £34,000 including backdating, the estimated rate yield from these cases is £34,431. There are an additional two cases where proposals have been made to the VOA in 25/26 where the VOA assessment of additional rateable is still outstanding.
- 3.25 Of note, the majority of Housing Benefit customers have now transferred over to Universal Credit. This should not impact on the number of referrals received, as most allegations also affect Council Tax Support. However, this has started to impact on the value of overpayments raised.
- 3.26 Of note, the Council’s current CTS scheme includes that all customers in receipt of Universal Credit [UC] will have their CTS claim assessed based on their UC entitlement. Should an allegation of fraud be received and the CTS entitlement is based on UC, Benefits are reliant on the customer being honest and notifying UC of a change in their circumstances. Generally, the only way for the UC to be reviewed following an allegation of fraud, is for the DWP’s fraud team to conduct an investigation and report their findings to UC. It is important to note, that currently UC will not consider accepting the findings and any evidence from a Local Authority Fraud/Compliance Officer’s investigation, whereas other DWP Benefit Teams, for example Employment Support Allowance [ESA] will. This is having an impact on CTS allegations suitable for investigation, particularly now HB customers have moved over to claiming UC for their housing costs. It is hoped that the CTS scheme will be amended in the future, to include that customers may have their UC decision overridden, when the Council knows their UC entitlement isn’t correct.
- 3.27 This year the Fraud and Compliance Officer has started investigating several joint working cases with a Criminal Investigator from the DWP. These investigations are complex, time consuming and will take several years [in some cases] from start to completion. Together we are using legislation available to obtain evidence, with the aim of proving the allegation. We are intending to conduct joint interviews under caution. These cases should yield high value overpayments if proved. The aim is to take prosecution action on suitable cases and obtain publicity for both organisations. This should act as a deterrent for others.

RECOVERY

- 3.28 Capita actively recover any HB overpayments, CTS adjustments, discounts and exemption removals raised because of fraud activities.

- 3.29 Fraudulent HB overpayments attract a 40% subsidy, this means that any monies collected over 60% of the overpayment, is additional income for the Council. If 100% of the overpayment is recovered then the Council would retain 140% of the original overpaid.
- 3.30 Fraudulent overpayments are not separately recorded from other recoverable overpayments such as council error. In 2025/26 £159,785 of recoverable overpayments were raised and £194,886 collected at a collection rate of 121.97%. Ongoing overpayment collection is reported quarterly as a key performance indicator. Of note, these figures exclude overpayments raised and collected during quarter two, due to a DWP exercise which distorted the figures.
- 3.31 Similarly, no separate recovery figure for council tax and NNDR adjustments is available. In year collection rates for all council tax was 95.4% in 2025/26 with 98.8% for NNDR.

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY FRAUD AND PREVENTION ACTIVITY

- 3.32 During 2025/26 9 referrals were received relating to Household Support Fund applications and 1 relating to adaptations/grants. These were reviewed and one customer was interviewed. Advice was given to the Officers who deal with these, including strengthening the questions on the application form to tighten up the application process; specifically to include a strong declaration around fraud; the repayment of fraudulent grants paid including further action such as prosecution; to compare mobile and email addresses to those held on the Council Tax system; querying any anomalies; advice on how to spot fake/counterfeit bank statements and redacted samples of Universal Credit notifications were given to assist in spotting genuine/fake documents.
- 3.33 Also referred was a case against a member of staff [MOS] who had recently left the Authority. It was identified that the MOS may have conducted fraudulent activity implicating the Authority. The MOS of staff had been using his RBC PC to generate invoices payable to himself/family members, using his RBC email address and work mobile number. The invoices generated contained reference numbers normally generated by the Civica invoice system. Following checks, it was identified that the Authority hadn't been defrauded, however, it did identify other fraudulent issues which were reported Action Fraud.
- 3.34 During the year Council Tax was scammed as a refund was paid to a scammer [organised crime]. Following this incident, it was recommended considering the use of bank account checker software, to assist in identifying future attempts. There is a cost implication to the Authority to use this service.
- 3.35 The Exchequer Team continue to verify any changes to bank details they receive before amending details on their system. They never use the contact details supplied on the change request notification to verify the change, but will check for another contact via the internet etc.
- 3.36 NAFN issued intelligence alerts relating to criminals targeting various areas of Local Authority business, such as procurement impersonation fraud, corporate impersonation fraud, bank mandate fraud, Household Support Fund and staff salary mandate fraud, these are passed to the relevant teams to make them aware of impending threats.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ROSSENDALE BC WEBSITE

- 3.37 The Council's Facebook page and website have been used to highlight scams to our residents.

JOINT WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

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3.38 The Council currently has four joint working cases with DWP. All investigations are complex and lengthy. These cases involve both Fraud Investigators obtaining evidence, conducting a joint interview under caution, then if the case is suitable for prosecution, preparing it jointly for the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS]. The investigation of cases is to a criminal standard therefore it is resource intensive, due to the amount of work required in collating and preparing the evidence, contacting witnesses, writing witness statements and completing the relevant paperwork required for the CPS. One case is listed for a court trial in May 2027, one is being prepared for a joint prosecution and two are at the evidence gathering stage.

FRAUD TRENDS

3.39 The new trend/target was identified in Rossendale and in many other Local Authority's during 2025/26 was the targeting of the Household Support Fund. The advice given the team and the NAFN fraud alerts issued, should assist in combating and identifying any future cases.

CONCLUSION

3.40 This report has been developed to provide performance information in relation to the activities undertaken by the Fraud and Compliance Officer and to demonstrate the joint working with other agencies on either a mandatory or voluntary commitment basis.

3.41 This work has resulted in fraud being identified and repayments to the Council and partners being made.

3.42 There would normally be scope within the workload for other proactive exercises to be undertaken, but due to the number of joint working complex cases and the release of the NFI data matches no proactive work was conducted.

3.43 To summarise, as a result of actions by the Council's Fraud and Compliance function during 2025/26 there have been -

- £25,030.14 Council Tax Support adjustments created.
- £30,744.52 Housing Benefits overpayments raised.
- £7,309.76 Single Person Discounts were withdrawn.
- £5,321.53 Council Tax liability added.
- 11 Civil Penalties added.

4. RISK

4.1 The objectives of the Fraud and Compliance function is to:

- In common with all other public bodies, Rossendale Borough Council is potentially vulnerable to fraud, either internally by its employees, or externally from members of the public. The Council has an on-going duty to protect public funds.
- Undertake fraud prevention measures.
- Detect and stop fraud, thus making financial savings to the Council.
- Conduct investigations, implement sanctions and recommend appropriate follow-on action in line with the Investigation, Sanction & Prosecution Policy, which is updated periodically.
- Ensure that investigations comply with the appropriate regulations.
- Increase fraud awareness.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 The financial implications of failing to protect the Council are potentially substantial. The Council's strategy for tackling fraud provides an assurance that public funds are being protected from abuse. Fraud leaves the Council with less to spend on services for residents and costs taxpayers' money.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 The work outlined herein supports good governance and demonstrates effective financial stewardship and strong public financial management. It is supported through other policies and procedures to include the Council's Whistleblowing policy.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No significant equality, socio-economic, or human rights impacts have been identified as a result of the Annual Fraud Report.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Any policy implications are included in the body of the report. No equality implications.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Annual Fraud Report has no significant impact on Local Government Reorganisation and supports continuity of good governance arrangements during any period of organisational change.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Not applicable.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Statement of purpose

1. The Audit and Accounts Committee is a key component of Rossendale Borough Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
2. The primary purpose of the committee is to provide independent assurance to the members (being those charged with governance) of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.
3. The committee's members should therefore behave objectively and independently in their deliberations and decisions.

Governance

The committee will:

4. Review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, and consider annual governance reports and assurances.
5. Review and recommend the local code of corporate governance for adoption by the Council.
6. Review the annual governance statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account the head of internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.
7. Consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money, and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
8. Consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
9. Consider the Council's arrangements for discharging its duties in relation to promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.
10. To make recommendations to the Cabinet, Council and other organisations where appropriate.

Risk management and control

The committee will:

11. Monitor the effective development and operation of the risk management framework and processes across the Council.
12. Monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Committee.
13. Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
14. Review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
15. Monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources, including any instances of

whistleblowing.

Internal audit

The committee will:

16. Consider the internal audit charter approved by Lancashire County Council.
17. Approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including the Internal Audit Service's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
18. Approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
19. Make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
20. Consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of any other external providers of internal audit services.
These will include:
 - a. Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
 - b. Regular reports on the results of the Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
 - c. Reports on instances where the Internal Audit Service does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the annual governance statement.
21. Consider the head of internal audit's annual report:
 - a. The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement.
 - b. The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion, which will assist the committee in reviewing the annual governance statement.
22. Consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
23. Receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Council or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
24. Contribute to the Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

External audit

The committee will:

25. Consider the appointment of the Council's external auditor proposed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited and assess whether there are any valid reasons for the Council to object.
26. Support the external auditor's independence through consideration of its annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.
27. Approve the letters of representation required by the external auditor and consider the

external auditor's annual letter, audit opinion, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.

28. Consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
29. Comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
30. Commission additional work from the external auditor as necessary.

Financial reporting

The committee will:

31. Review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, it will consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
32. Consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Accountability arrangements

The committee will:

33. Report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements; and internal and external audit functions.

Report Title:	Adoption of statutory accounts for financial year 2025/26		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Head of Financial Services	Cabinet Portfolio:	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected:	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan ☒	☐ General Exception	☐ Special Urgency ☐
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required: ☐ No ☐	Attached: ☐	No ☐
Contact Officer:	Kimberly Haworth		Telephone: 01706 252547
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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The 2025/26 accounts were published on the website on the 30th June, in advance of the 30th June deadline. The period of consultation ends on the 11th August 2026.
- 1.2 The backstop date for the adoption of the 2025/26 accounts is 31st January 2027.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members are asked to note the contents of this report and accept the 2025/26 statutory accounts as the final published accounts. The statutory accounts for 2025/26 are at (Appendix 1).**
- 2.2 **Members are asked to delegate to the Head of Financial Services and the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee the ability to amend the documents to finalise the presentation of the statutory accounts to include the addition of the signed audit opinion and any referencing adjustments or minor amendments as necessary.**

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

The External Audit Environment

- 3.1 One of the key reasons that external audit assignments are in place is to ensure that the council has complied with the Code of Practice and as a result give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation.

- 3.2 In the event of non or limited compliance, this must be made clear in the Statements themselves and may result in a qualified, often referred to as a modified audit opinion.
- 3.3 For various resourcing reasons it has been impossible for audit firms to deliver complete audit assurance assignments in a timely manner and the 2024/25 accounts (and previous years from 2018/19 onwards) for the Council are not as yet fully audited and due to Backstop Regulations as noted below never will be.

Backstop Regulations

- 3.4 To address the national audit problem backstop regulations for the audit of local government accounts in England were introduced by the Minister of State for Local Government, on July 31, 2024.
- 3.5 The primary reasons for these regulations include:
1. Restoring Transparency and Accountability: The backlog undermined local accountability and governance, making it difficult for the public and other stakeholders to understand how public money was being spent.
 2. Clearing the Backlog: The government set statutory backstop dates to ensure that all outstanding audits up to and including the financial year 2022/23 would be completed by December 13, 2024. This measure aims to clear the backlog and enable a focus on more recent accounts.
 3. Improving the Audit System: The regulations are part of broader efforts to overhaul the local audit system to ensure it is fit for purpose and capable of delivering high-quality and timely financial reporting.
- 3.6 These steps are supported by guidance from the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Financial Reporting Council, with extensive communication and engagement planned to explain the necessity of these measures.
- 3.7 The backstop regulations for the audit of local government accounts in England set specific deadlines to address the backlog of unaudited accounts and ensure timely financial reporting. Here are the key directives:
1. Statutory Deadlines: Local authorities had to publish audited accounts for all financial years up to and including 2022/23 by December 13, 2024. This was intended to clear the existing backlog and allow a focus on more recent accounts.
 2. Current and future deadlines: For subsequent financial years, specific deadlines have been set:
 - 2025/26: 31 January 2027
 - 2026/27: 30 November 2027
 - 2027/28: 30 November 2028
 3. Modified or Disclaimed Opinions: Auditors may issue modified or disclaimed opinions if they cannot complete all audit work by the backstop dates. These opinions must clearly state the reasons, distinguishing between issues caused by the backstop dates and those indicating significant financial reporting problems.

4. Value for Money (VfM) Reporting: Auditors are required to report on VfM arrangements and can issue statutory recommendations or Public Interest Reports if necessary.
5. Communication and Support: Extensive communication efforts will be made to explain the necessity of these measures and mitigate potential reputational impacts on local bodies.

3.8 These regulations aim to restore transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the local audit system.

DETAILS

Rossendale context

- 3.9 The statutory deadline requires that the Council must publish its accounts for the 2025/26 financial year by 30th June 2026 and must adopt audited accounts for the same year by 31st January 2027 as nationally mandated MHCLG to help resolve the national audit backlog issue. The accounts are not complete from an audit perspective at this point and are still subject to audit.
- 3.10 RBC along with most other local authorities will retain accounts in for historical periods that will have modified audit opinions on them. This is likely to continue for an as yet undefined period going forward. Some of the wording in the backstop regulations and the emerging theme of building back assurance to a point where auditors will be confident to certify whichever councils statutory accounts suggests that it is likely that there will be modified opinions for the Council for at least a further two years following 2025/26 with a high probability that the situation will not be resolved at that point. The implication of this is that councils will move into LGR with unaudited accounts. The framework around which auditors will rebuild assurance as part of their audit work is as yet undefined.

4. RISK

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
 - There remains a risk as part of the ongoing building back assurance work that there may be a restatement of opening balances in any year up to the completion of audit backlog.
 - There is a risk that ongoing backlog clearance work may negatively impact on the finance team resources available to continue to manage the financial affairs of the organisation. This can be mitigated by bringing in dedicated financial support should the need arise.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

The Annual Statement of Accounts

- 5.1 The accounts are a statutory document produced and published by the council every year. The preparation, and the subsequent external audit of the document is a significant undertaking for the finance function and the oversight of these tasks is one of the key undertakings for the Council's Responsible Finance Officer (the "Section 151 Officer").
- 5.2 The central role of the Statement of Accounts is to enhance the financial accountability of the Council to those external to the Council.
- 5.3 The Statement of Accounts is also a statutory document. The Local Government Act 2003 (section 21) enables the Secretary of State to issue regulations on the preparation and

publication of accounts for local authorities, which is fulfilled by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended). The requirements are that:

- Every council must prepare a statement of accounts in accordance with the Regulations and proper accounting practices (section 7(1)).
- These statements must include a narrative statement (also known as the narrative report) which comments on the council's financial performance and the economy efficiency and effective in its use of resources over the financial year (section 8).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (the Section 151 Officer) must sign and date the accounts and so confirm that they are satisfied that they provide a true and fair view of the council's finances (Section 9(1)).
- The council must ensure that there is a period of public consultation.
- After the period of public consultation, the Statement of accounts should be considered by Full Council, or a Committee of the Council, for them to discuss and approve the statements. The statements must then be signed and dated to this effect (section 9(2)).
- The Council must publish the annual Statement of Accounts, the narrative statement and the annual governance statement, together with any external audit opinion (reg 10(1)) by a specified date.

The form of the annual Statement of Accounts

- 5.4 The Accounts and Audit Regulations Section 7(1) requires that the annual Statement of Accounts be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. This is defined as International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as applied to local authorities by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC) in their Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.
- 5.5 The situation with respect to modified audit opinions is likely to remain in place for an undefined period of time as the audit sector works with local authorities to build back assurance, current back stop provisions refer to the financial year 2028/29 which is indicative, but not conclusive as to when the national audit backlog will be resolved satisfactorily. This does not consider the implications of the transition of district councils into new unitary authorities as part of LGR.
- 5.6 The report covered by these backstop arrangements will remain on record and will not be amended. This is the case for all local authorities of which there are many as noted above with an audit backlog. Any material adjustments dictated by the work carried out to build back assurance will be actioned via the restatement of prior years' comparative figures in the latest unaudited financial statements. This is normal accounting practice.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 All legal implications are covered in the body of this report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Effective performance management is important to the Council, and the Council is committed to improving its services. In completing this report, consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team and Portfolio Holder for Resources.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Performance management arrangements will inform transition planning under any future Local Government Reorganisation arrangements to ensure service continuity and governance oversight.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Q4 Performance Management Report



ROSSENDALE
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2025–26



Working together
for a stronger Rossendale

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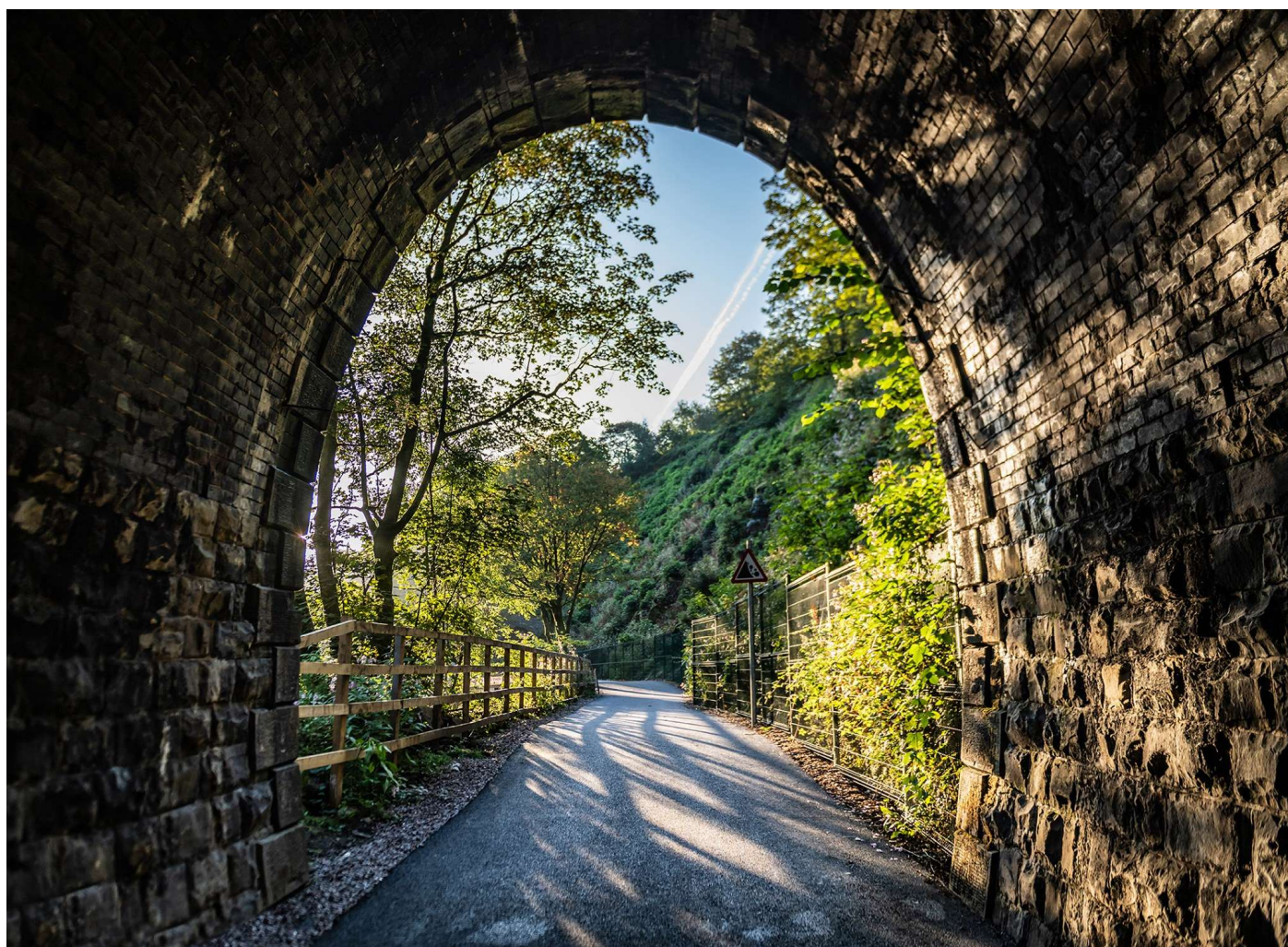
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Introduction

Rossendale Borough Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26 provides a comprehensive overview of the financial performance and position of the Council. This document is an essential component of our commitment to transparency and accountability, presenting detailed information on how public funds have been managed and allocated throughout the year.

The 2025/26 financial year has been a period of both challenges and achievements for Rossendale Borough Council. Against a backdrop of ongoing economic pressures, evolving public service demands, and legislative changes, the Council has remained steadfast in its mission to deliver high-quality services to its residents. This Statement of Accounts reflects the Council's resilience and adaptability in managing its resources efficiently and effectively.

The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026 has been prepared and published in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2025/26, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The accounting policies adopted by the Council comply with the relevant recommended accounting practices and the latest revisions to these from 1 April 2025. There have been no major changes in the Council's statutory functions during the year.



Independent Auditor's Report

This page is intentionally left blank for the inclusion of the Independent Auditor's Report.

The Independent Auditor's Report will be provided by the appointed external auditor in accordance with the requirements of the **Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014** and the **Code of Audit Practice** issued by the National Audit Office.

The signed auditor's report will be inserted here upon completion of the audit.

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Narrative Report

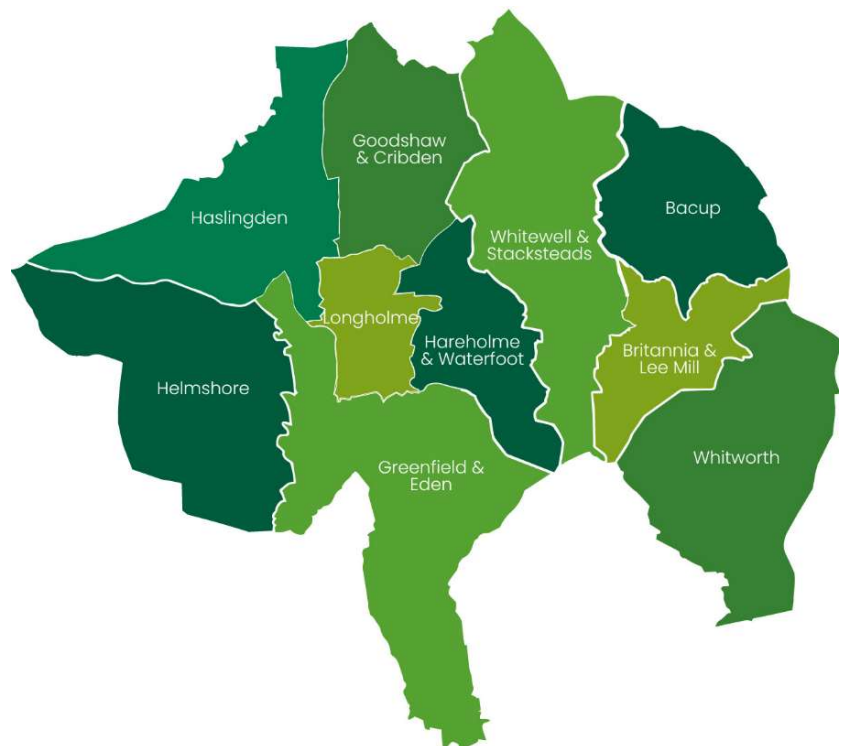
Introduction by the Head of Finance

This Statement of Accounts gives an overview of the Council's finances for 2025/26, with the Narrative Report outlining some of the key initiatives that have taken place and how these influenced the financial position of the Council. 2025/26 witnessed a stabilisation in the national economic position and an increase nationally in GDP, however this was combined with higher inflation rates (3.2% vs 2.5% in 2024/25) affecting both the Council and local residents. The ongoing high levels of inflation continued to lead to increased general prices for goods and materials for the Council.

Rossendale – geography, economy and our priorities for 2025/26

Rossendale is an authority in East Lancashire that covers 138 square kilometres. During 2025/26 the Borough comprised 10 electoral wards, following the boundary review in May 2024, which reduced the number of wards from 14 to 10.

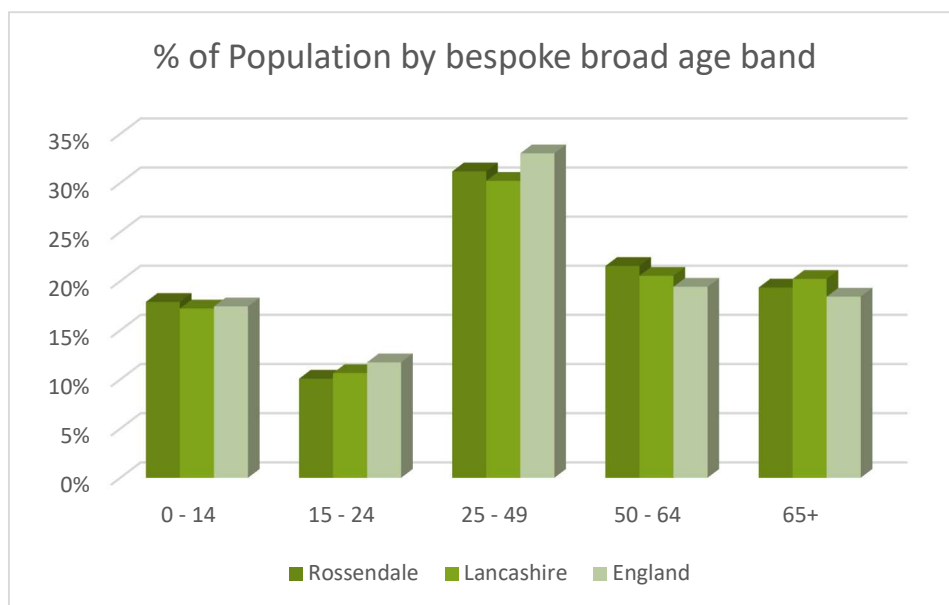
Rossendale is a distinct valley region in East Lancashire, blending a proud industrial heritage with dramatic Pennine landscapes. Characterised by its vibrant market towns and welcoming communities, the area offers a unique sense of place. Situated on the western slopes of the Pennines, Rossendale boasts excellent transport links into Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and the wider Lancashire area.



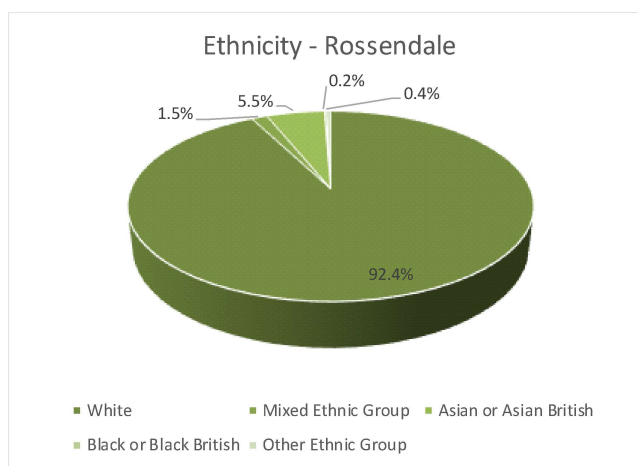
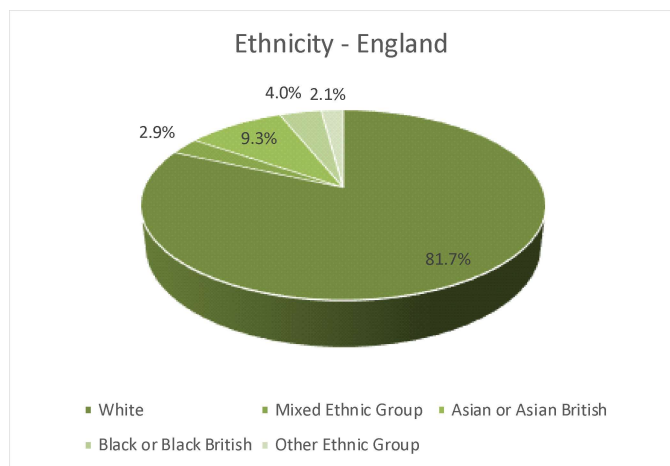
Our Vision: Rossendale, a place where people want to live, visit, work and invest

Our people:

The latest population estimate for the Rossendale area is c71,000. The age demographic make-up of the population compared with Lancashire and England (as per the 2021 Census) is shown in the table below:



he population of Rossendale is growing and it is estimated that between 2018 and 2043 the population will increase by 12.6%, the fourth highest increase in the Lancashire area. The ethnic make-up based on the 2021 Census is shown in the comparative graphs below.



Housing:

There are c32,200 dwellings in the Borough, 85% of which were owner-occupied or private rented. In common with other East Lancashire authorities, Rossendale has a high proportion of its housing stock in the lowest category 'A' Council tax band, almost 51%. In the most up-to-date information available, around 3.3% of dwellings were vacant.

A total of 14.6% of Rossendale households were in fuel poverty in 2020, compared to the average in England of 13.2%. The main factors that determine this are the energy efficiency status of the property, the cost of energy, and household income. The 2019 national indices of deprivation revealed that Rossendale was the 91st most deprived area out of the 317 districts and unitary authorities in England.

Our businesses:

As in most places, the manufacturing sector has shed jobs over the years whilst the service sector has grown to become a far greater source of employee jobs. However, in Lancashire and Rossendale, there still continues to be a bias towards a larger proportion of employees in the manufacturing sector than is the national norm, and a lower proportion of jobs in the service sector. Rossendale does however maintain a relatively high percentage of private sector jobs. In 2025/26 there were 2,830 active enterprises in Rossendale, slightly more than in 2024/25.

In Rossendale, a significant proportion of businesses are small and as at March 2026 almost 54% of the active enterprises qualified for small business rate relief which is a small increase on the 52% recorded in the previous year.

Our area:

Despite lacking a connection to the mainline railway network, Rossendale is highly accessible via major road corridors. The Borough benefits from strategic highway links, including the M66 leading south into Greater Manchester, the M62 crossing the Pennines, and the M65 running west towards the M6.

This robust road infrastructure supports a highly mobile workforce. According to Lancashire County Council's Census analysis, only 40.3% of Rossendale's working population is employed within the Borough itself. Furthermore, more than 10% of residents travel between 20 and 30 kilometres to reach work - a figure that stands as the highest in Lancashire and sits well above both regional and national benchmarks.

Rossendale plays a vital role in preserving Lancashire's natural spaces. The county boasts over 8,000 hectares of common land - amounting to 1.5% of the national total - and Rossendale is one of just three Boroughs that make up the vast majority of this area. On top of this, 22.6% of the borough's landscape is protected green belt. This strict zoning does more than just shield the countryside and preserve the historic charm of local towns; it actively keeps Rossendale's air quality significantly cleaner than both the Lancashire and UK averages.



Council Priorities

Priority A: Thriving Local Economy

The nature of the local economy continues to change and we will be playing an active role in creating the right conditions for local businesses to thrive. We will continue to grow the local economy, attracting businesses to our employment sites.

Key Outcomes:

- To support Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall town centres as better places to provide their own unique offers and a destination for local shoppers and visitors
- To have secured new inward investment in the Borough creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills provision with future job and career opportunities
- Having a thriving visitor economy which is more widely known with enhanced attractions and a much-improved accommodation offer

Priority B: High Quality Environment

The high quality of our natural environment is something local people love and take pride in. The Council recognises the value of our physical and built environment and the particular importance of our Pennine uplands and villages.

Key Outcomes:

- A high quality 'clean and green' local environment where people feel proud to live
- Reduce our carbon footprint
- Improve the waste recycling rate across the Borough

Priority C: Healthy and Proud Communities

Having access to a good quality home to either rent or buy plays a fundamental part in our residents' quality of life. We want people to live long lives and take pride in their communities.

Key Outcomes:

- To have delivered more new homes and a good mix of housing tenures
- Improve the health of residents through access to better leisure facilities and health services
- A more joined-up approach to physical and mental wellbeing which is more rapidly reducing health inequalities
- Residents share a sense of pride in their immediate community and the wider Borough

Priority D: Effective and Efficient Council

It is important that we are an effective and efficient Council - one with ambition, clear direction, which delivers high quality services, which provide good value for money to our residents.

Key Outcomes:

- Provide high quality and responsive services whilst embracing new technology
- Be a financially sustainable Council with a commercial outlook whilst always considering social value
- Provide sound governance to enable key decisions and major projects to be progressed, in an efficient and professional way
- Have a skilled and happy workforce, where we are able to retain and attract good staff

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 2025/26



Rawtenstall Market relocated, with works beginning in January 2026.



8,072 responses to the 2025 Residents Survey, increasing by 42%



Completion of Public Realm works on Deardengate, Haslingden



Green Flag awards retained in Rawtenstall, Bacup, and Whitworth



Supported 2,376 households via the Household Support Fund



Preparation completed for April 2026 food waste collection launch



THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY



Installation of pilot town square and canopy in Waterfoot



Bacup Market designs approved



Murals completed in Whitworth, Waterfoot, and Haslingden



Partnership established to bring forward the former Bingo Hall site in Bacup



HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



98% of bins collected as per schedule throughout the year



Junior play park completed at Whitaker Park



Net Zero Terrace Streets project completed



Proposals approved for a new Waste Transfer Station at Futures Park



HEALTHY & PROUD COMMUNITIES



5 properties purchased to increase temporary accommodation offer



Leisure Asset Review completed



92% of residents feel safe in their local area during the day



Better Lives Strategy approved, supported by Low-Income Family Tracker data



EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL



Local Government Reorganisation proposals submitted



95% of staff enjoy working for the Council



2026/27 annual budget approved



'Recite Me' tool integrated into the Council's website, improving customer accessibility

Rossendale folk - the people behind the borough

Our Councillors

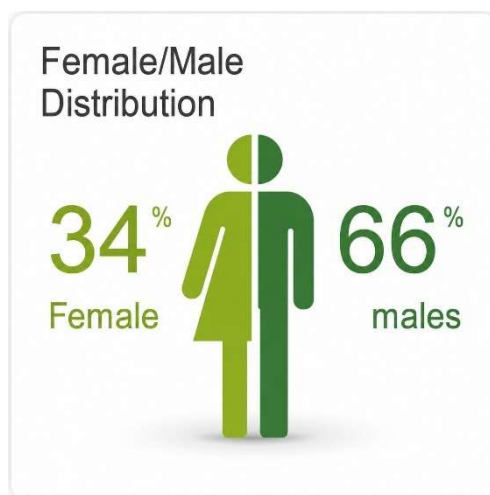
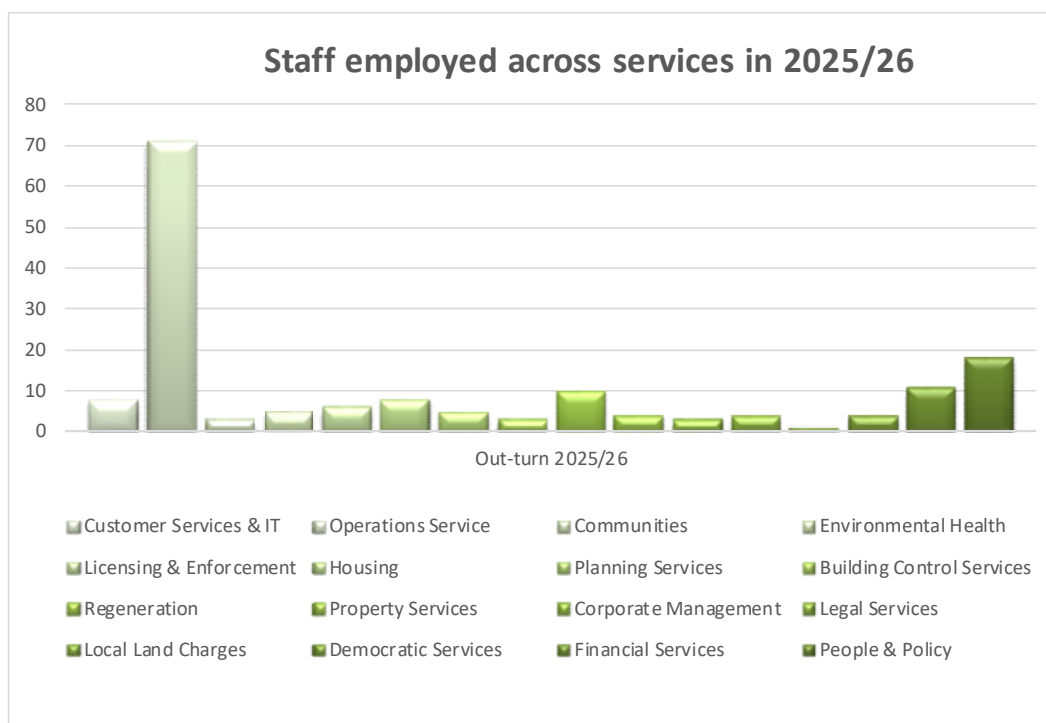
During 2025/26 there were 30 ward Councillors, serving 10 wards across the Borough. During this time, there was a resignation of 1 member representing Community First. At the end of 2025/26 the political balance was:

19 Labour 3 Green 5 Conservative 1 Community First 1 Reform UK 1 Vacant

On the 2nd April 2026, subsequent to the year end, 1 member representing Green was elected.

Our staff

During 2025/26 the Council employed 173 people across its services, 44% of whom provide front-line services within the Operations Team collecting refuse, maintaining our parks and cemeteries and keeping the roads around the Borough clean. Of our 173 employees 66% are men and 45% are over 50.



The Senior Management Team during 2025/26



Rob Huntington

Chief Executive



Chris Warren

Director of
Resources



David Smurthwaite

Director of Economic
Development



Andrew Taylor

Head of
Operations



Clare Birtwistle

Head of Legal



Clare Law

Head of People &
Policy

Chris Warren (Director of Resources) left the authority on 5th March 2026. Following his departure, the post of Director of Resources has remained vacant. In the interim, the Head of Finance has assumed the statutory responsibilities of the Section 151 Officer.

Our Cabinet Lead Members during 2025/26



Alison Barnes
Leader of the Council
Lead Member for Planning



Andrew Walmsley
Deputy Leader of the Council &
Lead Member for Resources



Adrian Lythgoe
Councillor
Lead Member for Environmental
& Corporate Support



Nick Harris
Councillor
Lead Member for Economic Development



Liz McInnes
Councillor
Lead Member of Communities

Our partners, community groups and the volunteers that we work with

CAPITA Capita provide our revenues, benefits and customer services.

Civic Pride groups support the Borough by providing a gardening and litter clearance service, building upon the work done by the Council's workforce.

CIVIC PRIDE
...Rossendale



Calico Homes assist with managing some of the Council's dispersed accommodation. **Together Housing** manages social housing across the Borough.



RTB Partnership Ltd is an equal partnership development vehicle set up in February 2013 to facilitate a number of development projects across the Borough.



Rossendale Leisure Trust provides the sports facilities provision in the Borough.

The NHS and **East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group** are the health providers for Rossendale.

Main hospital services are provided by **East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust**. Some other facilities are run by the **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**.

Lancashire Constabulary is the local police force.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue provide our fire service.

Lancashire County Council upper tier responsibilities.

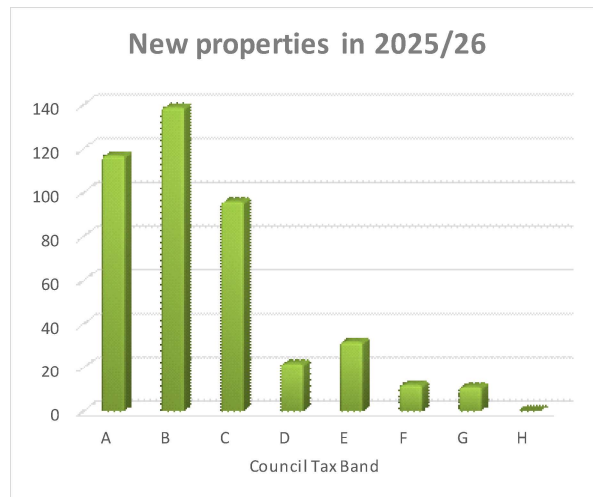
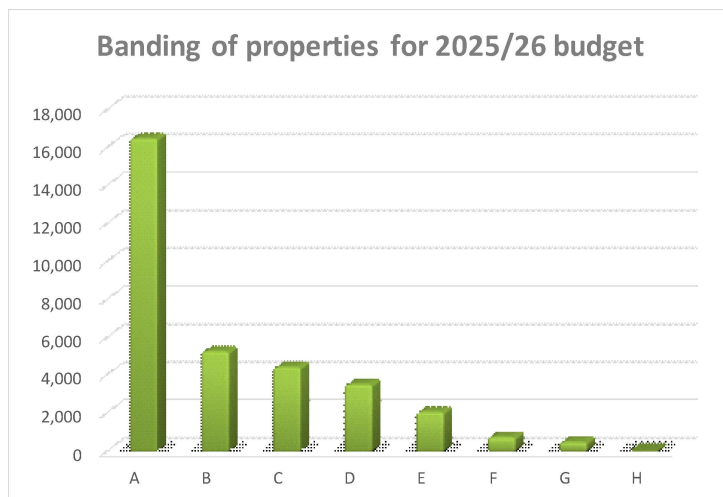


East Lancashire Hospitals
NHS Trust

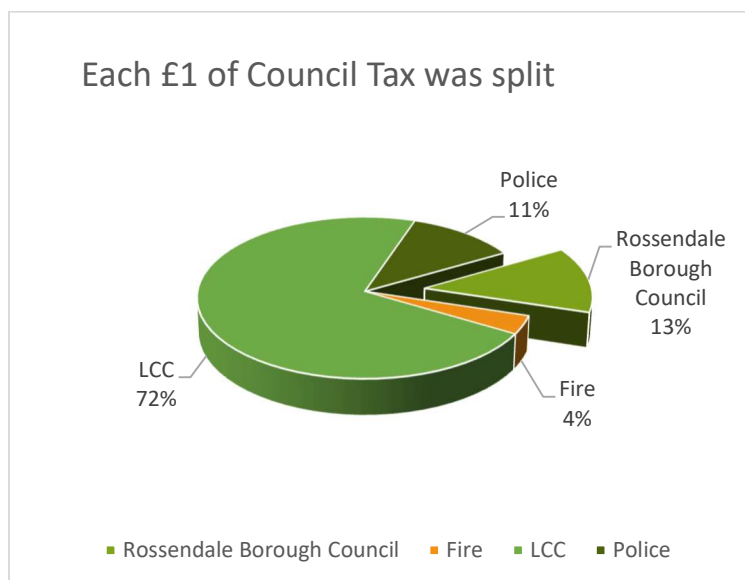


Council Tax in Rossendale

Almost 51% of all the domestic properties in Rossendale fall into Band A, the lowest band for Council Tax purposes. Though the Band D is taken nationally as the average for the purposes of collecting Council Tax, only 10.6% of properties in Rossendale fall into this band. The total number of properties when the 2025/26 Council Tax was set was 32,847.

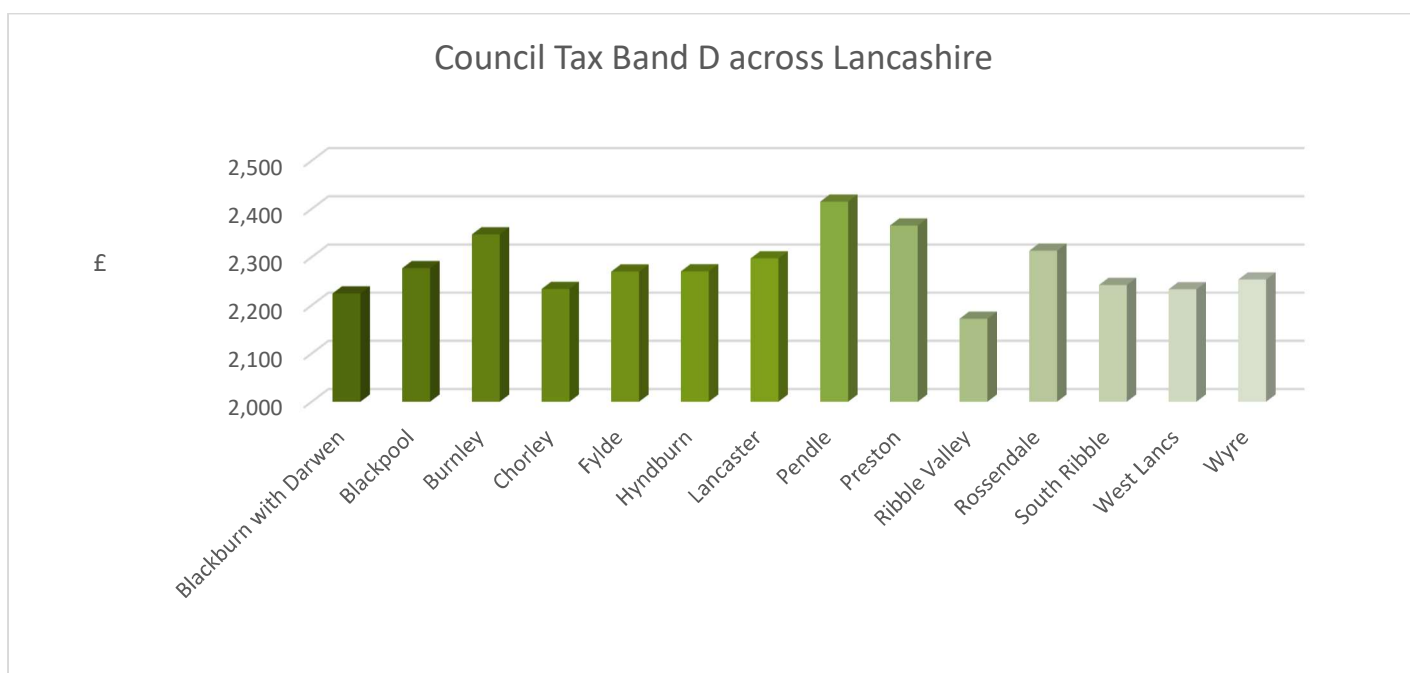


Rossendale Borough Council collects Council Tax on behalf of each of the major preceptors, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Constabulary. In 2025/26, we also collected a precept from 3,698 properties for Whitworth Town Council. In 2025/26 Rossendale Borough Council increased its element of the Council Tax by 2.99% which made the 2025/26 charge for a band D property £317.66. The Council retained £6.799m in Council Tax in 2025/26.



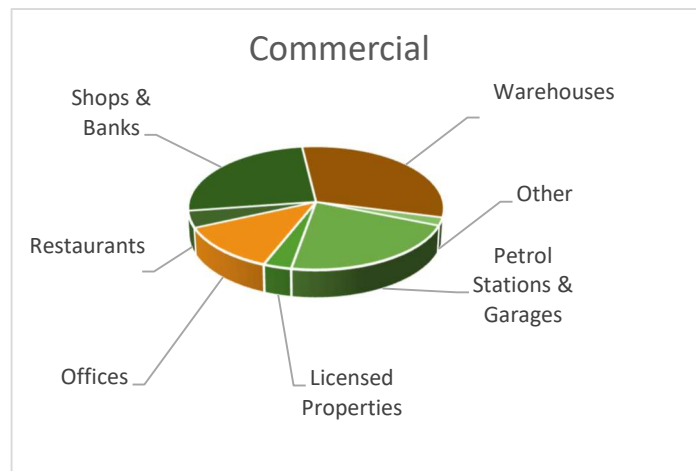
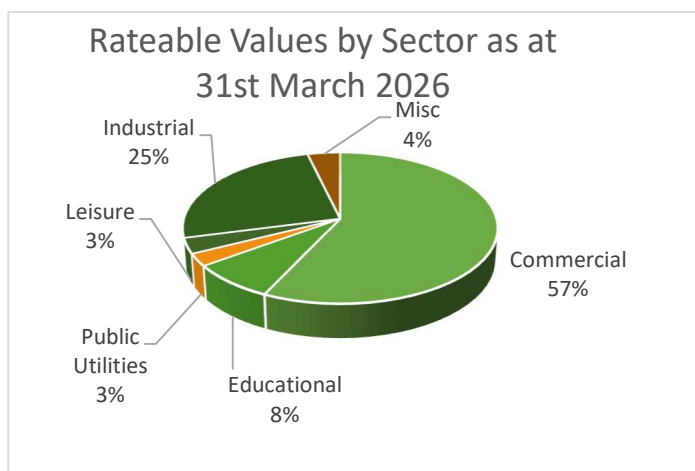
Precepting Body	Increase / (decrease) %	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Rossendale BC	2.99%	211.77	247.07	282.37	317.66	388.25	458.85	529.44	635.32
Lancashire County Council	2.99%	974.11	1,136.48	1,298.83	1,461.18	1,785.89	2,110.61	2,435.30	2,922.37
LCC - Adult Social Care	2.00%	183.07	213.58	244.09	274.61	335.63	396.65	457.68	549.21
Combined Fire Authority	5.90%	59.82	69.79	79.76	89.73	109.67	129.61	149.55	179.46
Police & Crime Commissioner	5.32%	184.93	215.76	246.58	277.40	339.04	400.69	462.33	554.80
Total	4.79%	1,613.70	1,882.68	2,151.63	2,420.58	2,958.48	3,496.41	4,034.30	4,841.16
Whitworth Parish Council	9.33%	22.57	26.34	30.10	33.86	41.38	48.91	56.43	67.72
Total Whitworth Parish	4.85%	1,636.27	1,909.02	2,181.73	2,454.44	2,999.86	3,545.32	4,090.73	4,908.88

In comparison with our neighbouring authorities across Lancashire, Rossendale has the fourth highest total Band D charge.

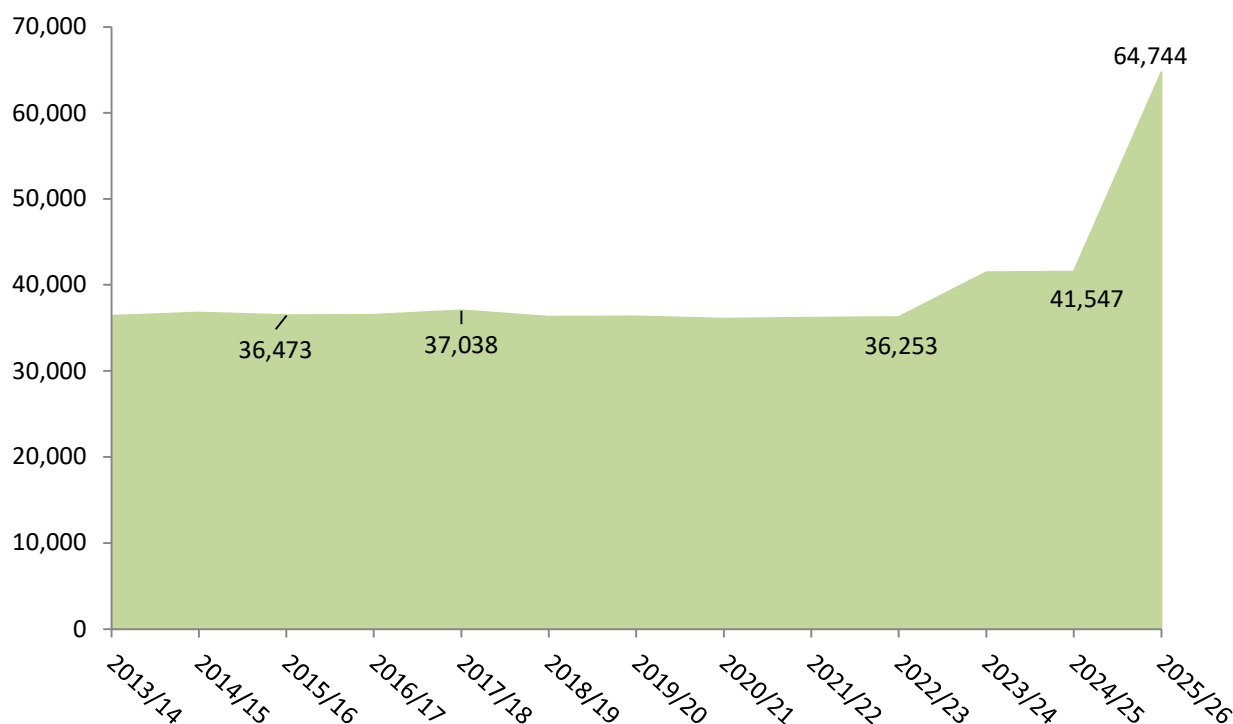


Business Rates in Rossendale

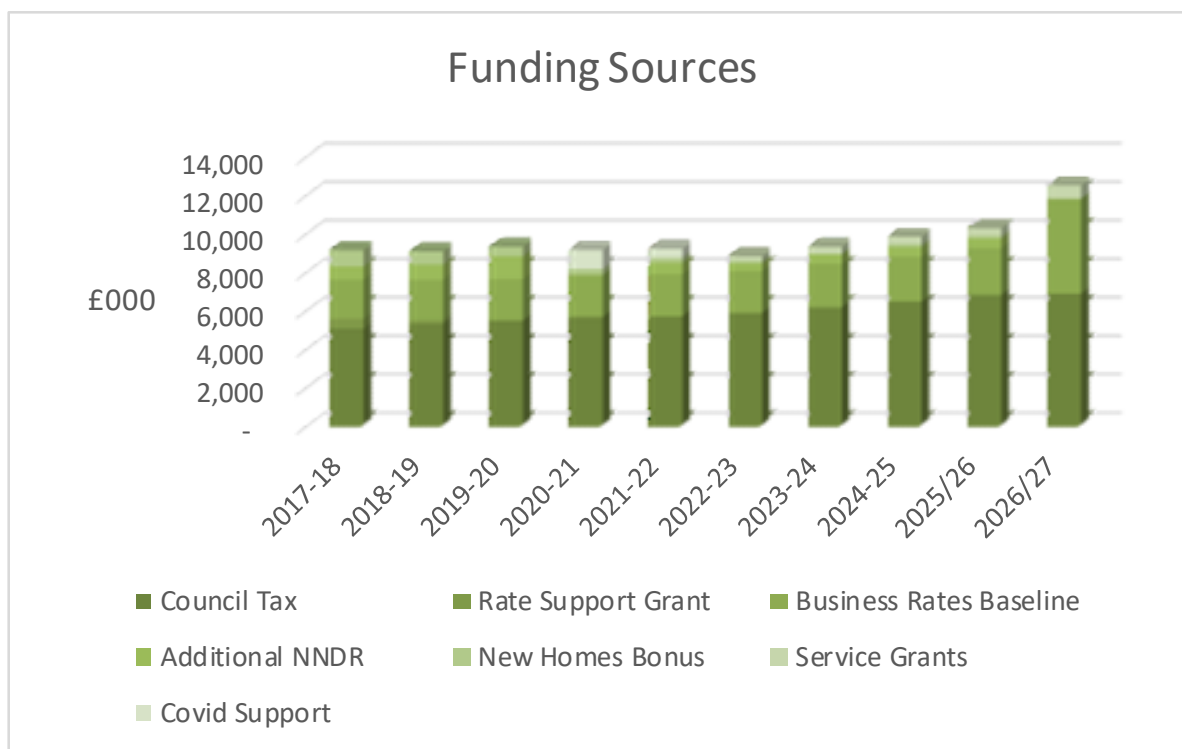
Business Rates are payable based upon a rateable value set by the national Valuation Office. The total rateable value of business premises in Rossendale at the 31st March 2026 was £64,744k, up from £41,574k in March 2025. Due to the cost of living crisis, the Government has continued with the Retail, Hospitality & Leisure rate relief originally introduced to help businesses survive the pandemic. The Council has received section 31 grants from Central Government to cover this loss of income. As noted earlier in this report, almost 54% of businesses in the Borough are eligible for small business rate relief. Full details can be found in the Collection Fund statements.



Rossendale Rateable Values in recent years



Rateable values underwent a national revaluation exercise in 2017 and again in 2023. As can be seen by the above graph, the 2023 revaluation has had a significant impact on rateable values within the Borough, with Industrial and Commercial properties seeing the biggest increases.



Until 2025/26, the Council has seen significant reductions in core funding and an increasing reliance on Council Tax and NNDR income to fund services since 2010/11. The sources of funding available for Council Services can be seen in the table opposite, along with future predictions over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 the Council received various Covid grants to support the Council's Covid related support.

Revenue Outturn

At the time of setting the original budget in February 2025, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) indicated a balanced budget of £11.535m for 2025/26. The Council finances its net budget through Council Tax, General Government Grants and Retained Business Rates income.

With the continued decrease in external funding, local taxation has to contribute towards the MTFS challenge and in the 2025/26 budget, members again made the difficult decision to increase the Council Tax by the maximum allowed, 2.99%, resulting in estimated Council Tax income of £6,845k. The retained business rates baseline funding was £2,436k and the Council received £141k in New Homes Bonus. In addition the Council also received one off grants of:-

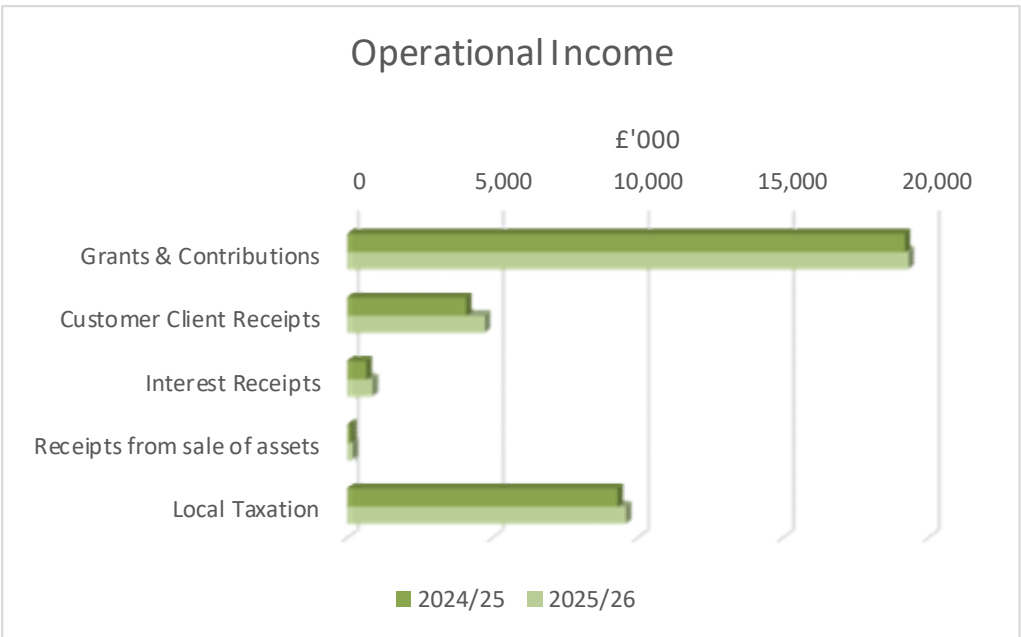
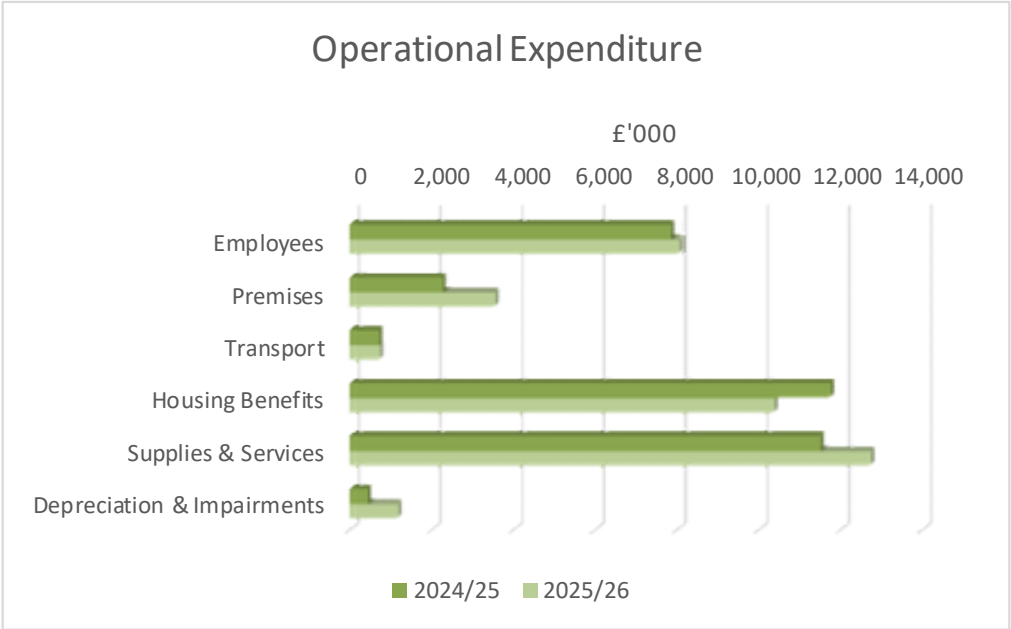
- Extended Producer Responsibility payment of £649k.
- Recovery Grant of £297k.

It was also anticipated that the Council would make a pooling gain/NNDR growth of £500k. Members also approved the use of £574k from the Transitional Reserve to fund the estimated budget gap.

The Council manages and presents in-year financial information in the format of Directorate Budgets. The Directorate outturn position will be reported within the Outturn Report to Cabinet in July 2026. Full details of expenditure, income and budget variances are set out within the report which is available on the Council's website.

The following table and charts show the General Fund figures before the technical accounting adjustments required by the Code in the CIES. These follow the operational basis shown in the financial monitoring reports presented to members at Cabinet meetings on a quarterly basis.

The graphs below show the year-on-year comparison between expenditure and income analysed by nature.



Service Area	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q4 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000
Communities Directorate			
Customer Services and E-Government	1,864.8	1,542.3	322.6
Operational Functions	2,706.8	2,702.2	4.6
Parks and Cemeteries	1,006.6	1,127.5	(121.0)
Public Protection Unit	265.3	251.8	13.6
Environmental Health	242.4	229.6	12.8
Licensing & Enforcement	36.8	19.4	17.4
Communities Team	182.8	186.1	(3.3)
Economic Development Directorate			
Planning Services	454.7	392.5	62.2
Building Control Services	13.5	(31.9)	45.4
Regeneration	258.5	385.7	(127.2)
Property Services	220.7	318.5	(97.8)
Housing	299.5	213.9	85.6
Corporate Management Directorate			
Corporate Management	491.9	454.9	37.0
Legal Services	202.2	187.0	15.1
Local Land Charges	20.5	21.3	(0.8)
Democratic Services	611.3	580.4	30.9
Financial Services	588.9	814.2	(225.3)
People and Policy	945.6	974.0	(28.4)
Non Distributed Costs	235.3	490.8	(255.6)
Capital Financing and Interest	818.7	(36.3)	855.0
Leisure Services	(31.9)	(65.9)	34.0
Empty Homes Scheme	100.6	78.3	22.3
TOTAL Service Cost	11,535.4	10,836.3	699.2
Funded by			
Council Tax	(6,719.0)	(6,719.0)	-
Retained Business Rates	(2,436.0)	(2,436.0)	-
Funding Guarantee	-	-	-
Revenue Support Grant	(93.0)	(111.0)	18.0
Services Grant	-	-	-
New Homes Bonus	(141.0)	(141.0)	-
Collection Fund Surplus - Council Tax	(126.0)	(126.0)	-
Estimated NNDR Pooling/growth Gain	(500.0)	(500.0)	-
Extended Producer Responsibilities	(649.0)	(649.0)	-
Recovery Grant	(297.0)	(297.0)	-
Employers NI Contribution Scheme	-	(75.0)	75.0
LESS Estimated use of Reserves	(574.4)	217.7	(792.2)
Net Budget Shortfall	0.0	0.0	0.0

This table compares the operational outturn against the budget. As can be seen the final outturn is £729.2k favourable variance to the budget. The main variance relates to increased interest gained on cash balances, due to interest rates throughout the year remaining significantly higher than anticipated when the budget was set in February 2025.

The final result being that rather than relying on reserves to balance the budgeted funding gap of £574k, the Council has been able to replenish reserves by £217.7k.

Capital Strategy and the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27

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 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.

The following are capital projects that were approved in the 2025/26 year, giving an additional total of £2,986k:

- £805k relating to the purchase of properties for supported housing with additional funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund;
 - Five properties have been purchased in the year and the remaining balance of the funding will be used to purchase further properties in 2026/27.
- £600k relating to the extension of Haslingden cemetery;
 - Work on the project had not started in the year and the funding for the project has been carried forward to the following year.
- £533k funding from Innovate relating to the Net Zero Terraced Streets project;
 - The funding was used in the year to develop the methodology and tools for deploying the Net Zero Terraced Street (NZTS) scheme at a greater scale, and for the technical feasibility work for future NZTS schemes.
- £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;
 - Work on the Junior play area has been completed in the year.
- £34k relating to the Building Heat Decarbonisation plan, with funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund;
 - This project was completed in the year.
- The original 2025/26 estimate for DFG funding was £1,000k. An additional £580k has been added to the base programme throughout the year, resulting in an actual grant received of £1,580k.

More information on the capital costs and funding sources can be found in Note 18.

At the end of 2025/26 slippage of c£7,460k was considered for carrying forward into 2026/27 and reprofiling. The majority of this was Disabled Facility Grants of £1,516k, and £5,129k of funding for Capital Regeneration Projects.

The Collection Fund

Billing authorities in England, such as Rossendale, are required by statute to maintain a separate fund for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates). The key features relevant to accounting for Council tax and business rates in the Core Financial Statements are:

In its capacity as a billing authority the Council acts as agent; it collects and distributes Council tax income on behalf of the major preceptors and itself; under the scheme of Business Rates Retention introduced in 2013/14. Business rates are also collected on behalf of Central Government and the major preceptors;

While the Council tax and business rate income credited to the Collection Fund is the accrued income for the year, regulations determine when it should be released from the Collection Fund and transferred to the General Fund of the billing authority or paid out of the Collection Fund to major preceptors.

The Council tax and business rate income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is the accrued income for the year. The difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the Collection Fund has been taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and is included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Since the collection of Council tax and business rates income is in substance an agency arrangement, cash collected by the billing authority from Council tax and business rates debtors belongs proportionately to the billing authority and the major preceptors. There is therefore a debtor/creditor position between the billing authority and each major preceptor which is recognised since the net cash paid to each major preceptor in the year will not be its share of the cash collected from taxpayers.

The surplus on the Collection Fund for Council Tax as at 31st March 2026 was £470k and will be shared between the Council (billing authority), the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority in following years. The actual rate of in year collection of Council Tax for 2025/26 was 95.4% (95.31% for 2024/25).

At the 2025/26 year end the Collection Fund position for NNDR was a surplus of £635k which will be carried forward and shared with other preceptors in subsequent years' budgets. Rossendale Borough Council's share of this is £210k, with the balance due to the Government and major preceptors. The actual in-year collection rates for business rates for 2025/26 was 98.78% (98.38% for 2024/25).

The Council signed up to the Lancashire Business Rates Pool which came into effect on the 1st April 2016. In a Business Rate Pool, tariffs, top-ups, levies and safety nets can be combined. This can result in a significantly lower levy rate or even a zero-levy rate meaning that more or all of the business rate growth can be retained within the pool area instead of being payable to the Government.

In 2025/26 the Council was a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool on a 50% business rates retention basis. This will be the last year of Pooling for Rossendale who opted out, following the fair funding review. In 2025/26 the Council made a pooling gain of £694k.

Further details in relation to the Collection Fund can be found in the Supplementary Statements.

Treasury Management

Treasury Management is conducted in-house with advice provided by an external organisation, MUFG Corporate Markets. Interest rates remained high during the year and by the end of the year the Council was earning over 3.7% on balances, this was slightly lower than the 4.0% earned in 2024/25. During 2025/26 the level of balances held averaged £22m, and despite the interest rate decreases, the £800k interest income earned exceeded budget.

Treasury management during the year was conducted within the borrowing limits and investment criteria as per the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices approved at Full Council in February 2025.

The Council is able to borrow money from PWLB (an agency of HM Treasury), banks and building societies, or from other public bodies. The Council's borrowing need as at 31st March 2026 was met by a combination of long-term actual debt of £3.006m and internal cash balances.

The use of internal cash balances in lieu of borrowing has continued to be the most cost-effective means of funding capital expenditure. These amounts are analysed in the notes to the Balance Sheet. The interest payable in relation to the Council's borrowing totalled £100k in 2025/26. As the value of useable reserves drops over the life of the Council's MTFS, greater consideration will need to be given to the potential requirement for additional PWLB borrowing to fund future capital investments.

The **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)**, a key Prudential Indicator, determines the amount that the Council needs to borrow for a capital purpose and is the total of the Council's capital assets less all of the Council's capital reserves. The CFR for the year ending 31st March 2026 was £19.5m.

The **Authorised Limit for External Debt** is a key Prudential Indicator that controls the overall level of borrowing and is a statutory limit set by the Council that must not be breached. The Council's Authorised Limit for external debt for 2025/26 was £26.4m. The Council's actual total long-term debt of £3.006m is well below the Authorised Limit.

Pension Fund Liabilities

Rossendale BC participates, as an employing authority, in the Lancashire County Pension Fund administered by Lancashire County Council. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme i.e. retirement benefits are determined independent of the scheme investments. A pensions reserve and pensions liability are incorporated within the Council's accounts reflecting the amount by which the Rossendale element of the Lancashire Fund is underfunded / overfunded compared with the assessed payment liability to pensioners.

There are also entries in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement to show the pensions benefits earned during the year. These pension cost entries do not however affect the amount calculated as being due from taxpayers through Council Tax.

The latest triennial valuation of the Fund was carried out as at 31st March 2025, taking effect from 1st April 2025. The valuation confirmed that the Council remained in an overall pension surplus position. The Council's overall uncapped pension surplus was £22.6m as at 31st March 2026, compared with a surplus of £23.8m as at 31st March 2025. Further information on the assumptions used by the actuaries is provided in Note 32.



Principal Risk & Uncertainties

The Council has a risk management strategy in place to identify and evaluate risks. All risks are identified, potential impacts are highlighted and controls and mitigations are in place. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) identified a number of key corporate risks which the Council monitors and reports to Cabinet Members and Audit & Accounts Committee during the year, a selection of the risks have been highlighted below:

Corporate Risks
Sustainability of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy
Major disaster affecting the delivery of Council services
Incident resulting in death or serious injury or HSE investigation
Changes to Government policy on the delivery of the Council's services
Sustainable Workforce
Insufficient data and cyber security
Poor communications and public relations
Non-Delivery of Corporate Programmes
Financial sustainability of the Council-owned leisure assets
Waste Transfer Station

Key Future Financial Risks – Along with the corporate risks, there are a number of key financial risks identified within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which potentially could have a significant impact on the financial forecast, these are:

Key Financial Risks
Impact on the economy – Cost of living crisis – Inflation and high interest rates
Resources – Including future Government funding, any change to the Business Rate retention scheme and level of reserves
Bridging the funding gap
Council Tax – Housing Levels not in line with forecast projections
Rossendale Leisure Trust
Increase in demand for Temporary Accommodation
The major regeneration schemes
Local Government reorganisation

The Economic Climate and Financial Outlook for the Future

The latest MTFS reported to Budget Council in March 2026 sets out the Council's spending plans and available capital and revenue resources for the period 2026/27 to 2027/28. The MTFS set out the funds required to deliver the Council's essential services and the objectives in our priority areas. It also highlighted the key areas/issues the Council faced in the current year and future years. For 2026/27 onwards a major concern is the ongoing cost of living crisis and future levels of Government funding in response to Local Government Reorganisation.

In light of the current risks and uncertainties, the Council will aim to continue to maintain a healthy and robust level of reserves. The Council's strategic budget plan has been to use reserves to fund the gap between income and expenditure over the life of the forecast, whilst looking to identify savings and income generating opportunities. The aim is for the Council to bridge the gap, i.e. the shortfall between how much the Council spends and how much the Council receives in funding, and build up reserves to ensure long-term financial sustainability for the Council, as was achieved in 2025/26.

Explanation of the Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026 has been prepared and published in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2025/26 (the Code), issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2025/26 (SeRCOP).

The layout and purpose of each statement is as follows:-

Introductory Statements

Narrative Report - provides information about Rossendale, including key issues affecting the Council and its accounts. It also provides a summary of the financial position as at 31st March 2026. It should be fair, balanced and understandable for the users of the financial statements, containing a commentary on the major influences affecting the authority's income and expenditure and cash flow, as well as information on the financial needs and resources of the authority.

Annual Governance Statement – explains the way the Council ensures responsible stewardship of its assets.

Statement of Responsibilities - explains the responsibilities of the Council and its Chief Financial Officer in relation to the Council's financial affairs and the Statement of Accounts.

Core Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) - a summary of the resources generated and consumed by the authority in the year, in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Cost of Services section is now presented in the same format as the authority's operational reports. Note 1 presents a reconciliation between the General Fund Summary in the Narrative Report and the CIES figures produced here under statutory accounting practices.

Movement in Reserves Statement – this statement shows the movement in year on the reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'useable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. It reverses the statutory accounting adjustments in the CIES to get back to the General Fund Balance Sheet Reserve.

Balance Sheet - this shows the value of the assets and liabilities. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the value of reserves held, split between Useable and Unusable reserves.

Cash Flow Statement - summarises changes in cash and cash equivalents during the year, and how the Council generates and uses cash through operating, investing and financing activities.

Notes to the core financial statements

All the notes to the core statements above are collected in one place. Notes on the policies used in the preparation of the figures in these accounts, including judgements and assumptions, are at the end of the notes area.

Other Statements

The Collection Fund – this agency statement reflects the Council's statutory obligation to maintain a separate Collection Fund for its transactions as a billing authority in relation to Council tax and non-domestic rates.

Glossary - an explanation of some of the key technical terms used in these accounts.

Annual Governance Statement

Introduction and Scope of responsibility

Rossendale Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
- public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- risks are properly managed as part of the governance arrangements.

To ensure effective governance the Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)/SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' (2016).

Purpose of the Governance Statement

This Governance Statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code. It also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

In this document the Council:

- acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance;
- summarises the key elements of the governance framework and the roles of those responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
- describes how the Council has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period;
- provides details of how the Council has responded to any issue(s) identified in last year's governance statement; and
- reports on any key governance matters identified from this review and provides a commitment to addressing them.

The Annual Governance Statement reports on the governance framework that has been in place for the year ended 31st March 2026 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

The Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the culture, values, systems and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of Internal Control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Principles of Good Governance

The Council aims to achieve good standards of governance by adhering to the seven core principles in the diagram below, which form the basis of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance:



The following pages provide a summary of actions and behaviours taken by the Council in relation to each of these seven core principles (A – G) and associated sub principles.

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law		
Supporting Principles:		
Behaving with integrity	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Respecting the Rule of Law
How we do this:		
The Audit and Accounts Committee is responsible for promoting high standards of member conduct. All elected Members follow a code of conduct, supported by training and development. The Monitoring Officer provides advice and reports complaints and their outcomes to the Audit and Accounts Committee. Officer behaviour is governed by the Employee's Code of Conduct that sets out the standards of conduct expected of employees at work. The Code is supported and reinforced by organisational values of: • Pride • Passion • People The Codes are regularly reviewed to ensure they are operating effectively. Expected behaviours are embedded into performance appraisals.	Arrangements are in place to ensure that decisions are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest. These include: • A register of disclosable conflicts of interest • Provision on Cabinet/ Council/ Committee agendas for the declaration of interests • A register of gifts and hospitality. A corporate complaints procedure exists to receive and respond to any complaints received. A Whistleblowing Policy enables employees and others to raise concerns about any aspect of the Council's work. The Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all citizens, in line with the Public Sector Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.	The constitution sets out: • the responsibilities of the Council, the Cabinet, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Committees • The roles, duties and delegated powers of key officers. The Council has a duty to appoint staff to three specific roles: • The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) who has overall accountability for the governance arrangements operating within the Council. • The S151 who is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and internal controls. • The Monitoring Officer who has a role in ensuring decisions are taken lawfully and that the Council complies with the Constitution.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principles:

Openness

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

Engaging with stakeholders effectively including residents and service users

How we do this:

To ensure open and transparent decision making the following are published on the Council's website:

- Council/ Cabinet/ Committee agendas and reports
- the Cabinet Forward Plan detailing upcoming key decisions
- Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions

To ensure maximum transparency, reports containing confidential information are split into confidential and non-confidential sections whenever possible.

When reports have to be considered in private an explanation is provided on the agenda.

Progress against the Financial Strategy is monitored and reported to Cabinet on a half yearly basis.

We comply with the code of recommended practice for local authorities on data transparency which acts as a starting point for the information we make available.

The publication scheme lists the information we make available as part of our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We are committed to working collaboratively with a range of partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Council is part of a number of external partnerships which provide support to its strategic agenda. These include our Community Partnerships, Calico Homes, Together Housing, Rossendale Valley Energy, Valley Heritage, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police, and Fire and Rescue, Rossendale Leisure Trust and Rossendale Civic Pride.

The Council's planning and decision-making processes are designed to include consultation with stakeholders.

Elected Members are democratically accountable to their local area and provide a clear leadership role in building sustainable communities.

The medium- term vision for the Council is set out in the Valley Plan. The outcomes have been developed through extensive consultation with staff, members, residents and stakeholders.

Budget and strategic plan consultations undertaken are used to help develop the Valley Plan, Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Council carries out an annual resident survey which is used to establish what local people think of services, what should be prioritised and what can be improved.

The Council manages a number of social media streams including Facebook, Tik Tok and LinkedIn and maintains websites that help underpin the Council's strategic ambitions.

The Council's Customer Hub is the first contact point for customers/ citizens. The Hub is a significant component in the distribution of information to residents and visitors, and for capturing information from customers to inform service development.

Feedback and requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are used to identify datasets for publication.		The Council has a customer feedback scheme for the public to make complaints, comments and compliments. The information gathered is used to improve services. The Formal Complaints Procedure provides guidance to staff on the Council's complaints process. Monitoring reports are presented quarterly and annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
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C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Supporting Principles:

Defining outcomes

Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

How we do this:

The Council's Medium-Term vision and priorities are set out in the Valley Plan 2025-2029. The document provides the basis for the Council's overall strategy, planning and decisions.

The key priority outcomes that the Plan aims to achieve are:

- **Thriving Local Economy** - We will regenerate our towns and strengthen our local economy by empowering individuals, supporting businesses, and attracting investment into our area.
- **High Quality Environment** - We will develop the Borough's unique character and Pennine landscapes by delivering the Green Agenda and improving our local environment and green spaces.
- **Healthy and Proud Communities** - We will work with partners to provide residents with access to the housing and support services they need, supporting healthier lifestyles and communities.
- **Effective and Efficient Council** - We will be an ambitious, effective, and efficient Council, delivering high-quality services and providing good value for money for residents.

The Local Plan encourages sustainable development within the Rossendale area, and includes policies on a number of key themes, including housing, employment growth and employment, retail, environment, leisure, tourism and transport.

The procurement strategy seeks to embed social value principles (social, economic and environmental) in procurement and contract management.

Consideration is given to the environmental impact, financial implications and social impact (equality, diversity, human rights, crime and safety) of all Cabinet decisions.

Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team have identified the top priority issues that needed to be addressed, to ensure these form the basis of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Service Plans. Officers responsible for the Business Plan and Service Plan actions update the quarterly performance report to ensure performance on each individual action is registered in a central location. Performance reporting takes place on a quarterly basis alongside quarterly financial monitoring facilitating informed consideration of performance and budgetary pressures. The Council works with partner organisations where there are shared objectives and clear economic benefits from joint working. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has an important role in helping to define and monitor outcomes.	
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D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Supporting Principles:

Determining and planning interventions

Optimising the achievements of the intended outcomes

How we do this:

The Valley Plan sets out the Council's aspirations, focus and priorities. This in turn helps identify and determine any interventions that are necessary.

The Council's decision-making process ensures decision makers receive a rigorous, objective and robust analysis of options together with the risks associated with any proposed decision.

Consultation is undertaken as part of the decision-making process. Reports are required to set out the consultation that has taken place.

The Valley Plan is supported by Performance Indicators that are monitored by the Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is driven by the Valley Plan. The MTFS covers investments, the use of reserves, the approach to Council Tax, and the use of capital. It also considers Medium-Term cost pressures and how these could be financed.

The Council's Capital Strategy provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services together with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It provides a framework for managing the Council's capital programme and forms part of the Council's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning.

Quarterly reports are presented to Cabinet and financial projections are updated in these reports.

The Council engages with internal and external stakeholders.

The achievement of 'social value' forms part of the procurement strategy.

E. Developing capacity, including the capability of leadership and individuals within it

How we do this:

The Constitution sets out how the Council legally operates, how formal decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The document identifies the roles and responsibilities of Member and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for decision making and communication. The Constitution is kept under continual review and changes are recommended to Full Council as appropriate.

The Council has a training plan for Members which is developed and monitored by the Governance Working Group. The areas covered include:

- Standards, Ethics & Equalities
- Development Control
- Licensing Act 2003
- Taxi Licensing
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Audit and Accounts
- Media
- Budget Consultation
- Treasury Management

The Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service have annual performance targets. These are based on delivery of the Valley Plan and the business risks anticipated for the year.

Performance Reviews are carried out for employees and training needs are identified as part of this process.

A learning programme is available which greatly enhances the learning and development opportunities for a large cross-section of employees. The Council also provides learning opportunities across a wide range of topics as part of its Lunchtime Learn activities.

The Council has invested in its Rising Stars programme which is aimed at aspiring management colleagues.

Employees are kept up-to-date with issues affecting the Council through regular Chief Executive Huddle meetings and emails from the Chief Executive. Employees also have a monthly forum, Your Voice, which provides a space to discuss issues affecting staff across the organisation and provide feedback to management.

The Council has a Health and Wellbeing Programme that aims:

- to ensure all employees are supported
- to provide a positive environment that is compatible with promoting staff engagement, being an employer of choice, improving attendance, high individual performance, and as a result organisational performance.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Supporting Principles

Managing risks

How we do this:

The Council has a Risk Management Policy that defines the roles and responsibilities for managing risk.

A Corporate Risk Register is produced by assessing the risk factors that could potentially impact on the Council's ability to deliver its Valley Plan. Risks are judged on their likelihood of occurrence and their potential impact. These are monitored by Members and Senior Officers and reported quarterly to Audit and Accounts Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Annual and quarterly Health and Safety performance reports are presented to Corporate Management Team and quarterly to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

An 'Acceptable Use Policy' for IT seeks to ensure that all computer systems and networks owned or managed by the Council are updated in an effective, safe, ethical and lawful manner.

Financial Procedure Rules form part of the Constitution and set out the financial management framework for ensuring the best use of resources. It outlines the financial roles and responsibilities for staff and Members and provides a framework for financial decision-making. The Rules ensure statutory powers and duties are complied with, and reflect best professional practice.

The Council regularly reviews and revises its Contract Procedure Rules.

The S151 Officer provides effective financial management in accordance with the financial procedures and rules set out in the Constitution.

There is clarity over the role of the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Maintenance of an effective system of both internal and more detailed financial control is the agreed responsibility of Heads of Service and Service Managers, who are responsible for managing their services within available resources, in accordance with agreed policies and procedures, and to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities in the Valley Plan and maintain statutory functions. Elements include:

- Formal budgetary monitoring reports reviewed with budget holders and Heads of Service at quarterly intervals. These look at actual performance and provide forecasts going forward.
- Monitoring reports are produced quarterly, reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and reported to Cabinet.

The Audit and Accounts Committee provides independent assurance over governance, risk and internal control arrangements with a focus on financial management, financial reporting audit and assurance. The Committee is independent of the Executive and accountable to Full Council.

The Council is an active member of the National Anti-Fraud Network.

The Audit and Accounts Committee receives and considers an Annual Fraud Report. This report updates the Committee on the work undertaken in the financial year in relation to fraud and compliance activities, including the success that has been achieved in identifying instances of fraud and the actions taken.

Supporting Principles
Managing performance
How we do this:
The Valley Plan outlines priorities. The Valley Plan is supported by Performance Indicators that are monitored by the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Service Plans set out key priorities, objectives and risks for individual services. Performance is monitored by the Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Reports provide clear objective analysis and advice including risk and assess financial, social and environmental implications as necessary. Personal Development Reviews are used to assess performance and set goals and objectives at the individual level.
Supporting Principles
Robust internal control
How we do this:
The Internal Audit Service provides an objective evaluation of internal controls to effectively manage risk and monitors any weaknesses identified to ensure these are addressed. The Audit and Accounts Committee is independent from the Executive and provides further assurance on the governance of risk management and internal control arrangements. Fraud is taken very seriously and the Council has an anti-fraud and corruption policy and a whistleblowing policy.
Supporting Principles
Managing data
How we do this:
The Council is committed to complying with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. It is recognised that the correct and lawful treatment of personal data maintains public confidence and trust. Compliance with the Council's Data Protection Policy is mandatory. The policy facilitates a unified GDPR compliant framework for all Members and officers when managing and processing customer data. In line with GDPR requirement the Council has appointed a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to oversee compliance with GDPR and provide advice in relation to the law. The Council's DPO, works closely with the Chief Executive, who is the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO).

We are registered as a Controller under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which governs how we manage and process the information we collect and retain. We have a nominated Data Protection Officer and procedures in place that explain how we use and share information, as well as arrangements for members of the public to access information.

Supporting Principles

Strong public financial management

How we do this:

Budget holders and Heads of Service review budgets on a quarterly basis to monitor actual performance and review/update forecasts.

Formal budgetary monitoring reports are reviewed with budget holders and Heads of Service at quarterly intervals.

Reports considering financial performance against the Budget are produced quarterly. The reports are reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and reported to Cabinet.

The Council has implemented the Financial Management Code developed by CIPFA.

External Audit reviews the Council's financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement) providing an opinion on the accounts and the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

The Audit and Accounts Committee is independent of the Executive and accountable to the Full Council. It considers the external audit opinion on value for money as part of its responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the control environment and value for money.

G Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Supporting Principles:

Implementing good practices in transparency

Implementing good practices in reporting

Audit and deliver effective accountability

How we do this:

The Agendas and Minutes of Cabinet and Committee meetings are published on the Council's website.

Upcoming Key Decisions are Published on the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

The Council has a [Freedom of Information publication scheme](#)

The published Annual Statement of Accounts is a statutory summary of the Council's financial affairs for the financial year. It provides clear information on the income and expenditure of the Council and sets out the Council's stewardship of public money.

The Annual Governance Statement sets out governance arrangements and considers their effectiveness against the seven key principles.

Accountability and decision making arrangements are clearly defined within the Council's constitution.

The Audit and Accounts Committee provides independent assurance to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance arrangements and internal control.

Risk based internal audit, compliant with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards,

	The Audit and Accounts Committee reviews and approves the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.	provides ongoing assurance that key risks material to achieving the Council's objectives are being managed. External Auditors carry out reviews of our internal control arrangements throughout the year. Weaknesses relating to prior financial years have been reported in their updates to Audit and Accounts Committee during 2025/26 and these have been addressed within the current financial year.
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Dealing with Last Year's Key Improvement Areas

In its drive of continuous improvement for its governance arrangements the Council has made the following progress on areas highlighted for improvement in last year's Annual Governance Statement. The narrative below sets out the actions which have been taken to address these issues in the current year:

Area of Concern	Progress Update
Financial Resilience – the Council continued to face significant financial challenges. The February 2025 MTFS included a significant savings requirement in future years, to ensure the minimum level of reserves is maintained. These savings needed to be regularly reviewed at the established officer group meetings.	The progress of the savings plan is monitored as part of the Councils embedded financial monitoring process and reported to Cabinet quarterly. The Council reassessed its MTFS and resources following the Local Government funding reform which was received in February 2026. As a result of that a budget gap remains, albeit at reduced levels.
Monitoring of the 2025/26 budget would be undertaken and reported to CMT on a regular basis to determine the corrective action required to balance the budget and protect the level of general reserves.	Throughout 2025/26 Officers worked with Cabinet to review performance and develop further efficiency savings and income growth options to include within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This is an ongoing process and further work is being undertaken at regular officer group meetings to ensure savings are being achieved. Higher than anticipated levels of cash at bank have afforded an underspend in the 2025/26 year due to significantly higher interest income than budgeted.
Procurement Compliance – The Council would update its Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules in the light of the Procurement Act 2023 and training would be rolled out to relevant staff during 2025/26.	A full review of the Contract Procedure Rules has been carried out and officer training provided. Work will continue to embed the correct governance surrounding procurement with the help of the dedicated procurement officer.
Accounts Audit – we were awaiting further detail of how the audit profession would build back assurance for the years where the audits were impacted by the back stop provision and would	The backlog of unaudited accounts is a national issue and the Government consulted on a backstop solution which meant all accounts prior to 2024/25 needed to have been adopted by Councils with an

collaborate with our auditors as part of the resolution to the current audit crisis.	auditor's value for money statement in each set of accounts by the 27 th February 2026. This was successfully completed. The next audit backstop date is 31 st January 2027 for the 2025/26 audits.
Risk Management – Officer training would be provided in the 2025/26 financial year.	The Corporate risks are reviewed and updated quarterly. During 2026/27 both member and officer training will be refreshed.
Policy refresh – The Council would ensure all policies were reviewed and updated where necessary.	The policy framework has been updated and the policies that require refreshing have been identified. The remaining policies will be refreshed during 2026/27.
Leisure Trust Governance, following a review of the Leisure provision in Rossendale planned for the latter part of 2025, we would review the relationship with Rossendale Leisure Trust and ensure there is a comprehensive approved service level agreement in place to formally document the working relationship.	A review of the Leisure provision in Rossendale has been completed and work is underway to adopt the recommendations of that report.

Key Areas for Further Improvement

The Council continues to refine and improve its governance arrangements to minimise risk and to ensure resources as far as is practicably possible are deployed against the Council's strategic priority areas in order to deliver our vision which is:

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.

Building on the improvements in 2025/26 the Council has reviewed the governance arrangements and identified the following areas where it wishes to see improvements in 2026/27:

- Financial Resilience – the Council continues to face significant financial challenges. The February 2026 MTFS included a significant savings requirement in future years, to ensure the minimum level of reserves is maintained. These savings will need to continue to be regularly reviewed at the established officer group meetings.
- Monitoring of the 2026/27 budget will be undertaken and reported to CMT on a regular basis to determine the corrective action required to balance the budget and protect the level of general reserves.
- Procurement Compliance – The Council has updated its Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules in the light of the Procurement Act 2023 and training has been rolled out to relevant staff during 2025/26. In 2026/27 work needs to be completed to compound the message regarding the importance of proper procurement and establish core working processes to underpin this.
- Accounts Audit – we are awaiting further detail of how the audit profession will build back assurance for the years where the audits were impacted by the back stop provision and will collaborate with our auditors as part of the resolution to the current audit crisis. The auditors have reported in 2025/26 that it is unlikely that the work to build back assurance will be completed by Local Government Reorganisation vesting date.
- Risk Management – Officer and member refresher training will be provided in the 2026/27 financial year.
- Policy refresh – The Council will ensure all policies are reviewed and updated where necessary.
- Work will be undertaken during the year to implement the recommendations of the Leisure review in 2025/26 and subsequent years.

Local Government Reorganisation

During 2025/26 the Council continued to operate within the national programme of Local Government Reorganisation, under which the existing Councils in Lancashire are expected to be replaced by new unitary authorities from the planned vesting date. The Council recognises that reorganisation presents a material and ongoing governance consideration: it must maintain robust, business-as-usual governance and the delivery of statutory functions throughout the transition, while ensuring that decisions taken in the run-up to vesting day are properly considered, transparent, and do not unreasonably constrain the new Authority. The Council participates in the programme's established governance arrangements, including the Sponsor Board and Programme Board, and the statutory roles of Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer continue to provide assurance over lawful and well-controlled decision-making. The Council has begun to put in place safeguards around decisions that commit resources or governance arrangement obligations beyond vesting, and will keep its transition governance, risk management and internal control arrangements under active review as the programme progresses.

Key area for further improvement for 2026/27:

- The Council will maintain effective governance, risk management and internal control throughout the transition to the new unitary authority, ensuring continuity of statutory functions, sound stewardship of resources, and appropriate scrutiny of decisions that may bind the successor authority.

Governance Review 2025/26

We have a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of our Governance Framework, including the system of internal control. The outcomes of the review are considered by The Audit and Accounts Committee (which is charged with final approval of this statement).

The review is informed by:

- The views of Internal Audit, reported to The Audit and Accounts Committee through regular progress reports, and the Annual Internal Audit Opinion.
- The views of our External Auditors, regularly reported to The Audit and Accounts Committee through regular progress reports, the Auditors Annual Report, the Audit Findings Reports and the Audit Plan.
- The views of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.
- The Risk Management Process, particularly the Corporate Risk Register.
- Performance information reported to Cabinet, the Audit and Accounts Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Conclusion of the Review

We consider the Governance Framework and Internal Control environment operating during 2025/26 to provide reasonable and objective assurance that any significant risks impacting on the achievement of our principal objectives will be identified and actions taken to avoid or mitigate their impact.

The system of Governance (including the system of Internal Control) can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period, that value for money is being secured and that significant risks impacting on the achievement of our objectives have been mitigated.

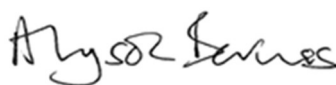
Signed: On behalf of Rossendale Borough Council



Rob Huntington

Chief Executive

Date: 30th June 2026



Councillor Alyson Barnes

Leader of the Council

Date: 30th June 2026

Statement of Responsibilities

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs;
- Ensure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Head of Finance (Acting Section 151 Officer);
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient, and effective use of resources;
- Safeguard its assets against fraud and other losses; and
- Approve the Statement of Accounts via the Audit and Accounts Committee.

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The Head of Finance (Acting Section 151 Officer) is legally responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts. This must be done in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA / LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ("the Code").

In preparing these Statement of Accounts, the Acting Section 151 Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with the Local Authority Code of Practice;
- Kept proper, up-to-date accounting records; and
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certification of the Accounts

I certify that the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of Authority at the reporting date, and of its income and expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year.

Signed:



Kimberly Haworth

Head of Finance (Acting Section 151 Officer)

Date: 30th June 2026

Approval of Accounts

I certify that the Statement of Accounts were formally approved by the Audit and Accounts Committee on 30th June 2026.

Signed:



Councillor J Driver

Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee

Date 30th June 2026

Core Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) shows the cost of providing services in the year in accordance International Financial Reporting Standards, rather than the amount to be funded from Council Tax and other Government grants. The amount funded from Council Tax and Government grants differ from this by a series of adjustments made in accordance with regulations, these adjustments are reversed in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	2024/25			2025/26			Note
	Gross Expend £000s	Income £000s	Net Expend £000s	Gross Expend £000s	Income £000s	Net Expend £000s	
Communities Directorate	20,580	(14,290)	6,290	19,648	(12,860)	6,788	
Economic Development Directorate	8,921	(5,730)	3,191	10,606	(7,854)	2,752	
Corporate Management	3,131	(394)	2,737	3,198	(556)	2,642	
Cost of Services	32,632	(20,414)	12,218	33,452	(21,270)	12,182	
Other Operating Expenditure							
Whitworth Town Council Precept			70			80	
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets			(40)			(22)	
Other Income			(4,817)			(3,193)	
Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure			(637)			(335)	3
Taxation and Non-Specific Grants			(11,954)			(12,582)	4
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services			(5,160)			(3,870)	
(Surplus)/deficit on revaluation of non-current assets			(4,351)			(1,271)	
Remeasurement of the net defined pension liability			(161)			119	
Other Comprehensive (Income)/Expenditure			(4,512)			(1,152)	
Total Comprehensive (Income)/Expenditure			(9,672)			(5,022)	

Movement in Reserves Statement

This Statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves.

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to Council Tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance in the year following those adjustments.

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Total Useable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves	Note
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
Balance at 31 March 2024	1,000	9,326	2,506	2,645	15,477	24,928	40,405	
Movement in Reserves in 2024/25								
Total Comprehensive Income/(Expenditure)	5,160	-	-	-	5,160	4,512	9,672	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	(2,743)	-	(362)	(561)	(3,668)	3,668	-	13
Net increase/(decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	2,417	-	(362)	(561)	1,492	8,180	9,672	
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	(2,417)	2,417	-	-	-	-	-	
Increase/(decrease) in Year	-	2,417	(362)	(561)	1,492	8,180	9,672	
Balance at 31 March 2025	1,000	11,743	2,144	2,084	16,969	33,108	50,077	
Movement in Reserves in 2025/26								
Total Comprehensive Income/(Expenditure)	3,870	-	-	-	3,870	1,152	5,022	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	(1,074)	-	(206)	(567)	(1,847)	1,847	-	13
Net increase/(decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	2,796	-	(206)	(567)	2,023	2,999	5,022	
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	(2,796)	2,757	-	-	(39)	39	-	
Increase/(decrease) in Year	-	2,757	(206)	(567)	1,987	3,035	5,022	
Balance at 31 March 2026	1,000	14,500	1,938	1,517	18,955	36,143	55,098	
	Note	30a	30b	30c				



Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value of the Council's recognised assets and liabilities at the Balance Sheet date. The difference between these is the Council's net assets, which are represented by its reserves. These reserves are split into two categories: usable reserves, which can be used to support service delivery, subject to statutory restrictions and the need to maintain adequate reserve levels; and unusable reserves, which cannot be used to fund services. Unusable reserves mainly reflect unrealised gains and losses, such as changes in asset values, and accounting adjustments required to reconcile accounting standards with statutory funding arrangements.

BALANCE SHEET	31st March 2025 £000s	31st March 2026 £000s	Note
Property, Plant & Equipment	44,026	48,514	14
Heritage Assets	2,399	2,399	15
Investment Property	525	525	16
Intangible Assets	161	101	17
Long-term Investments	2	-	
Long-term Debtors	229	224	20
Long-term Assets	47,342	51,763	
Inventories	97	123	
Short Term Debtors	3,664	5,009	23
Cash and cash equivalents	12,087	20,344	24
Assets held for sale within one year	1,291	57	25
Current Assets	17,139	25,533	
Short-term Borrowing	(284)	(284)	27
Short-term Creditors	(4,650)	(5,040)	26
Grants Received in Advance (Revenue)	(170)	(383)	29
Current Liabilities	(5,104)	(5,707)	
Long Term Borrowing	(3,006)	(2,722)	27
Provisions	(1,160)	(890)	28
Grants Received in Advance (Capital)	(4,090)	(11,988)	29
Pensions Liability	(1,044)	(891)	32
Long- term Liabilities	(9,300)	(16,491)	
Net Assets	50,077	55,098	
Represented by:			
General Fund	1,000	1,000	
Earmarked Reserves	11,743	14,500	30a
Capital Receipts Reserve	2,143	1,938	30b
Capital Grants Unapplied	2,083	1,517	30c
Usable Reserves	16,969	18,955	
Revaluation Reserve	17,148	18,065	31a
Pension Reserve	(1,044)	(891)	32a
Capital Adjustment Account	15,735	17,543	31b
Deferred Capital Receipts	1,265	1,265	31c
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	4	161	31d
Unusable Reserves	33,108	36,143	
Total Reserves	50,077	55,098	

Kimberly Haworth



S151 Officer

30th June 2025

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting periods. The Statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.

The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or by the recipients of services provided by the authority.

Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the authority's future service delivery. The cash outflows here relate to capital spend on assets held by the Council, such as buildings, vehicles and equipment, which will be used to provide services in the future. Cash inflows relate to the sale of assets no longer required by the Council to provide its services, or capital grants and contributions received by the Council.

Cash flows arising from financing activities show the net movements in investments and borrowing during the period in accordance with the Council's treasury management strategy. These can be useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (ie borrowing) to the Council.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000
Operating Activities		
Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	5,160	3,870
Adjustment for noncash movements	6,434	9,043
Adjustment for items that are investing and financing activities	1,823	1,300
Net cash flows from Operating Activities	13,417	14,213
Investing Activities		
Additions to property, plant and equipment & intangible assets	(6,936)	(4,649)
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment	82	147
Increase/(decrease) in long-term debtors	(9)	(5)
Other income	4,817	3,193
Cash inflows - Short-term investments	320,800	247,300
Cash outflows - Short-term investments	(327,300)	(251,400)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(8,546)	(5,414)
Financing		
Cash Inflows/(Outflows) - agency operations		
National non-domestic rates	125	(86)
Council Tax	(334)	(171)
Cash Outflows - Repayments of amounts borrowed	(284)	(284)
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(493)	(541)
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,378	8,257
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the year	7,709	12,087
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the year	12,087	20,344

Notes to the core financial statements

Note 1 Accounting Policies

1. Accounting Concepts & Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarise the Council's transactions for the 2025/26 financial year and its position at the end of the year of 31st March 2026. The Council is required to prepare the annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require the Accounts to be prepared in accordance with the proper accounting practices. These practices are primarily comprised of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in these Statement of Accounts is primarily historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the assumption that the Council will continue in existence for at least the next 12 months.

2. Revenue Recognition

Revenue is defined as income arising as a result of the Council's normal operating activities. Where income arises from contracts with service recipients it is recognised when or as the Council has satisfied a performance obligation by transferring goods or a service to the service recipient. Revenue is measured as the amount of the transaction price which is allocated to that performance obligation. Where the Council is acting as an agent of another organisation the amounts collected for that organisation are excluded from revenue.

3. Accruals of Income & Expenditure

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual's basis for all transactions and balances. Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

Where income and expenditure have been recognised, but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

4. Employee Benefits

The code has interpreted IAS 19 Employee Benefits and confirmed that local authorities should account for:

- benefits payable during employment,
- termination benefits
- post-employment benefits
- pension fund accounts

Benefits Payable During Employment Short-term - employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, flexi and time off in lieu (TOIL) as well as bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. mobile phones) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

Employee Accumulated Absence Accrual - An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the current accounting year. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday entitlement occurs.

Termination benefits - are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant services lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post-Employment Benefits - Employees of the Council are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Lancashire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees work for the Council. Retirement benefits are determined independently of scheme investments and the Council must contribute to any deficit where assets are insufficient to meet retirement benefits.

Pension Fund - The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- the liabilities of the scheme attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc. and projections of earnings for current employees. Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a real discount rate of 6.1% (5.8% 2024/25) determined by reference to market yields at the balance sheet date based on high quality corporate bonds
- the assets of the pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.

The change in the net pension liability is analysed into the following components:

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability, i.e. net interest expense for the Council. This is the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- re-measurements comprising:
 - the return on plan assets (excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability) charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure; and,
 - actuarial gains and losses. Due to changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions. This is charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- contributions paid to the pension fund. This is cash paid to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities.

Statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. This means that there are transfers in the Movement in Reserves Statement to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and any amounts payable, but unpaid at the year end.

The Council has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to a member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

5. Interest

Interest paid on external borrowings is accrued in the accounts of the period to which it relates and interest earned on the external investment of surplus funds is credited to the General Fund using the effective interest method as set out in the Code.

6. Value Added Tax

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). VAT receivable is excluded from income.

7. Principal and Agent transactions

Where an authority is acting as a principal, transactions shall be included in the authority's financial statements. However, where an authority acts as agent transactions shall not be reflected in an authority's financial statements, with the exception in respect of cash collected or expenditure incurred by the agent on behalf of the principal, in which case there is a debtor or creditor position and the net cash position is included in financing activities in the Cash flow Statement. This Council acts as an agent for the collection of Council tax and non-domestic rating income.

8. Tax Income (National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax)

NNDR and Council Tax income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year will be treated as accrued income and will be recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement within the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line.

As a Billing Authority, the difference between the NNDR and Council Tax included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

NNDR and Council Tax income is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council, and the amount of revenue can be measured reliably.

Revenue relating to NNDR and Council Tax is measured at the full amount receivable (net of any impairment losses) as they are non-contractual, non-exchange transactions and there can be no difference between the delivery and payment dates

9. Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as property, plant and equipment.

These assets are further classified as follows:

- Operational land and buildings,
- Operational plant, furniture, equipment, and motor vehicles.
- Infrastructural assets.
- Community assets.
- Surplus assets – held for future regeneration opportunities

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accrual's basis, provided that it is probable that the Council will receive future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item. This excludes expenditure on routine repairs and maintenance of property, plant or equipment which is charged direct to service revenue accounts.

Capital expenditure is initially added to the value of an asset however if the revised value of the asset has not increased to reflect the additional expenditure an impairment can be applied.

Measurement

Non-current assets are valued on the basis recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and in accordance with the RICS Valuation – Global Standards (colloquially called the Global Red Book) issued by The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and effective from 31 January 2025. Non-current assets are classified into the groupings required by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management; and,
- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- Surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective
- All other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV)

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

Revaluation

Revaluations of fixed assets are undertaken by professionally qualified valuers on a five-year rolling basis, supported by annual indexation in the four intervening years. Any unrealised gains on revaluation are shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement then removed in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Revaluation Reserve on the Balance Sheet.

Revaluation gains are depreciated in line with the asset to which they relate. Future revaluation losses are matched against any balance in the Revaluation Reserve in the first instance on a strict per-asset basis, with the remaining balance being transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

An impairment review is undertaken at the end of each accounting period and material changes to asset valuations are adjusted as they occur. Impairment losses on a re-valued asset are recognised in the Revaluation Reserve to the extent that the impairment does not exceed the balance in the Revaluation Reserve for that asset and thereafter as a cost to the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

However, the Code stipulates that impairments do not impact on the Council tax, therefore the charge is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account.

When an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement up to the amount of the original impairment loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment with a finite useful life. Useful life is estimated at the time of acquisition or revaluation. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain community assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Infrastructure, community assets and surplus non-operational assets are not depreciated each year but measured at historical cost.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the asset
- Infrastructure – straight-line allocation as advised by a suitable qualified officer

Newly acquired assets are depreciated the year following acquisition, although assets in the course of construction are not depreciated until they are brought into use, thereafter an equal charge to revenue is made over the useful life of the assets.

Component Accounting

Where the asset comprises two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives, each component should be accounted for separately for depreciation purposes and depreciated over its individual useful life. Componentisation elements are considered as assets are professionally revalued within the 5-year rolling programme.

10. Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are:

- Tangible assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities which are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.
- Intangible heritage assets with cultural, environmental or historical significance, such as recordings of significant historical events

For Rossendale Borough Council Heritage Assets include the Panopticon in Haslingden and the war memorials across the borough as well as civic regalia and exhibits at Whittaker Park Museum.

Where heritage assets are purchased or costs capitalised, these assets are now valued on a historic cost basis. This has occurred in examples such as the creation of the Panopticon. However, for historic assets where it is not possible to obtain a cost value commensurate with the benefit to users of the financial statements, the Council is entitled to use any method it deems appropriate and relevant. For the exhibits at Whittaker Park Museum the latest insurance values have been used as an approximation for the asset value.

Depreciation or amortisation is not required on heritage assets which have indefinite lives. However, the carrying amount of such assets is reviewed regularly to ensure that they have not suffered any physical deterioration, which would be treated as an impairment.

11. Investment Properties

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation, or both. This Council has one piece of land which meets the definition of an Investment Property.

Investment properties are initially measured at cost. After initial recognition they are measured at fair value. The fair value reflects market conditions at the Balance Sheet date. A gain or loss arising from a change in the fair value of investment property is recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Investment properties are not depreciated, but are re-valued annually according to market conditions.

An investment property is derecognised on disposal. Gains or losses arising from the disposal are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are reversed out of the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

12. Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets are assets that do not have physical substance and are held for use in the provision of services or for administrative purposes on a continuing basis (e.g. software licences). They are controlled by the Council as a result of past events and future economic or service benefits flow to the Council from intangible assets. These assets are capitalised at cost and amortised (depreciated) to the relevant revenue service over their economic lives. This amortisation is then reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and a transfer is made to the Capital Adjustment Account. An intangible asset is derecognised on disposal. The gains or losses arising from the disposal are recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services.

13. Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes evident that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale rather than its continued use, it can be reclassified as an asset held for sale. An asset can only be classed as held for sale if it is available for immediate sale in its present condition, the sale must be highly probable, it is being actively marketed and the sale should be expected to be completed within one year of its original classification. When events or circumstances extend the period beyond one year and there is sufficient evidence that the Council remains committed to the sale of the assets they are classified as long-term assets held for sale.

Assets held for sale are held at the lower of the carrying amount and the fair value less cost to sell. If this results in a loss in value the loss is posted to Other Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previous loss recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale. If these assets no longer meet the classification of assets held for sale they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale.

14. Leases

Finance Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets. There are no finance leases within the Council where the Council acts as either Lessee or Lessor.

Operating Leases

Lessee - Rental income paid under operating leases is treated as a revenue transaction and is charged to the relevant service expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment.

Lessor - Rental Income from operating leases is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease period and is shown in the Other Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Assets held for use as operating leases are recorded on the Council's Balance Sheet.

15. Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS) is expenditure of a capital nature that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset on the Balance Sheet. These are generally grants and expenditure on assets not owned by the Council.

Expenditure is charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services as the expenditure is incurred. This is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement and a transfer made to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Grants receivable in relation to REFCUS are accounted for as revenue grants in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, even if described as capital grants by the giver of the grant. Grant income is posted to the service(s) that the qualifying expenditure is charged to.

16. Government Grants and Other Contributions

Government grants and third-party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset in the form of the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line or taxation and non-specific grant income (non-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

17. Capital Receipts

Amounts to be treated as capital receipts are defined by statute and usually arise from disposal of an interest in a fixed asset. Any difference between the receipt value and the carrying value of the asset in the balance sheet at the time of disposal is shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as a gain or loss on disposal.

However, some statutorily defined capital receipts do not arise from the disposal of an interest in a fixed asset and as such are treated separately in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as 'Other Income'.

Capital receipts are not attributable to the General Fund Balance and are therefore transferred to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

18. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits available on demand. Cash equivalents are short-term (three months or less) highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Council's cash management.

19. Short-term Investments

Short-term investments are those with a life of between 3 months and 1 year at the Balance Sheet date and are shown in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

20. Long-term Investments

Long-term investments are those with a remaining life of more than 1 year at the Balance Sheet date and are shown in the Balance Sheet at fair value.

21. Inventories and Long-Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the First in First out (FIFO) or Average (AVCO) (for vehicle fuel) costing formulas. Long-term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus/ Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

22. Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, for which a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. Provisions are a charge to the Net Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

23. Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is either:

- (a) a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control, or
- (b) a present obligation that arises from past events but is not recognised because: (i) it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, or (ii) the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

A material contingent liability is not recognised within the accounts as an item of expenditure. It is, however, disclosed in a note to the accounts.

24. Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential

25. Reserves

Reserves are classified as either 'usable' (identified and maintained for specific future purposes and contingencies and include General Fund reserve, Earmarked reserve and Usable Capital Receipts reserve) or 'unusable' (kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council) – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

26. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the authority is required to set aside a minimum revenue provision for repayment of debt. Minimum Revenue Provision is a charge to the cost of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The Council calculates MRP to match the life of the asset.

27. Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council and can be represented by a contractual obligation to deliver cash or financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially unfavourable to the Council.

The majority of the Council's financial liabilities held during the year are measured at amortised cost and comprise:

- long-term loans from the Public Works Loan Board;
- trade payables for goods and services received.

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council that is represented by cash, equity instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or another financial assets or a right to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially favourable to the Council. The financial assets held by the Council during the year are accounted for under the following classifications:

(a) Amortised cost (where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows) comprising:

- cash in hand
- bank current and deposit accounts
- fixed term deposits with banks and building societies
- loans to other local authorities
- treasury bills and gilts issued by the UK government
- debtors for goods and services provided

(b) Fair value through profit and loss (all other financial assets) comprising:

- money market funds
- pooled bond funds
- Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Financial assets held at amortised cost are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council.

Financial assets that are measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. Any changes in the fair value of instruments held at fair value through profit or loss will be recognised in the net cost of services in the CIES and will have a General Fund impact.

(c) Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for debtors held by the Council.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations.

28. Fair Value

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets, such as surplus assets and investment properties and some of its financial instruments, at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

- a) in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- b) in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date
- Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 - unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

29. Prior Period Adjustments

Prior period adjustments are material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or estimates or from the correction of fundamental errors. The Code requires that the financial statements should disclose, where practicable the nature of the change in policy and the impact of any adjustment on the preceding accounting period where practicable. Where this is not practicable, the fact this is so and the reasons for it should be disclosed.

30. Events after the Balance Sheet date

Local authorities are required to account for events, both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue in accordance with IAS 10 *Events after the Reporting Period* and IPSAS 14 *Events after the Reporting Date*. Two types of events can be identified:

- Adjusting Events - where events arising after the balance sheet date provide additional evidence of conditions that existed at the balance sheet date and are of a material nature the amounts should be reflected in the Core Statements.
- Non-adjusting Events – events which arise after the balance sheet date and concern conditions which did not exist at that time should be detailed in Notes to the Core Statements if they are of such materiality that their disclosure is required for the fair presentation of the financial statements, rather than reflected in the Core Statements.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

Note 2 Expenditure Funding Analysis

2024/25				Service Segments	2025/26			
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement
£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
5,202	(20)	1,108	6,290	Communities Directorate	5,690	(201)	1,299	6,788
2,184	(48)	1,055	3,191	Economic Development Directorate	1,693	(801)	1,860	2,752
2,521	17	207	2,737	Corporate Management	3,610	(476)	(493)	2,642
9,907	(51)	2,370	12,218	Net Cost of Services	10,993	(1,478)	2,666	12,182
(9,921)	(2,344)	(5,113)	(17,378)	Other Income & Expenditure	(10,312)	(1,996)	(3,744)	(16,052)
(14)	(2,395)	(2,743)	(5,160)	(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	681	(3,474)	(1,078)	(3,870)
1,000	9,326			Opening General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance	1,000	11,743		
0	(2,417)			(Surplus)/Deficit on General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance as at 31 March	0	(2,757)		
1,000	11,743			Closing General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance in Year	1,000	14,500		

Notes to the Expenditure Funding Analysis

2a Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis						2025/26
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes	Net change for pensions adjustments	Other statutory differences	Total Statutory adjustments	Other (non-statutory) adjustments	Total adjustments
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Communities Directorate	913	386	-	1,299	-	1,299
Economic Development Directorate	1,656	204	-	1,860	-	1,860
Corporate Management	(715)	222	-	(493)	-	(493)
Net cost of services	1,854	812	-	2,666	-	2,666
Other income and expenditure from expenditure funding analysis	(2,502)	(1,084)	(158)	(3,744)	-	(3,744)
Difference between General Fund/reserves surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(644)	(272)	(158)	(1,074)	-	(1,074)

Comparator information for 2024/25 is shown below:-

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis						2024/25
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes	Net change for pensions adjustments	Other statutory differences	Total Statutory adjustments	Other (non-statutory) adjustments	Total adjustments
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Communities Directorate	740	368	-	1,108	-	1,108
Economic Development Directorate	853	202	-	1,055	-	1,055
Corporate Management	-	207	-	207	-	207
Net cost of services	1,593	777	-	2,370	-	2,370
Other income and expenditure from expenditure funding analysis	(4,227)	(782)	(104)	(5,113)	-	(5,113)
Difference between General Fund/reserves surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(2,634)	(5)	(104)	(2,743)	-	(2,743)

1) Adjustments for capital purposes – this column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

- **Other operating expenditure** – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.
- **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the statutory charges for capital financing ie minimum revenue provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.
- **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivables in the year to those receivables without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

2) Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For financing and investment income and expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

3) Other statutory adjustments between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For financing and investment income and expenditure the other statutory adjustments column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts.
- The charge under taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for Council tax and NNDR that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognized under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future surpluses or deficits on the collection fund.

2b Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

Expenditure & Income Analysed by Nature	2024/25	2025/26
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	7,881	8,093
Other service expenses	24,653	25,331
Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	166	96
Interest payments	111	100
Prescripts and levies	70	80
(Gain)/loss on disposal of assets	(40)	(22)
Total Expenditure	32,841	33,678
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(2,985)	(3,613)
Other Grants and Contributions included in Cost of Services	(22,246)	(20,851)
Interest and investment income	(816)	(502)
Income from council tax, non-domestic rates, district rate income	(9,110)	(9,422)
Government grants and contributions	(2,844)	(3,160)
Total Income	(38,001)	(37,548)
(Surplus) or deficit on provision of services	(5,160)	(3,870)



Note 3 Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Interest Payable on Debt	111	100
Interest and Investment Income	(640)	(851)
Pensions - Interest Cost	4,448	5,287
Pensions - Past Service Cost	-	-
Pensions - Admin Expenses	32	34
Pensions - Interest on Assets	(4,412)	(5,254)
Trading Undertakings	(176)	(365)
	(637)	(1,049)

Note 4 Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Collection Fund		
Council Tax	(6,514)	(6,524)
Council Tax re prior year deficit		
Retained Business Rates	(2,266)	(2,544)
Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit		
Council Tax	(117)	(102)
Retained Business Rates	(122)	(141)
Revenue Support Grant	(91)	(111)
Non service related Government Grants	(2,844)	(3,160)
	(11,954)	(12,582)

Note 5a Revenue from Contracts with Service Recipients

Revenue from contracts entered into by the Council to provide services to residents and businesses is recognised as the Council fulfils its performance obligations in accordance with the terms of the contract. The table below shows the services entered into.

Revenue from Contract with Service Recipients	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Building Inspections	(159)	(177)
Trade Waste	(332)	(384)
Garden Waste	(326)	(343)
Total Revenue from Contracts with Service Recipients	(817)	(903)

Note 5b Trading Operations

The Council operates 3 markets in Haslingden, Bacup and Rawtenstall. All sites have undergone / undergoing redevelopment. Haslingden reopened in March 2025 and has been trading successfully throughout the year. Bacup market closed in December 2024 and remains in the development phase. Meanwhile, the development of Rawtenstall market began in January 2026, with traders continuing to operate successfully from the temporary town centre location.

The Council has in the region of 40 industrial/Retail trading units, promoting economic regeneration across the borough.

Business Offices include a small number of high-tech managed office spaces as well as conference and meeting facilities at the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup.

Trading Operations	Net Expend/ (Income) 2024/25 £000s	Gross Expend 2025/26 £000s	Income 2025/26 £000s	Net Expend/ (Income) 2025/26 £000s
Markets	77	241	(136)	105
Industrial Units	(155)	10	(165)	(155)
Business Office Facilities	212	238	(63)	175
Futures Park Units	(95)	3	(97)	(94)
Bus Station Units	(325)	6	(350)	(344)
Commercial Properties	(63)	13	(65)	(52)
Total Trading Accounts	(349)	511	(876)	(365)

Note 6 Retained Business Rates

In April 2013 Local Government funding changed with the introduction of a system of locally retained business rates. Rossendale Council now has a direct stake in the business rates collected within the borough and at Full Council in February the Council sets a precept based on 40% of the business rates forecast to be collected within the Borough, from which it pays a tariff to Central Government.

The Lancashire Business Rates Pool, of which Rossendale Borough Council is a member, came into effect on 1st April 2016. Under the Pool arrangements, the first 50% of business rates continue to go to Central Government, 9% goes to Lancashire County Council and 1% goes to Lancashire Fire Authority, with Rossendale Borough Council taking the remaining 40%. From that 40% Rossendale continues to pay a Tariff to the Pool. As a result, Rossendale Borough Council retains 90% of any and all surplus or deficit arising from increases in the overall business rates. Added to this, Rossendale Borough Council benefits from 100% of the business rates from renewable energy installations. 2025/26 will be the last year that Rossendale is part of the Pool as the Council has opted out following the Final Settlement on 9 February 2026 and the outcome of the Fair Funding Review.

Business Rates Income & Expenditure	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Rossendale Borough Council Share of Business Rates Income	(5,448)	(5,720)
Less Tariff Payable to Central Government	3,459	3,488
(Surplus)/Deficit Payment in Year (declared January prior to start of year)	330	(159)
Movement on Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit at Year End	(501)	(106)
Business Rates Retained on Renewable Energy Schemes	(277)	(312)
10% Retained Levy Payable to LCC under pooling arrangements	59	77
Overall Net Retained Business Rates Related Income	(2,378)	(2,732)

Note 7 Grant Income

The Council recognised the following significant grants, contributions and donations during 2025/26:

Grants and contributions received	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Credited to Cost of Services		
<i>Grants received for Revenue Purposes</i>		
DWP - Housing Benefits - paid to claimants	11,025	9,846
DWP - Housing Benefits - re Council Tenants	599	520
DWP - Discretionary Housing Payments	70	70
DWP - Housing Benefits - administration grant	166	171
DWP - Misc Grants	58	35
MHCLG - Flexible Homeslessness Prevention Grant	315	443
MHCLG - Rough Sleeping Initiative	111	149
MHCLG - New Burdens Grants	8	70
MHCLG - Business Rates Collection Grant	97	-
MHCLG - Domestic Abuse	-	34
MHCLG - Other Grants	123	202
MHCLG - Defra Grants	43	25
MHCLG - Green Belt Fund	70	-
Home Office Asylum Dispersal Funds	338	302
LCC - Housing Support Fund	658	422
LCC - Afgan Resettlement Programme (ARP)	14	16
LCC - Affordable Warmth Grant	4	68
UKSPF - Revenue	636	174
Pride in Place	-	350
Historic England - Heritage Action Zone	13	-
Innovate Net Zero	264	307
UKP General Election	161	-
Other minor grants and contributions	658	383
	15,431	13,587
<i>Grants received for Capital Purposes</i>		
Capital Regeneration Programme	2,676	9,903
LCC Better Care Fund - Disabled Adaptations Grant	1,440	1,581
Lancashire Environmental Fund	75	40
UKSPF - Capital	843	255
DLUHC - Local Authority Housing Fund	231	445
Historic England - Heritage Action Zone	-	6
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership	(162)	-
SALIX - Net Zero Grant	-	97
National Lottery Heritage Fund	499	1,167
S106 Capital Contributions	319	326
FCC UK	153	199
DEFRA - Food Waste	211	62
On Street Residential Charge point Scheme (ORCS)	160	-
Sport England	290	270
Misc Contributions	80	-
	6,815	14,351
Total in the CIES Cost of Services	22,246	27,938

Grants note continued..	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income		
Service Grant	15	-
Funding Guarantee	361	-
Extended Producer Responsibility Payments	-	650
Revenue Support Grant	91	111
MHCLG - New Homes Bonus	163	141
MHCLG - NNDR Reconciliation	220	-
MHCLG - Levy Account Surplus	18	-
MHCLG - Employers' National Insurance Contributions	-	272
MHCLG - Recovery Grant	-	100
MHCLG - Business Rates - Small Business Reliefs	2,067	1,996
Non-Specific Grants in the CIES	2,935	3,271

Note 8 Members Allowances

An Independent Remuneration Panel meet a minimum of every 4 years to review Member's Allowances. Following the resolution from last full review for commencement in the 2023/24 period, Councillor allowances were to be increased in line with the average percentage awarded to officers. This resulted in the basic allowance being increased to £3,597 for the 2025/26 period.

Total Cost of Elected Members	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Basic Allowance	106	107
Special Responsibility Allowance	65	68
Employers National Insurance incurred	3	9
Employers Superannuation Contributions	-	-
Mileage, subsistence & other reimbursements	-	-
	175	183

Annual amounts payable for elected roles	2024/25 £s	2025/26 £s
Basic Allowance	3,477	3,597
Special Responsibility Allowances		
Leader of Majority or Largest Group	13,908	14,389
Deputy Leader of Majority or Largest Group	10,431	10,792
Leader of Minority or Second Largest Group	6,954	7,195
Cabinet Members	6,954	7,195
All Committee Chairs (4)	3,477	3,597
One off Payment for Charing Meetings	156	161

Note 9 Senior Officers' Remuneration

The table below shows remuneration details for the Chief Executive and the Senior Officers directly responsible to him, along with their respective salary (including fees and allowances), employer's pension contributions and total remuneration during 2025/26, along with prior year comparators which were restated to include local elections as a cost to the Council.

During 2024/25 the Chief Finance Officer post was disestablished and a Director of Resources post was established.

Senior Officers		Salary £	Other Allowances & Expenses £	Election Duties £	Pension £	Total £
Chief Executive	2024/25	115,826	1,004	5,000	17,276	139,106
	2025/26	119,533	627	297	17,495	137,952
Director of Economic Dev	2024/25	84,163	-	262	12,370	96,795
	2025/26	89,467	291	-	13,062	102,820
Director of Resources #	2024/25	51,221	-	-	7,478	58,699
	2025/26	89,964	477	426	12,734	103,601
Chief Finance Officer #	2024/25	19,321	59	237	2,430	22,047
	2025/26	-	-	-	-	0
Legal Services Manager	2024/25	57,050	-	619	8,329	65,998
	2025/26	58,876	52	467	8,596	67,991
HR Manager	2024/25	56,822	-	-	8,329	65,151
	2025/26	58,876	68	-	8,596	67,540

Director of Resources started 02/09/2024

Director of Resources left 08/03/2026

Chief Finance Officer left 26/06/2024 - disestablished as part of structure

Note 10 Other Officers' Remuneration

The number of employees whose remuneration, excluding pension contributions, was £50,000 or more are listed in the table below in bands of £5,000.

The Code includes a requirement to disclose the costs of exit packages paid by the Council in bands of £5k. The Council has paid no exit packages in 2024/25 and one exit package in 2025/26 of £5,573.

Officers with remuneration above £50,000 (excl pension)	2024/25 Number	2025/26 Number
£50,000 - £54,999	-	-
£55,000 - £59,999	5	3
£60,000 - £64,999	1	2
£65,000 - £69,999	1	1
£70,000 - £74,999	1	-
£75,000 - £79,999	-	1
£80,000 - £84,999	1	-
£85,000 - £89,999	1	1
£90,000 - £94,999	-	1
£95,000 - £99,999	-	-
£115,000 - £119,999	1	1
	11	10

Note 11 Related Parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties, bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council or to be controlled or influenced by the Council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

Central government

Central government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides a large proportion of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (eg Council tax bills, housing benefits).

Other local authorities and precepting bodies

- Payments to the Lancashire County Council Pension Fund.
- Precepts in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates are paid to Central Government, Lancashire Police Authority, Lancashire Fire Authority, Lancashire County Council.
- The Lancashire Business Rates Pool.
- Precept payable to Whitworth Town Council – see the Narrative Statement and the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Other key partners

- In June 2004 the bulk of Rossendale's Leisure Facilities transferred to the management of the newly-formed independent Rossendale Leisure Trust.
 - In previous years the Council has given the Trust an operational grant. However, the Council purchased the balance of the Haslingden Gym extension loan in November 2016 at a cost of £1,010k. The Trust now pays a rental charge for using the asset of £60k per annum for its remaining 10 year life. This represents a saving for the Trust which negated the need for any grant funding from 2017/18 onwards. The outstanding balance on this loan at the end of 2025/26 is £565k
 - Since 2016/17 the Council has made two loans to the Trust
 - a) 2016/17 a loan of £24.6k was made for Solar Panels at The Ashcroft. 2024/25 saw the final payment of £1.3k
 - b) 2019/20 an interest bearing loan of £256k was made for gym equipment refresh at the Adrenalin Centre. As at 31st March 2026 the balance owed on this loan was £74.7k.

The Council deferred payment on all the above loans for 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to the Covid Pandemic.

- During 2025/26 the Trust transferred monies each month to maintain the intercompany balance. The agreement was to pay the salary costs and creditor payments within the month. The balance brought forward from 2024/25 is £1,284.9k. The balance at the end of March 2026 is £1,284.9k. Debtor invoices outstanding at the end of the year is £10.8k, but it should be noted that these invoices were not overdue.
- The RLT Group outstanding balance is £1,250.8k and sits within the Council's balance Sheet. This has reduced by £130.9k from 2024/25
- The solar panel loans to the Trust are considered soft loans because interest payments have not been charged and are not material in 2025/26.
- To assist the Trust in its efforts to find operational efficiencies, the Council began to provide its professional financial and IT services in April 2013 under a service level agreement. No charge was made for these services. In 2023/24 the trust took back the function of professional financial and IT services. To aid the transition RBC contributed £70k to RLT in the years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 and will contribute £70k in 2026/27

- The RTB Partnership Ltd was incorporated on the 4th February 2013, with equal partners being Rossendale Borough Council, Together Housing and Barnfield Construction Ltd. The Partnership is a vehicle to facilitate a variety of development projects across the Borough. During 2025/26 no contributions have been made by the Council.

Members and Chief Officers

The Council's Standing Orders make provision for a register of Members and Officers interests.

Upon review of this register it is considered that any transactions involving Members and Chief Officers with related parties have complied with the above regulations and are not material.

Note 12 External Audit Costs

The sums due from Rossendale Borough Council to the external auditors for works carried out relating to the year of account 2025/26 were:

Audit costs	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Fees payable in respect of external audit of accounts	45	156
Fees payable for non-audit assurance work	10	-
	55	156



Note 13 Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to arrive at the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

The table below details the changes in 2025/26 while the financial year 2024/25 can be found on the following page.

Adjustments to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Movement in Reserves Statement	2025/26			
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Unuseable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Adjustment Account adjustments				
Depreciation of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	1,727	-	-	(1,727)
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	634	-	-	(634)
Revaluation gain/loss on Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)	172	-	-	(172)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	49	-	-	(49)
Revenue Expend funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	4,323	-	-	(4,323)
REFCUS for Empty Homes Scheme	-	-	-	-
Net book value of assets sold	125	-	-	(125)
Statutory provisions for financing of capital investment (MRP)	(715)	-	-	715
Capital Receipts Reserve adjustments				
Transfer of cash proceeds of assets sold	(147)	147	-	-
Other Income	(26)	26	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to fund capital spend	-	(379)	-	379
Capital Grants Unapplied Account adjustments				
Capital grants and contributions credited to the CIES	567	-	(567)	-
Application of grants to the Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)	(7,353)	-	-	7,353
Pensions Reserve adjustments				
Employer contributions paid to the Pension Fund	(951)	-	-	951
Net IAS19 charges made for retirement benefits	679	-	-	(679)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account adjustments				
Difference between the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CIES and that calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	(158)	-	-	158
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	(1,074)	(206)	(567)	1,847

Adjustments to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Movement in Reserves Statement	2024/25			
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Unuseable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Adjustment Account adjustments				
Depreciation of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	1,522	-	-	(1,522)
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	183	-	-	(183)
Revaluation gain/loss on Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)	44	-	-	(44)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	38	-	-	(38)
Revenue Expend funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	2,406	-	-	(2,406)
REFCUS for Empty Homes Scheme	-	-	-	-
Net book value of assets sold	42	-	-	(42)
Statutory provisions for financing of capital investment (MRP)	(687)	-	-	687
Capital Receipts Reserve adjustments				
Transfer of cash proceeds of assets sold	(82)	82	-	-
Other Income	(56)	56	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts to fund capital spend	-	(500)	-	500
Capital Grants Unapplied Account adjustments				
Capital grants and contributions credited to the CIES	562	-	(562)	-
Application of grants to the Capital Adjustment Account	(6,606)	-	-	6,606
Pensions Reserve adjustments				
Employer contributions to the Pension Fund	(934)	-	-	934
Net IAS19 charges made for retirement benefits	929	-	-	(929)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account adjustments				
Difference between the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CIES and that calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	(126)	-	-	126
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	(2,765)	(362)	(562)	3,689



Note 14 Property, Plant and Equipment

14a Movements during the year

Movements on property, plant & equipment assets in 2025/26 were as follows:

Property, Plant & Equipment 2025/26	Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip £000s	Infra- structure Assets £000s	Community Assets £000s	Assets under constr'n £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Total Assets £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2025	44,047	11,293	536	4,165	4,850	584	65,475
Additions	2,696	1,232	-	124	588	-	4,641
Donated Assets							-
Revaluation increases/(decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	1,188	-	13	70	-	-	1,271
to Provision of Services	(172)	-	-	-	-	-	(172)
Reclassifications- to/from Assets Held for Sale others	1,228						1,228
Derecognition- on disposal	(6)	(522)	-	-	-	-	(528)
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2026	48,982	12,003	549	4,359	5,438	584	71,915
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 1st April 2024	(13,138)	(6,766)	(262)	(711)	(442)	(131)	(21,449)
Depreciation for the year- to Revaluation Reserve	(78)	-	-	(17)	-	-	(95)
to Provision of Services	(628)	(942)	(4)	(58)	-	-	(1,632)
Impairment (losses)/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	(78)	-	-	(19)	-	-	(97)
to Provision of Services	(494)	-	-	(42)	-	-	(536)
Reclassifications Derecognition- on disposal	-	408	-	-	-	-	408
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments 31st March 2026	(14,416)	(7,300)	(266)	(847)	(442)	(131)	(23,401)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2026	34,566	4,703	283	3,512	4,996	453	48,514
Net Book Value at 31st March 2025	30,910	4,527	274	3,454	4,408	453	44,026

Depreciation, using the straight-line method, has been charged according to the estimated life of the assets involved on the following basis.

- Operational buildings generally have a useful life of 50 years, except where expert opinion has reduced this estimate. The land upon which the buildings reside is not subject to depreciation.
- Vehicles are depreciated over a useful life of 3-7 years depending upon their technical or mechanical nature.
- Equipment such as refuse bins, are depreciated over their individual useful life determined at the point of acquisition.
- All other assets under land, assets under construction, community assets, investment and surplus assets are not depreciated.

Component accounting is applied to all revaluation exercises on the following basis.

- For all property assets, land and buildings are valued separately. Only assets with a combined land and buildings value of £500k and over will be subject to component accounting.
- Significant components are items (or groups of items) with a value of at least 25% of the total asset value.

Fair Value Hierarchy – Surplus Assets

Surplus assets comprise land from which the Council does not provide services. The Council has determined all of its surplus assets are valued at level 2 inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly at 31st March 2025 and 2026.

Comparator movements in 2024/25 were as follows:

Property, Plant & Equipment 2024/25	Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip £000s	Infra-structure Assets £000s	Community Assets £000s	Assets under constr'n £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Total Assets £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2024	35,421	9,528	387	3,629	6,390	762	56,117
Additions	3,067	1,315	144	51	2,091	6	6,674
Donated Assets							-
Revaluation increases/(decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	3,792	-	5	555	-	(1)	4,351
to Provision of Services	(62)	-	-	(70)	-	87	(45)
Reclassifications- to/from Assets Held for Sale	(1,298)					(8)	(1,306)
others	3,162	730			(3,631)	(262)	(0)
Derecognition- on disposal	(35)	(280)	-	-	-	-	(315)
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2025	44,047	11,293	536	4,165	4,850	584	65,475
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 1st April 2023	(12,329)	(6,204)	(253)	(633)	(490)	(131)	(20,040)
Depreciation for the year- to Revaluation Reserve	(217)	-	-	(18)	-	-	(235)
to Provision of Services	(386)	(837)	(9)	(55)	-	-	(1,287)
Impairment (losses)/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	(161)	-	-	(5)	-	-	(166)
to Provision of Services	(11)	-	-	-	-	-	(11)
Reclassifications	(34)				48		15
Derecognition- on disposal	-	275	-	-	-	-	275
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments 31st March 2025	(13,138)	(6,766)	(262)	(711)	(442)	(131)	(21,449)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2025	30,910	4,527	274	3,454	4,408	453	44,026
Net Book Value at 31st March 2024	23,092	3,324	134	2,996	5,900	631	36,077



14b Revaluation Programme

During 2025/26 the Councils property portfolio was valued by external RICS-qualified officers from Capita Symonds Ltd, PO BOX 212, Faverdale Industrial Estate, Darlington, DL1 9HN, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

The Council carries out a revaluation programme that ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every five years.

Assets valued in previous years have been reviewed for any known material changes and it has been concluded that no assets have undergone any material changes which would alter their valuations.

Properties regarded by the Council as operational are to be valued on the basis of existing use value or, where this cannot be assessed because there is no market for the subject asset, the depreciated replacement cost. Valuations of vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment are based on depreciated historic cost.

The details below show the history of the revaluation programme and the next planned revaluation exercise for each type of asset held. Under the provisions of the Code assets of a similar type should be revalued together.

Revaluation Programme for assets under Property, Plant & Equipment	Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip £000s	Infra-structure Assets £000s	Community Assets £000s	Assets under constr'n £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Total PPE £000s
Carried at Historic Cost	5,289	4,702	274	293	4,996	-	15,554
March 2022	8,856	-	-	282	-	-	9,138
March 2023	2,005	-	-	316	-	-	2,321
March 2024	9,024	-	4	-	-	-	9,028
March 2025	6,440	-	5	2,621	-	453	9,519
March 2026	2,951	-	-	-	-	-	2,951
Net Book Value 31st March 2025	34,565	4,702	283	3,512	4,996	453	48,511

Note 15 Heritage Assets

The Heritage Assets held by the Council fall into four categories: Whitaker Museum Collection, War Memorials, Panoptican and Civic Regalia. All these categories have been in the Council's ownership for a number of years and are held for their intrinsic worth as opposed to potential financial gain. As such, they are unlikely to be sold.

The War Memorials and Panoptican are reported at historic cost and the Museum Collection and Civic Regalia are reported at insurance valuation. According to the Code there is no prescribed minimum period between valuations and so the Council does not intend to revalue its Heritage Assets in the near future.

Heritage Assets	Museum Collection £000s	War Memorials £000s	Panoptican £000s	Civic Regalia £000s	Total £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2024	1,507	71	21	800	2,399
Additions	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Gains	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2025	1,507	71	21	800	2,399
Additions	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Gains	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2026	1,507	71	21	800	2,399

Note 16 Investment Properties

The Council has one piece of land classified as an investment property following the agreement of a long-term lease.

Fair Value Hierarchy – Investment Properties

The Council has determined that this asset should be valued as a level 2 input, therefore, the level of rental income receivable is factored into the calculation to determine the fair value of the asset

Investment Properties	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Fair Value 1st April	525	525
Additions, Reclassifications, Revaluations :	-	-
Reclassification	-	-
Revaluations	-	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March	525	525
Fair Value at 31st March	525	525
Rental income within the year	36	36

Note 17 Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April	1,308	1,356
Acquisitions	48	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March	1,356	1,356
Accum Depreciation 1st April	(1,152)	(1,195)
Impairment losses/(reversals)	(5)	(11)
Amortisation for the period	(38)	(49)
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 31st March	(1,195)	(1,255)
Net Book Value at 31st March	161	101

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item under Property, Plant and Equipment. At Rossendale Borough Council these intangible assets comprise only purchased licenses as the Council has no internally generated software.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the expected benefit to the Council, over which depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis. The default value for the useful life is 5 years and all current assets have been deemed to follow that standard.

Note 18 Capital Expenditure, Financing and Capitalisation of Borrowing Costs

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below, together with the resources that have been used to finance it.

18a - Capital Expenditure on Council Assets

The Capital Financing Requirements (CFR) is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed. This capital expenditure is charged to future years through Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) as assets are used by the Council. Rossendale Borough Council splits the CFR into two distinct elements; those costs pertaining to the East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme and other capital expenditure. As the Empty Homes Scheme has now ended this will not be necessary in future years. The movement in the CFR during the year is analysed in the second part of this note. The capital expenditure is split between Council-owned assets and those owned by third parties. The Council incurs capital expenditure on third party assets through schemes like the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and the Haslingden Deardengate project. The distinction is an important one because capital expenditure on assets not owned by the Council is permitted by Statute, but is accounted for as revenue expenditure, along with its respective funding. Hence, in the table below there are details of 'Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute' (REFCUS) and funding from grants and other receipts and contributions, not from MRP.

Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	18,236	19,048
Non-Empty Homes Opening Capital Financing Requirement	17,339	18,151
Capital investments		
Property, Plant & Equipment	6,674	4,640
Intangible Assets	48	-
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	2,406	4,323
	9,128	8,963
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	(500)	(379)
Government Grants and other contributions	(7,129)	(7,390)
Earmarked Reserves	-	(36)
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute:-		
Direct revenue contributions	-	-
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(687)	(715)
Non Empty Homes Closing Capital Financing Requirement	18,151	18,594
Empty Homes Opening Capital Financing Requirement	897	897
Empty Homes		
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	-	-
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	-	-
Sums set aside from Revenue:-	-	-
Direct revenue contributions	-	-
Empty Homes Closing Capital Financing Requirement	897	897
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	19,048	19,491
Explanation of movements in the year - Increase/(Decrease) in underlying need to borrow (not supported by government financial assistance)		
Increase in underlying borrowing (net of direct grants and contributions)	1,499	1,158
Repayments (MRP)	(687)	(715)
Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	812	443

18b – Capital Commitments

As at 31st March 2026, the Council was contractually committed to a total of £11,556K (£2,123k 2024/25). The individual capital schemes are listed below:

Contractual commitments	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Various Small Projects	57	148
Henrietta Street Software Improvements	13	-
Cemeteries	52	68
Bacup Market	184	175
Rawtenstall Market	238	4,080
Rawtenstall Gyratory	68	40
Haslingden Big Lamp	1,270	231
Waste Management	210	6,200
The Bridge	-	555
UK Shared Prosperity	31	60
	2,123	11,556

Note 19 Leases

19a - Authority as Lessee

During the 2025/26 financial year, the authority did not act as a lessee.

Authority as a Lessee	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Lease Payments within the year	35	-
Future minimum lease commitments		
Amounts falling due within 1 year	-	-
Amounts falling due within 2-5 years	-	-
Amounts falling due within 6-10 years	-	-
Total Minimum Future Lease Payments	-	-

19b – Authority as Lessor

The Council leases out land and property under operating leases for services sport and leisure, regeneration and commercial use.

Authority as a Lessor	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Not later than one year	619	625
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,041	2,038
Later than five years	7,846	8,485
	10,506	11,148

The minimum lease payments receivable does not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews.

Note 20 Long-term Debtors

Long Term Debtors	Rossendale Leisure Trust £000s	Empty Homes Loans £000s	Other loans & mortgages £000s	Total £000s
Debt Outstanding 1st April 2024	23	1,228	10	1,261
Advances	-	-	-	-
Receipts	(6)	-	-	(6)
Write-offs	-	-	-	-
Other Adjustments	-	-	-	-
Total Debt outstanding	17	1,228	10	1,255
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	-	(1,026)	-	(1,026)
Balance at 31st March 2025	17	202	10	229
Debt Outstanding 1st April 2025	17	202	10	229
Advances	-	-	-	-
Receipts	(6)	-	-	(6)
Write-offs	-	-	-	-
Other Adjustments	-	-	-	-
Total Debt outstanding	12	202	10	224
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31st March 2026	12	202	10	224

The East Lancs Empty Homes Strategy moved into full operation during 2013/14. Funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in the first instance, this programme saw long-term empty properties across East Lancashire brought back into use. Any renovation costs, shown above as advances, were being recouped from property rentals during the life of the lease, shown above as receipts. At the end of these leases these properties reverted to their owners. Where loans could not be recovered upon property hand back, land charges are in place to recover debt upon eventual sale.

Note 21 Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

21a - Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instruments are carried on the Balance Sheet:

Financial Assets - Balances at Amortised Cost	2024/25		2025/26	
	Long Term £000	Short term £000	Long Term £000	Short Term £000
Investments	2	6,000	-	16,100
Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	6,087	-	4,233
Debtors	229	2,059	223	2,604
<i>Debtors that are not financial Instruments</i>		1,605		2,405
<i>Total Debtors</i>	229	3,664	223	5,009
Total Financial Assets	231	14,146	223	22,937

Financial Liabilities - Balances at Amortised Cost	2024/25		2025/26	
	Long Term £000	Short term £000	Long Term £000	Short Term £000
Borrowing	(3,006)	(284)	(2,722)	(284)
Creditors	-	(3,662)	-	(3,937)
<i>Creditors that are not financial Instruments</i>		(988)		(1,103)
<i>Total Creditors</i>		(4,650)		(5,040)
Total Financial Liabilities	(3,006)	(3,946)	(2,722)	(4,221)

The Financial Instruments categorised above represent:

Financial Assets

- Amounts shown under Investments consist of short-term deposits held by the Council for treasury management purposes.
- Amounts shown under Cash and Cash Equivalents consist of cash held by the Council in bank accounts.
- Amounts shown under Long-Term Debtors consist of loans to property owners under the Empty Homes scheme and a loan to Rossendale Leisure Trust.
- Amounts shown under Short-Term Debtors represent the Council's net operational (sundry) debtors.

Fair Value Hierarchy of Investments - The investments above have been assessed as Level 2 within the fair value hierarchy, as their valuation is based on observable inputs other than quoted market prices, either directly or indirectly, as at 31st March 2025 and 31st March 2026.

Financial Liabilities

- Amounts shown under Long-Term and Short-Term borrowings consist of loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb).
- Amounts shown under Short-Term Creditors represent the Council's operational creditors.

21b - Financial Instrument Gains/Losses

The amounts shown below are recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under the (Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services:

Income & Expenses Gains and Losses	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Financial Liabilities		
Interest Expenses	111	100
Financial Assets		
Interest Income	(640)	(851)
Net (Gain)/Loss charged to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services	(529)	(751)

21c - Fair value of assets and liabilities carried at amortised cost

Financial liabilities and financial assets represented above under 21a - Categories of Financial Instruments are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- For the loans from the PWLB, the fair value has been calculated by reference to the premature repayment set of rates in force on 31st March 2025 and 31st March 2026 respectively.
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised.
- Where an instrument will mature in the next 12 months, the carrying amount is assumed to be approximate to fair value.
- The fair values of trade debtors, other receivables and trade creditors are considered to be equal to the invoiced amounts.

The fair values are calculated as follows:

	31st March 2025		31st March 2026	
	Carrying amount	Fair Value	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Borrowings	(3,290)	(2,935)	(3,006)	(2,662)
Short Term Trade Creditors	(3,662)	(3,662)	(3,937)	(3,937)
Total Financial Liabilities	(6,952)	(6,597)	(6,943)	(6,599)
Long Term Investments	2	2	-	-
Investments <1 year	6,000	6,000	16,100	16,100
Long Term Debtors	229	229	223	223
Short Term Trade Debtors	2,865	2,865	2,604	2,604
Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,087	6,087	4,244	4,244
Total Financial Assets	15,183	15,183	23,171	23,171

At 31st March 2026, Rossendale Borough Council had two outstanding PWLB Loans. One loan was taken out in March 2010 for a period of 25 years at a fixed interest rate of 4.49%, and the second loan was taken out in August 2019 for £2m over a period of 20 years at a fixed interest rate of 1.34%.

The premature repayment rates applicable on 31st March 2026 were 4.33% and 4.51% respectively. The corresponding fair values of the loans were £1,671k and £1,112k, as provided by the Council's treasury management advisor, MUFG Corporate Markets. For sensitivity analysis purposes, MUFG Corporate Markets has confirmed that, had similar new loans been available at 31st March 2026 at discount rates 1% higher than those stated above, the fair value of the loans at the end of 2025/26 would have been reduced by £129k to £2,654k.

The new loan rates applicable at 31st March 2026 were 5.27% and 5.45% respectively. Using these rates, the corresponding fair values were £1,609k and £1,053k. MUFG has confirmed that, had similar new loans been available at 31st March 2026 at discount rates 1% higher than those stated above, the fair value of the loans at the end of 2025/26 would have been reduced by £120k to £2,542k.

The Council's treasury management investment portfolio does not include any long-term deposits with a maturity period exceeding 365 days. For investments with maturities of less than 365 days, the carrying value is considered to be a reasonable approximation of their value.

Short-term debtors and creditors are carried at cost, which is considered to be a fair approximation of their value.

Note 22 Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

Key Risks

The Council's activity exposes it to a variety of financial risks, the key risks are:

- **Credit risk** – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Council;
- **Liquidity risk** – the possibility that the Council may not have sufficient funds available to meet its commitments as they fall due;
- **Re-financing risk** – the possibility that the Council may be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at unfavourable interest rates or terms;
- **Market risk** – the possibility that financial loss may arise for the Council as a result of changes in market variables, such as movements in interest rates.

Overall procedures for Managing Risks

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services.

The procedures for risk management are established within the legal framework of the Local Government Act 2003 and associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice, and Investment Guidance issued under the Act.

Overall, these procedures require the Council to manage risk in the following ways:

- by formally adopting the requirements of the Code of Practice;
- by approving, in advance each year, prudential indicators for the following three years that limit:
 - the Council's overall borrowing;
 - its maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable interest rates;
 - its maximum and minimum exposures to the maturity structure of its debt; and
 - its maximum annual exposure to investments maturing beyond a year;
- by approving an annual Investment Strategy for the forthcoming year, setting out the criteria for investing funds and selecting investment counterparties in compliance with government guidance.

These requirements are known as Prudential Indicators and are required to be reported to and approved by Members alongside the Council's annual Council Tax budget-setting process in February. They are considered together with the annual Treasury Management Strategy, which outlines the detailed approach to managing risks associated with the Council's exposure to financial instruments. Actual performance against these indicators is reported to Members on a quarterly basis.

These policies are implemented by the Council's Financial Services team. The Council maintains written principles for overall risk management, together with specific policies covering areas such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash through Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). These TMPs are a requirement of the Code of Practice and are reviewed annually.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits placed with banks and financial institutions, as well as from credit exposures to the Council's customers. Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria, and limits approved by the Council.

The Council maintains strict criteria for investment counterparties and monitors activity against these criteria on an ongoing basis. As a result of this high credit criteria, there has been no experience of defaults. The Council maintains an approved list of organisations for investment purposes, informed by the recognised credit rating agencies and comprising major banks, building societies and other local authorities. Maturity limits apply for each counterparty category, and maximum investment limits also exist per counterparty, and per sector.

No breaches of these criteria occurred during the reporting period, and the Council does not expect to incur any losses arising from the non-performance of any counterparty in relation to financial deposits.

The following analysis summarises the Council's potential maximum exposure to credit risk, based on default experience assessed by the credit rating agencies and the Council's experience of customer collection levels over the previous three financial years, adjusted to reflect current market conditions.

Credit Risk

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk is relation to its treasury investments and cash balances on the 31st March 2026 was negligible, based on past and current experience, alongside reference to historical default data published by credit rating agencies. The cash balances are readily accessible, and the investments mature within 12 months. As such, no loss allowance has been provided. Although a risk of irrecoverability applies to all of the Council's deposits, there was no evidence at 31st March 2026 that this was likely to crystallise.

Loss allowances on sundry trade debtors has been assessed using overdue debtor information and calculates losses based on lifetime credit losses for all debtors overdue by more than 30 days. Debtors are assessed individually where information on the likelihood of collection exists; otherwise, debtors are collectively assessed for credit risk as one group. During the reporting period, the Council held no collateral as security.

Trade Debtors

Short Term Trade Debtors by age	31st March 2025 (Restated) £000s	31st March 2026 £000s
Less than 3 months	216	273
Three to six months	134	53
Six months to one year	87	79
Over one year	597	670
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	(443)	(632)
Total Net Trade Debtors	591	443

Liquidity Risk

The Council has ready access to long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) and the Money Markets to cover any day-to-day cash flow requirements. There is no significant risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The Council managed its liquidity position through the risk management procedures outlined above, including the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the treasury management and investment strategy reports, as well as through cash flow management procedures required by the Code of Practice. The Council's performance in managing its cash position is reported quarterly in financial monitoring reports available on the Council's website.

Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The approved prudential indicator limits for the maturity structure of debt, together with the limits placed on investments with a duration greater than one year, are the key parameters used to address this risk. The approved treasury management and investment strategy addresses the main risks and sets the operational parameters should the Council need to borrow funds.

Market Risk

There are three related risks the Council is aware of: interest rate risk, price risk and foreign exchange risk.

Interest Rate Risk

The Council has limited exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Borrowings are carried at fair value on the balance sheet; therefore, nominal gains and losses on fixed-rate borrowings do not impact the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable-rate borrowings and investments are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and reflected in the General Fund Balance.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The annual Medium-Term Financial Strategy brings together the Council's prudential indicators and its expected treasury operations, including assumptions regarding interest rate movements. The aim of the prudential indicators is to contain treasury activity within defined limits, thereby reducing the risk and likelihood of adverse movements in interest rates or borrowing decisions that could negatively impact the Council's overall financial position.

Within this Strategy, prudential indicators are set which provide maximum and minimum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The Financial Services team monitor market conditions and interest rate forecasts throughout the year to adjust exposure where appropriate. The indicators in force during 2025/26, which were approved alongside the Council's annual budget in February 2025 are shown below:

Interest rate exposure

Limits in interest rate exposure	2024/25	2025/26
Max principal sums borrowed > 364 days	£20.75m	£24.40m
Borrowing limits on Fixed Interest Rates	100%	100%
Borrowing limits on Variable Interest Rates	0%	0%
Max sums invested > 364 days	£0m	£1.5m
Max sums invested with Government body	Unlimited	Unlimited
Max sums invested with commercial body	£8.0m	£8.0m

Price Risk

The Council does not invest in instruments with this type of risk.

Foreign exchange risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and therefore has no exposure to losses arising from movements in exchange rates.

Note 23 Debtors

The short-term debtors are shown below.

Debtors	31 st March 2025 £000s	31 st March 2026 £000s
Central Government Bodies	(1,208)	(1,360)
Other Local Authorities	1,536	1,378
Other entities and individuals		
Council Tax	431	549
Retained Business Rates	(380)	(87)
Housing Benefits	805	721
Advance Payments	421	1,204
Sundry Trade Debtors	4,138	4,817
Credit Loss Impairment	(2,079)	(2,213)
Net Balance at 31st March	3,664	5,009

Note 24 Short Term Investments and Cash and Cash Equivalents

Short Term Investments and Cash & Cash Equivalents	31 st March 2025 £000s	31 st March 2026 £000s
Short Term Investments (between 3 months and 1 year)	-	-
Short-term Investments at 31st March	-	-
Short term Investments (under 3 months)	6,000	16,100
Bank Deposits - Current Accounts	6,086	4,243
Petty Cash Accounts	1	1
Cash and cash equivalents at 31st March	12,087	20,344

Note 25 Assets Held for Sale

Current Assets held for sale	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Balance at 1st April	-	1,291
Revaluation Gain on Dipsoal	-	-
Revaluation gains/(losses) to the Revaluation Reserve	-	(6)
Reclassifications	1,291	2
Amounts written back to tangible fixed assets	-	(1,230)
Balance at 31st March	1,291	57

Note 26 Creditors

The short-term creditors are shown below.

Creditors	31 st March 2025 £000s	31 st March 2026 £000s
Central Government Bodies	66	59
Other Local Authorities	37	158
Bodies external to government		
Advance Receipts: Council Tax	75	76
Advance Receipts: Retained Business Rates	(15)	34
Advance Receipts: Others	764	706
Accumulated Absences	61	70
Sundry Trade Creditors	3,662	3,937
Balance at 31st March	4,650	5,040

Note 27 Borrowing

In March 2010 the Council took out a PWLB loan of £4.6m over a life of 25 years at 4.49% to support the Council's capital spending, including the planned investment resulting from the Leisure Services Review. In August 2019 the Council took out a further loan of £2m over 20 years at 1.34% Repayment of both loans is based on equal instalments of principal.

PWLB Borrowing	31 st March 2025 £000s	31 st March 2026 £000s
Repayable in less than 12 months	284	284
Repayable between 1 and 2 years	284	284
between 2 and 5 years	852	852
between 5 and 10 years	1,420	1,236
in 10 years or more	450	350
Balance at 31st March	3,290	3,006

Note 28 Provisions

Provisions	31st March 2025 £000s	Movement in Year	31 st March 2026 £000s
Business Rate Appeals Provision	1,160	(270)	890
Total Provisions	1,160	(270)	890

Note 29 Short-Term and Long-term Grant Receipts in Advance

This account holds the movements between grants received and those recognised through the CIES when the grant conditions have been met.

During 2022/23 the Council was awarded funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to be spent within three years. During 2025/26 this period was extended to September 2026 and the Council is on track to fully utilise the funding ahead of the deadline.

In March 2025 and the Council received a large sum of money in advance in relation to the Capital Regeneration Programme. This scheme now has an extended deadline March 2028 and good progress is being made with the schemes that this programme is funding.

The Local Authority Housing Fund has continued into 2025/26 where additional monies have been received and the Council is in the process of using these funds to purchase additional properties to provide temporary accommodation.

The DEFRA Waste Capital Fund was a grant to enable the roll out of Food Waste Collection from April 2026. The money has been used to purchase additional waste vehicles and Food Waste Collections were successfully implemented in April 2026.

The Plan for Neighbourhoods funding was Year 1 and 2 of a 10 year programme to improve a pre-defined area including Rawtenstall, Waterfoot and Crawshawbooth. The money in the table below relates to capacity funding received to prepare a Regeneration Plan.

Short-term and Long Term Grant Receipts in Advance	UKSPF	Capital Regeneration Programme	Local Authority Housing Fund	DEFRA Waste Capital Fund	Long Term Plans for Town	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
2024/25						
Balance Brought forward	50	671	688	-	-	1,409
Grant received/(repaid) in the year	1,681	5,118	50	528	170	7,547
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)	(1,731)	(2,720)	(245)	-	-	(4,696)
Balance at 31st March 2025	-	3,069	493	528	170	4,260
2025/26						
Balance Brought forward	-	3,069	493	528	170	4,260
Grant received/(repaid) in the year	490	9,903	356	(439)	213	10,523
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)	(197)	(1,636)	(579)	-	-	(2,412)
Balance at 31st March 2026	293	11,336	270	89	383	12,371

Note 30a Usable Reserves

The overall movements in the Council's Usable Reserves can be seen in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Further details on the movements in the individual Earmarked Reserves and Capital Grants Unapplied accounts can be found below, along with greater explanation of the activity on the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve.

Earmarked Reserves;

Transitional Reserve – This reserve is to support the Council in its medium-term financial strategy.

Business Rates Retention Reserve – Following the localisation of non-domestic rates in April 2013, this reserve was established with the additional grant received for Small Business Rate Relief to support any future volatility of this new resource stream. The balance on this reserve will also be required to support the deficit on the Collection Fund Adjustment Account. Under the timings permitted by the Code each year's surplus or deficit will not impact on the CIES until the following year.

Rawtenstall Bus Station Reserve – This reserve holds the commuted sum received from Lancashire County Council to cover future maintenance costs associated with the Rawtenstall Bus Station.

Directorate Investment Reserve – This reserve holds unspent budgets for future one-off revenue projects.

Homelessness Reserve – This reserve holds funds for supporting ongoing and future projects to tackle homelessness within Rossendale.

Individual Registration / local Election Reserve – Individual electoral registration implementation began in summer 2014 and this reserve was established to hold grant funds received and not spent to be matched against costs as they arose over the subsequent years.

Planning Strategy Reserve – This reserve is to cover the costs of public scrutiny associated with reviews of planning strategy in the future.

Tourism Strategy Reserve – Established to allow the Council to support various events/ activities.

Haslingden Regeneration Reserve – The Council has previously set aside £100k to provide funds for the wider regeneration of Haslingden. This reserve has been fully utilised.

Asylum Dispersal funds – To support asylum seekers with housing needs.

Ukraine Guests – to support Ukraine guests and their sponsors

Earmarked Reserves	Balance 31st March 2025 £000s	Income & Transfer to Reserves £000s	Transfers between Reserves £000s	Utilised from Reserves £000s	Balance 31st March 2026 £000s
Transitional Reserve	5,910		(44)	-681	5,185
Business Rates Retention	3,113	1,996			5,109
Rawtenstall Bus Station	486				486
Directorate Operational Reserves	754	907	40	(167)	1,534
Homelessness	288	62		(14)	336
Individual Registration / Elections	109	73		(14)	169
Planning Strategy	399	370		(6)	763
Tourism Strategy	-	18	4		22
Haslingden Regeneration	34			(34)	-
Asylum Dispersal Funds	356	235			591
Ukraine Guests	65	13			78
MMI	229				229
	11,743	3,673	-	(916)	14,500

Note 30b - Capital Receipts Reserve

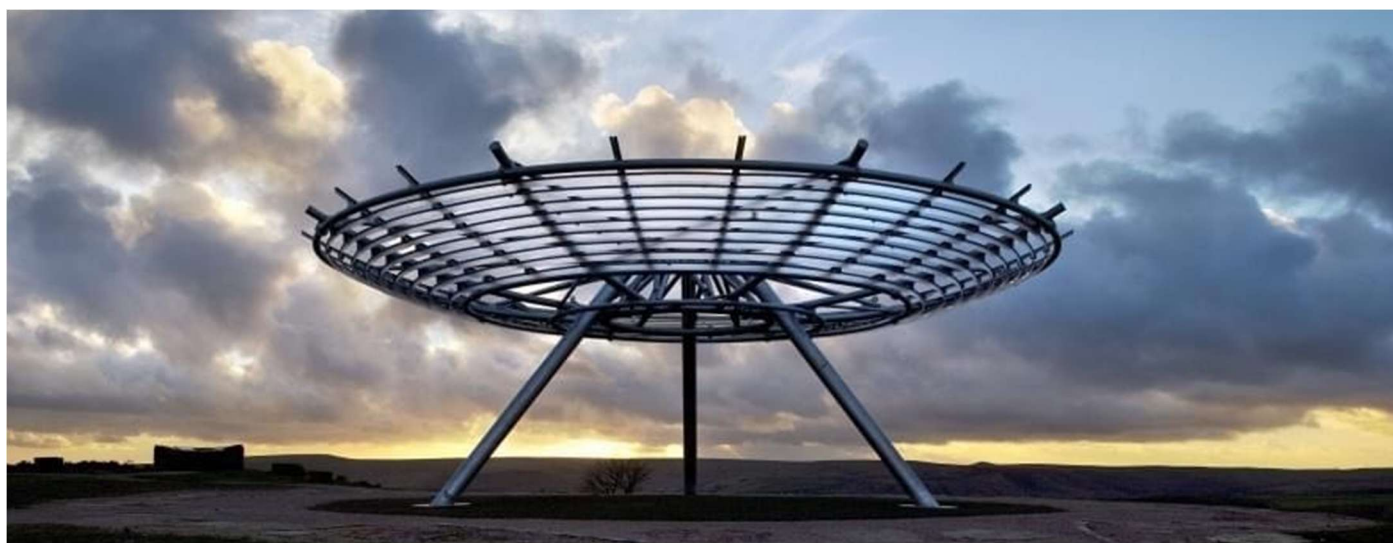
These are capital receipts (net of asset values) which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure or repay debt.

Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Balance at 1st April	2,504	2,141
Capital receipts in year	137	173
Capital receipts used to fund capital expend	(500)	(378)
Non Empty Homes sub-total	2,141	1,936
Empty Homes		
Balance at 1st April	2	2
Capital receipts in year	-	-
Capital receipts used to fund capital expend	-	-
Empty Homes sub-total	2	2
Balance at 31st March	2,143	1,938

Note 30c - Capital Grants Unapplied Account

Capital grants and other contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipt have been complied with.

Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Balance 31 st March 2025 £000s	Grants Received £000s	Grants Applied £000s	Balance 31 st March 2026 £000s
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,083	1,581	(2,147)	1,517
	2,083	1,581	(2,147)	1,517



Note 31 Unusable Reserves

31a Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains unrealised revaluation gains, net of depreciation and disposals on that revaluation amount, on a strict per-asset basis. This Reserve is matched by fixed assets within the Balance Sheet. It does not represent resources available to the authority.

Revaluation Reserve	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Balance at 1st April	13,233	17,148
Surplus/(Deficit) on revaluation of assets in the year		
Property, Plant & Equipment	4,351	1,271
Investment Assets		
Assets Held for Disposal		
Value of assets disposed of in the year	(35)	(12)
Depreciation in the year	(235)	(246)
(Impairments)/Impairment Reversals in the year	(166)	(96)
Balance at 31st March	17,148	18,065

31b Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account provides a balancing mechanism between the different rates at which assets are depreciated under the Code and are financed through the capital controls mechanism.

In the main this account holds the gains on historical revaluations of the assets still held by the Council, depreciated over the life of the assets. It is managed as a total figure, not on a per-asset basis, and does not represent cash resources available to the authority.

Capital Adjustment Account	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Balance at 1st April	13,533	17,527
Revenue and Capital Receipts used to finance capital		
Revenue Contributions		
Useable Capital Receipts	500	379
Capital Grants and Contributions	6,606	7,353
Earmarked Reserves		36
Donated Assets		
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	(45)	(172)
Investment Assets		
Assets Held for Disposal		
Write off NBV of disposals (net of Revaluation Reserve)	(7)	(113)
Minimum Revenue Provision for repayment of debt	687	714
Depreciation of Property, Plant and Equipment	(1,287)	(1,480)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	(38)	(49)
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment assets	(16)	(537)
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under statute	(2,406)	(4,323)
Non Empty Homes sub-total	17,527	19,335
Empty Homes		
Balance at 1st April	(1,792)	(1,792)
Revenue and Capital Receipts used to finance capital		
Revenue Contributions	-	-
Useable Capital Receipts	-	-
Minimum Revenue Provision for repayment of debt		
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under statute	-	-
Empty Homes sub-total	(1,792)	(1,792)
Balance at 31st March	15,735	17,543

31c Deferred Capital Receipts Account

The Deferred Capital Receipts holds the value of renovation loans on the East Lancs Empty Homes properties.

Deferred Capital Receipts Account	31st March 2025 £000s	31st March 2026 £000s
East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme Loans		
Balance at 1st April	1,265	1,265
Balance at 31st March	1,265	1,265

31d Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account allows for differences between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund. The balance on the account represents the Council's share of the Collection Fund surplus or deficit. The large balance relating to Business Rates is offset by Section 31 grants received from Central Government.

Rossendale Borough Council - Collection Fund Adjustment Account	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at 1st April	22	(122)	26	(22)
Prior year (Surplus)/Deficit transferred to/from revenue	(113)	11	(52)	(33)
Apportioned Estimated Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	52	-	64	-
Apportioned Final Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	65	89	38	140
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at 31st March	26	(22)	76	85

Note 32 Local Government Pension Scheme – a defined benefit scheme

The following note explains the terms and conditions of the retirement benefits of the Council officers and other employees. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the authority has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The authority participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Lancashire County Council – this is a funded scheme, meaning that the authority and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

The Lancashire County Pension Fund is a multi-employer arrangement, under which each employer is responsible for the pension cost, liabilities and funding risks relating to its own employees and former employees. Each employer's contributions to the Fund are calculated in accordance with the LGPS Regulations, which require an actuarial valuation to be carried out every three years.

The latest actuarial valuation of the Fund was carried out as at 31st March 2025 and showed assets of £11,974m against accrued liabilities of £8,938m, resulting in a funding level of 134%. This compares with a funding level of 115% at the previous valuation, when assets were £10,712m and accrued liabilities were £9,317m.

The weighted average duration of the Fund's liabilities is 11 years, measured using IAS 19 assumptions. The duration of liabilities for individual employers participating in the scheme may differ significantly from this, reflecting the profile of their current and former employees.

The Fund provides pensions payable for life. The amount of pension payable depends on the length of time employees are active members of the scheme, and their salary when they leave the scheme (a “final salary” scheme) for service up to 31st March 2014 and a re-valued average salary (a “career average” scheme) for service from 1 April 2014 onwards.

The Fund targets a pension paid throughout life. The amount of the pension depends on how long employees are active members of the scheme and their salary when they leave the scheme (a “final salary” scheme) for service up to 31st March 2014 and a re-valued average salary (a “career average” scheme) for service from 1 April 2014 onwards.

Impact of McCloud Judgement

On 16 July 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued its consultation on the McCloud remedy for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales. The principal feature of the proposed remedy was broadly as expected: the final salary underpin would be extended to a wider group of members in respect of service up to 31st March 2022. However, there are a small number of areas of detail which require further consideration.

An allowance for the McCloud remedy is included in the 31st March 2026 figures, and will continue to be included in future actuarial calculations unless specific circumstances or guidance require otherwise. The additional liabilities and service costs have generally been calculated in line with the proposed underpin set out in the consultation. However, there are some minor amendments to the underpin for all members who were active on or before 31st March 2012. For example, the underpin may now apply retrospectively to members who left the service after 1 April 2014, and calculations may be required even when a member no longer has a benefit entitlement from the Fund. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the impact of these amendments is expected to be nil.

Furthermore, when calculating the potential cost of the McCloud Judgement as part of the 2022 actuarial valuations, the Fund’s actuary, Mercers, carried out a standalone estimate of the cost of the McCloud Judgement. It was estimated that the cost was an increase in past service liabilities by £107m at the valuation date, and this amount was included in the 2022 liability figure.

32a – Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Council’s obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan is as follows:

Pension Assets and Liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(67,982)	(67,172)
Fair value of plan assets	91,794	89,811
Net Asset/(Liability) arising from defined benefit obligation	23,812	22,639
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	(24,856)	(23,530)
Net Asset/(Liability) after asset ceiling adjustment	(1,044)	(891)

Asset Ceiling

Following the pensions valuation by the Council actuary, the Council determined that the fair value of its pension plan assets outweighed the present value of the plan obligations at 31st March 2026, resulting in a pension plan asset for the third time. IAS 19 Employee Benefits requires that, where a pension plan asset exists, it is measured at the lower of:

- The surplus in the defined benefit plan; and
- The asset ceiling.

The asset ceiling is the present value of any economic benefits available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. The Council's actuary calculated the asset ceiling as the net present value of future service costs less the net present value of future contributions.

The Council has therefore limited the pension asset recognised in the balance sheet to the asset ceiling. The adjustment has been recognized within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Balance Sheet.

32b - Present Value of Scheme Liabilities

The following table reconciles the opening and closing values of the scheme liabilities.

Scheme Liabilities	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Scheme Liabilities as at 1 st April	75,974	67,982
Current Service Cost	861	612
Interest on Pension Liabilities	3,638	3,845
Member Contributions	350	370
Past Service cost/(gain)	-	-
Remeasurement of liabilities	(9,067)	(1,910)
Benefits/transfers paid	(3,774)	(3,727)
Scheme Liabilities as at 31st March	67,982	67,172

Of the above liabilities there is an unfunded element, for which the value at 31st March 2026 was £891k (£1,044k at 31st March 2025).

32c - Present Value of Scheme Assets

The following table reconciles the opening and closing values of the scheme assets.

Scheme Assets	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Scheme Assets as at 1 st April	91,295	91,794
Interest on plan assets	4,412	5,254
Remeasurement of assets	(1,391)	(4,797)
Administration expenses	(32)	(34)
Employer contributions	934	951
Member contributions	350	370
Benefits/transfers paid	(3,774)	(3,727)
Scheme Assets as at 31st March	91,794	89,811

32d - Major Categories of Scheme Assets

Scheme Assets	31st March 2025		31 st March 2026	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Equities	92	0.1%	90	0.1%
Bonds	92	0.1%	-	0.0%
Property	1,102	1.2%	1,248	1.4%
Alternatives	89,148	97.1%	87,576	97.5%
Cash & Cash equivalents	1,360	1.5%	897	1.0%
Total Scheme Assets	91,794		89,811	

32e - Scheme Membership

The membership of the scheme was as follows:-

Scheme Membership	31st March 2025	31 st March 2026
Active Members	166	169
Deferred Members	226	230
Pensioners	422	417
Spouses / dependents	98	89

32f - Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account

Authorities recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge required against Council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so that the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and replaced with the cash paid in the year.

The table below shows transactions within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the corresponding adjustments made in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Reconciliation of the movement in the Pension Fund Reserve	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Net Costs of Services - Current Service Cost	861	612
Past Service cost/(gain)	-	-
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure		
Interest cost	(774)	(1,409)
Expected return on assets in the scheme	1,391	4,797
Administration expenses	32	34
Total post-employment benefit charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the	1,510	4,034
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(9,067)	(1,910)
Total post-employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income	(7,557)	2,124
Movement in Reserves Statement		
Reverse net charges for retirement benefits in accordance with the Code	(1,510)	(4,034)
Actual charge to the General Fund Balance in the year		
Employer's contributions payable to the scheme	934	951

32g – Re-measurement impacts in the Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement

Remeasurement Gains/(Losses)	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Experience gains/(losses)	(105)	(1,574)
Gains/(losses) on financial assumptions	(8,719)	(33)
Gains/(losses) on demographic assumptions	(243)	(303)
Net Remeasurement gains/(losses) in current year	(9,067)	(1,910)

32h – Actual gains and losses on plan assets

The actual gains measured against experience gains/(losses) in the year can be seen in the following table, along with the relevant percentages of period-end assets and liabilities which these values represent:

Actual Gains/(Losses)	2024/25		2025/26	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Actual Return on Plan Assets	3,022	3.3%	3,601	4.0%

32i - Actuarial Assumptions

The Borough Council fund liabilities and assets have been assessed by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, an independent firm of actuaries. The main assumptions used in their calculations at the beginning and end of the year are shown below, with an effective date of 31st March 2026.

The liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc.

Assets in the Lancashire Pension Fund are valued at fair value, principally market value for investments, and consist of the following categories, by proportion with their expected rates of return at the beginning and end of the year:

Actuarial Assumptions		Beginning of Period %	End of Period %
Duration information as at the end of the accounting period			
Estimated Macaulay duration of liabilities		15 yrs	11 yrs
Duration profile used to determine assumptions		Very Mature	Retiree
Financial Assumptions			
Rate of CPI inflation		2.60%	2.90%
Rate of increase in salaries		4.10%	4.40%
Rate of increase in pensions		2.70%	3.00%
Discount rate		5.80%	6.10%
Post retirement mortality assumptions			
Non-retired members	Mortality table	SAPS 4 / SAPS 4 Middle	SAPS 4 / SAPS 4 Middle
	Improvements	CMI 23 1.5% / CMI 23 1.5%	CMI 24 1.5% / CMI 24 1.5%
	Weightings	112% M 101% F S=7, A=0	119% M 106% F
	Other choices	W20=W21=0, W22=W23=15%	Core Underlying
Current pensioners	Mortality table	SAPS 4 / SAPS 4 Middle	SAPS 4 / SAPS 4 Middle
	Improvements	CMI 23 1.5% / CMI 23 1.5%	CMI 24 1.5% / CMI 24 1.5%
	Weightings	106% M 101% F S=7, A=0	112% M 103% F
	Other choices	W20=W21=0, W22=W23=15%	Core Underlying
Life expectancy			
of a male (female) future pensioner aged 65 in 20 yrs		22.3 (25.4) yrs	22.1 (25.1) yrs
of a male (female) current pensioner aged 65		21.1 (23.6) yrs	21.0 (23.6) yrs
Market value of total fund assets			
£11,974m		£11,974m	£12,435m
Last actuarial valuation		Start of Period	End of Period
31st March 2025		31st March 2025	31st January 2026

32j – Sensitivity Analysis of Actuarial Assumptions

Under IFRS the assumptions made by the actuary must be submitted to a sensitivity analysis. Below are the main assumptions used by the actuary and the effects on the pension fund accounts if those assumptions changed.

Sensitivity analysis based on assumptions as at 31st March 2026	Central	Sensitivity 1	Sensitivity 2	Sensitivity 3	Sensitivity 4	Sensitivity 5	
	Estimates for 2025/26	+ 0.5% p.a. discount rate	+ 0.25% p.a. inflation	+ 0.25% p.a. pay growth	+ 1 yr to life expectancy	change in 2024/25 investment returns	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	+1% £000s	-1% £000s
Liabilities	67,172	63,728	68,963	67,318	68,653	67,172	67,172
Assets	(89,811)	(89,811)	(89,811)	(89,811)	(89,811)	(90,697)	(88,925)
Deficit/(Surplus)	(22,639)	(26,083)	(20,848)	(22,493)	(21,158)	(23,525)	(21,753)
Projected current service cost	608	518	658	608	624	608	608
Projected net interest cost	(1,394)	(1,736)	(1,281)	(1,381)	(1,300)	(1,448)	(1,340)

32k – Budgeting figures used in the Assumptions

Budgets used in assumptions for following year	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s
Projected Pension cost next year		
Estimated Pay	5,340	5,589
Service Cost (% of pay)	11.8%	10.6%
Implied Service Cost including interest	646	608
Net Interest Cost	34	41
Administration Expenses	32	34
	712	683
Projected employer contributions next year		
Normal contributions	(780)	(302)
£ for £ recharges	(154)	(135)
	(934)	(437)
Projected deficit/(surplus) for operations next year	(222)	246
Projected deficit/(surplus)	(23,812)	(22,639)
Projected deficit/(surplus) at end of next year	(24,034)	(22,393)

Note 33 Contingent Assets & Liabilities

Contingent Assets - There are no known contingent assets.

Contingent Liabilities - There are no known contingent liabilities.



Note 34 Cash Flow notes

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000
Operating Activities		
Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	5,160	3,870
Adjustment for noncash movements	6,434	9,043
Adjustment for items that are investing and financing activities	1,823	1,300
Net cash flows from Operating Activities	13,417	14,213
Investing Activities		
Additions to property, plant and equipment & intangible assets	(6,936)	(4,649)
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment	82	147
Increase/(decrease) in long-term debtors	(9)	(5)
Other income	4,817	3,193
Cash inflows - Short-term investments	320,800	247,300
Cash outflows - Short-term investments	(327,300)	(251,400)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(8,546)	(5,414)
Financing		
Cash Inflows/(Outflows) - agency operations		
National non-domestic rates	125	(86)
Council Tax	(334)	(171)
Cash Outflows - Repayments of amounts borrowed	(284)	(284)
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(493)	(541)
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,378	8,257
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the year	7,709	12,087
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the year	12,087	20,344

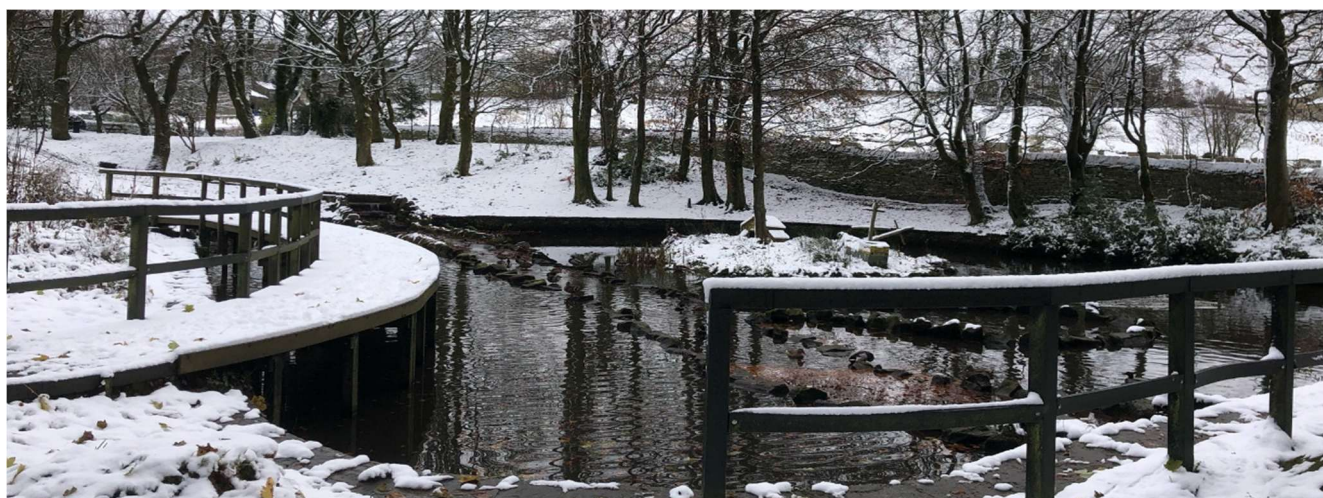


Note 34a Reconciliation of Revenue Surplus to Net Cash Flow

Reconciliation of I&E Surplus to Net Cash Flow from revenue activities	RBC	
	31st March 2025	31st March 2026
	£000s	£000s
Adjustments for non-cash movements		
Depreciation and Impairments	1,705	2,361
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	38	49
Revaluation losses charged to Revenue	44	172
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	42	125
Pension Fund Adjustment	(5)	(272)
Adjustments between accruals and cash accounting		
(Incr)/Decr in Long Term Debtors	9	5
(Incr)/Decr in Inventories	(2)	(26)
(Incr)/Decr in Debtors	2,680	(1,345)
Incr/(Decr) in Creditors	(928)	390
Less Cash (Outflows)/Inflows from Agency Operations	209	(257)
Incr/(Decr) in Grant Receipts in Advance	2,722	8,111
Incr/(Decr) in Provisions	(80)	(270)
Adjust net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	6,434	9,043
Adjustments for investing and financing activities		
Additions to PPE & intangible assets	6,722	4,640
Proceeds from the sale of PPE	(82)	(147)
Other income	(4,817)	(3,193)
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	1,823	1,300

Note 34b Net Change in Liquid Resources

Net change in liquid resources	31 st March 2025 £000s	31 st March 2026 £000s	Movement £000s
Cash in Hand	1	1	-
Cash at Bank	12,086	20,343	8,257
Net Book Value at 31st March	12,087	20,344	8,257



Note 35 Accounting Standards Issued, but not yet adopted

The Council is required to disclose information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted by the Code. The requirement applies to accounting standards that come into effect for financial years commencing on or before 1 January of the financial year in question (i.e. on or before 1 January 2026 for 2025/26).

At the balance sheet date, the new standards and amendments to existing standards that have been published but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom are:

- Amendments to FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Amendments to Heritage assets) issued in March 2024
- Amendments to the Classification and Measurement of Financial Instruments (Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7) issued in May 2024
- Annual improvements to IFRS accounting standards – Volume 11 issued in July 2024
- Contracts Referencing Nature-dependent Electricity (Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7) issued in December 2024.

These changes are not anticipated to have a material impact on the Council's accounts.

Note 36 Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in preparing this Statement of Accounts are:

- Estimates for depreciation of assets in any one year depend upon the forecast life of the assets. The asset life of buildings is determined by a qualified valuer at each revaluation date and in the case of vehicles, equipment and intangible assets by Council staff.
- Estimates for impairment of assets are performed by a qualified valuer at the end of each year to reflect any abnormal changes in property values between full formal reviews within the 5-year rolling revaluation programme.
- Following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in April 2013, Local Authorities are liable for a share of the cost of successful appeals by businesses against their rateable value in 2025/26 and earlier financial years. A provision has been calculated based on information provided by Analyse Local who use the latest Valuation Office Agency (VOA) ratings list of appeals and an analysis of successful appeals to date. The Council's share of the business rate appeals provisions at 31st March 2026 was £890k.

Note 37 Events after the Balance Sheet date

This DRAFT Statement of Accounts was authorised for release by the Head of Financial Services (S151) on 29th June 2026. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statement or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31st March 2025, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

Note 38 Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future, or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2026 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	The Council's fixed assets are valued on the balance sheet in accordance with the statement of asset valuation principles and guidance notes issued by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures all Plant, Property and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued within a five year cycle. All assets reviewed had a valuation date of 1 April 2025. Any material changes after the valuation date have been accounted for. As per Guidance indexation has been applied to properties. There is uncertainty regarding the implications of this on property values.	The Council's property assets that are vulnerable to uncertainty are those valued under Current Value and Fair Value. There is the possibility that these values may change and as an illustration a 1% variation in these valuations could affect the assets values by £325k. The Council will continue to review their current valuation programme and reflect any changes in future valuation reports.
Pensions Liability	The estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and the expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice on the assumptions to be applied.	The sensitivity of the pension liability to changes in key assumptions is shown in Note 32. Relatively small changes in assumptions can have a significant impact on the pension liability. A 0.5% per annum increase in the discount rate assumption would result in a decrease in the pension liability of approximately £3.444m. A one-year increase in members' life expectancy would result in an increase in the pension liability of approximately £1.481m.
Business Rates - NNDR	Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme effective 1 April 2013, Local Authorities are liable for refunding ratepayers who have successfully appealed against the rateable value of their properties on the rating list. A provision has been recognised for these liabilities up to and including 31st March 2025. The estimate has been calculated using the Valuation Office (VAO) ratings list of appeals and with support from LG Futures. The costs will be shared between Central Government, Rossendale Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.	The Council's share of the business rate appeals `provision is £890k, this has remained broadly unchanged from the previous year.

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate collection fund. The statement below shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of Council tax and non-domestic rates.

COLLECTION FUND	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000
Income				
Council Tax	50,338	-	52,970	-
Non Domestic Rates	-	13,776	-	14,698
Apportionment of Previous Year (Surplus)/Deficit				
Central Government	-	(28)	-	(41)
Rossendale Borough Council	(113)	(23)	(52)	(33)
Lancashire County Council	(663)	(5)	(278)	(7)
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	(106)	-	(44)	-
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	(35)	-	(14)	(1)
Total Income	49,421	13,720	52,582	14,616
Expenditure				
Precepts paid out				
Central Government	-	6,810	-	7,150
Lancashire County Council	34,539	1,226	36,715	1,287
Rossendale Borough Council	6,444	5,448	6,524	5,720
Lancashire Police Authority	5,503	-	5,867	-
Lancashire Fire Authority	1,770	136	1,898	143
Whitworth Town Council	70	-	-	-
Charges to the Collection Fund				
Write off of uncollectable amounts	450	332	204	41
Increase/(Decrease) in Bad/Doubtful Debts impairment allowance	695	(331)	1,016	12
Increase/(Decrease) in Provision for Appeals	-	172	-	(674)
Interest	-	28	-	32
Cost of Collection Allowance	-	97	-	98
NNDR Transitional Protection Payments	-	(727)	-	(86)
Renewable energy	-	280	-	311
Total Expenditure	49,471	13,471	52,224	14,034
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(50)	249	358	582
Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward	162	(196)	112	53
Surplus/(Deficit) Carried Forward	112	53	470	635
<i>Allocated to</i>				
Central Government	-	95	-	386
Lancashire County Council	77	(18)	332	34
Rossendale Borough Council	29	(23)	78	210
Lancashire Police Authority	5	-	43	-
Lancashire Fire Authority	1	(1)	17	5
	112	53	470	635

Collection Fund Note 1 Council Tax Base

Council Tax derives from charges raised according to the value of residential properties, which have been classified into nine valuation bands (A-H) for this specific purpose. Individual charges are calculated by estimating the amount of income required to be taken from the Collection Fund by the Council for the forthcoming year and dividing this by the Council Tax base i.e. the equivalent number of Band D dwellings.

The basic amount of Council Tax for a Band D property rose in 2025/26 from £2,309.86 to £2,420.58 following increases by all preceptors.

The Council tax base has been calculated as follows:-

Band	Ratio to Band D	Total No. Properties	Total equiv No. after Discounts & Exemptions	2025/26 Band D Equivalent	2024/25 Band D Equivalent
Special	5/9		28.9	16.1	19.4
A	6/9	16,465.0	11,763.9	7,842.6	7,706.5
B	7/9	5,246.0	4,355.9	3,387.9	3,369.4
C	8/9	4,418.0	3,960.3	3,520.3	3,455.5
D	1	3,463.0	3,174.3	3,174.3	3,168.9
E	11/9	2,034.0	1,902.1	2,324.7	2,307.3
F	13/9	715.0	682.1	985.2	973.5
G	15/9	466.0	435.4	725.6	706.9
H	2	40.0	28.3	56.5	54.5
		32,847	26,331.0	22,033.2	21,761.8
Less adjustments for anticipated changes to the base and losses on collection				(881.2)	(870.8)
Band D equivalent number of properties				21,152.0	20,891.0

Collection Fund Note 2 Provision for Rating Appeals

Provision for Rating Appeals	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Balance as 1st April	-	2,727	-	2,900
Provision made in year	-	884	-	73
Provision utilised in year	-	(350)	-	(748)
Balance at 31st March	-	3,261	-	2,225
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	-	1,304	-	890

Collection Fund Note 3 Provision for Bad Debts

Bad Debts Provision	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Balance as 1st April	6,372	1,282	7,067	950
Write-offs during year for previous years	(450)	(356)	(204)	(54)
Contribution to provisions during year	1,145	24	1,221	65
Net increase/(decrease) in provision	695	(332)	1,017	11
Balance at 31st March	7,067	950	8,084	961
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	952	380	1,072	384

Collection Fund Note 4 Arrears

Arrears	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Balance as 1st April	8,774	1,519	8,929	1,366
Change in year	155	(153)	829	(293)
Balance at 31st March	8,929	1,366	9,758	1,073
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	1,204	546	1,315	429

Collection Fund Note 5 Rossendale Borough Council's Shares

RBC's Shares	2024/25		2025/26	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Within Debtors				
Arrears	1,204	546	1,315	429
Less Provision for Bad Debts	(952)	380	(1,072)	384
	252	926	243	814
Within Creditors				
Advance Receipts	(60)	(263)	(76)	(8)
Within Provisions				
Provisions for Rating Appeals	-	1,091	-	1,160

Collection Fund Note 6 National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Under the current Business Rate model Rossendale Borough Council retain 40% of the business rates collected locally.

Non-domestic rates are organised on a national basis. Central Government specifies an amount, for 2025/26 this is 51.2p in the pound, or 49.9p for small businesses (51.2p or 49.9p in 2024/25) and, subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying the rateable value of their property by that amount. The rateable value for business premises in Rossendale increased to £67,744k by March 2026, up from £41,547k in March 2025, this is mainly due to the national revaluation which was implemented in April 2023.

Since 2016/17 Rossendale Borough Council is entitled to keep 100% of the business rates from renewable energy installations. In 2025/26 renewable energy element of the business rates scheme was £312k, compared to £280k in 2024/25.

The net business rates collected within Rossendale (after provision for bad debts and appeals) were £13,776k compared with £12,072k in 2024/25. This reduction is mainly due to the transitional protection ratepayers have received to alleviate the impact of the 2023 revaluation. This usually tapers out over the period of the new rating list. The Council will be compensated by Government for the transitional protection awarded.

Collection Fund Note 7 Lancashire Business Rates Pool

Since 2016/17, this Council has been a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool.

In a Business Rates Pool, tariffs, top-ups, levies and safety nets are combined. This can result in a significantly lower levy rate or even a zero-levy rate meaning that more or all of the business rate growth can be retained within the pool area instead of being payable to the Government.

The Lancashire Business Rates Pool, which included most but not all local authorities in Lancashire was designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and originally operated with allocations on the basis of the 50% business rates retention scheme, and it has operated on this basis since.

In 2019/20 we successfully submitted a bid along with 15 other authorities in Lancashire to become a 75% Business Rates Pilot Pool. This meant that 75% of collected rates were retained in Lancashire rather than 50%. This arrangement operated for one year only, and then reverted to the 50% business rates retention scheme, and it has operated on this basis since.

Local authority membership of the pooling arrangement has varied over the years since 2016/17, but current membership has been the same since 2020/21.

The business rates income allocations in 2024/25 and 2025/26 are shown in the table below:

	Lancashire Business Rates Pool - Income Allocations for 2024/25 and 2025/26
District Authorities	40%
Lancashire County Council	9%
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	1%
	50%
Central Government	50%
Total	100%

As part of the pool arrangements, one authority must be designated as lead authority, which in the case of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool is Ribble Valley Borough Council. As part of this arrangement a fee of £20,000 is payable, charged equally to all members of the pool by Ribble Valley Borough Council in their role as lead.

The retained levy in the Lancashire Business Rates Pool has been distributed as follows:

- Lancashire County Council is paid 10% of the overall retained levy
- Each district within the pool retains 90% of their retained levy.

Lancashire Business Rates Pool Members 2025/26	Authority Type	Tariffs and Top-ups in respect of 2025/26	Retained Levy on Growth 2025/26	10% retained Levy Payable to/received by LCC	Net Retained Levy 2025/26
		£	£	£	£
Burnley Borough Council	Tariff	6,980,506	(1,609,512)	160,951	(1,448,561)
Chorley Borough Council	Tariff	7,943,392	(1,508,108)	150,811	(1,357,297)
Fylde Borough Council	Tariff	8,941,446	(1,426,366)	142,637	(1,283,729)
Hyndburn Borough Council	Tariff	5,094,179	(1,450,421)	145,042	(1,305,379)
Pendle Borough Council	Tariff	4,323,587	(1,254,967)	125,497	(1,129,470)
Ribble Valley Borough Council	Tariff	5,321,901	(880,161)	88,016	(792,145)
Rossendale Borough Council	Tariff	3,488,350	(771,031)	77,103	(693,928)
South Ribble Borough Council	Tariff	12,931,415	(2,233,792)	223,379	(2,010,413)
West Lancashire Borough Council	Tariff	10,771,529	(1,804,554)	180,455	(1,624,099)
Wyre Borough Council	Tariff	8,411,761	(810,305)	81,031	(729,274)
Lancashire County Council (LCC)	Top-Up	(171,275,856)	-	(1,374,922)	(1,374,922)
Central Government	-	97,067,790	-	-	-
Total		-	(13,749,217)	-	(13,749,217)

Collection Fund Note 8 Council Tax for all Precepting Bodies 2025/26

Precepting Bodies	2024/25	2025/26								
	Band D	Change	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£	%	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Rossendale	308.44	2.99%	211.77	247.07	282.36	317.66	388.25	458.84	529.43	635.32
LCC	1,653.29	4.99%	1,157.18	1,350.06	1,542.92	1,735.79	2,121.52	2,507.26	2,892.97	3,471.58
Fire	84.73	5.90%	59.82	69.79	79.76	89.73	109.67	129.61	149.55	179.46
Police	263.40	5.32%	184.93	215.76	246.58	277.40	339.04	400.69	462.33	554.80
Total (excl parish)	2,309.86	4.21%	1,613.70	1,882.68	2,151.62	2,420.58	2,958.48	3,496.40	4,034.28	4,841.16
Whitworth Parish	30.97	9.33%	22.57	26.34	30.10	33.86	41.38	48.91	56.43	67.72
Total (incl parish)	2,340.83	4.17%	1,636.26	1,909.02	2,181.73	2,454.44	2,999.86	3,545.32	4,090.70	4,908.88



Glossary

Accounting Policies - The rules and practices adopted that determine how transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements

Accruals - The concept is that income is recorded when it is earned rather than when it is received and expenses are recorded when goods or services are received rather than when the payment is made.

Agency Services - Services provided by the Council, as an agent on behalf of the responsible body, where the principal reimburses the Council for the cost of the work carried out.

Auditor's Opinion - The opinion required by statute from the Council's external auditors, indicating whether the statement of accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority.

Budget - A statement of the Council's spending plans for revenue and capital expenditure over a specified period of time.

Business Rates - From the 1st April 2013 non-domestic rates, or Business Rates, were localised. In the past all business rates were collected locally but then paid over to central government and each authority was paid a share of the national pool based upon their population and circumstances.

Capital Adjustment Account - The Account accumulates (on the debit side) the write-down of the historical cost of noncurrent assets as they are consumed by depreciation and impairments or written off on disposal. It accumulates (on the credit side) the resources that have been set aside to finance capital expenditure. The same process applies to capital expenditure that is only capital by statutory definition (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute). The balance on the account thus represents timing differences between the amount of the historical cost of noncurrent assets that has been consumed and the amount that has been financed in accordance with statutory requirements.

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. Section 40 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 defines 'expenditure for capital purposes'. Expenditure that does not fall within the definition must be charged to a revenue account.

Capital Financing Costs - The annual cost of borrowing (principal repayments and interest charges), leasing charges and other costs of funding capital expenditure.

Capital Grants Unapplied - Government grants and other contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipt have been complied with. This reserve holds the balance of grants unapplied at year-end.

Council Tax Base - The number of properties in each band is multiplied by the relevant band proportion in order to calculate the number of Band D equivalent properties in the area. The calculation allows for exemptions, discounts, appeals and a provision for non-collection.

Capital Receipts - Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets, such as land or buildings, or the repayment of capital grants or advances.



Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) - CIPFA is one of the leading professional accountancy bodies in the UK and the only one which specialises in the public sector. It is responsible for the education and training of professional accountants and for their regulation through the setting and monitoring of professional standards. Uniquely among the professional accountancy bodies in the UK, CIPFA has responsibility for setting accounting standards for a significant part of the economy, namely local government.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code) - The Code incorporates guidance in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). It sets out the proper accounting practice to be adopted for the statement of accounts to ensure they give a 'true and fair' view of the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the Council.

Collection Fund - The Collection Fund is a separate statutory fund which Billing Authorities have to maintain. It shows the transactions in relation to collection from taxpayers of National Non-Domestic Rates and the Council Tax, and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to Precepting Authorities and the General Fund holds that portion of the Collection Fund cumulative balance attributable

Collection Fund Adjustment Account - Holds that portion of the Collection Fund cumulative balance attributable solely to Rossendale Borough Council.

Community Assets - Assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life, and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks and historic buildings.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – Formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), is the Government department responsible for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy

Creditor - An amount owed by the Council for goods received, or services rendered to it within the accounting period, but for which payment has not been made.

Debtor - An amount of income due to the Council within the accounting period but not received at the balance sheet date.

Deferred Capital Receipts - Capital receipts to be received by instalments over agreed periods of time.

Depreciation - The measure of the wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in the useful economic life of a fixed asset.

DWP - The Department of Work and Pensions funds the Housing and Council Tax Benefits payable to borough residents and also funds the administration of those benefits.

Earmarked Reserves – The Council holds a number of reserves earmarked to be used to meet specific, known or predicted future expenditure.

Events after the Balance Sheet Date - These are events, favourable or adverse, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts are authorised for issue.

External Audit - The independent examination of the activities and accounts of Local Authorities to ensure the accounts have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and proper practices and to ensure the Council has made proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.

Fair Value – Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Financial instruments - Financial instruments are cash, evidence of an ownership interest in an entity, or a contractual right to receive, or deliver, cash or another financial instrument. Financial instruments can refer to both receivables (including debtors and other investments) and payables (including creditors and other liabilities or borrowings).

General Fund - This is the main revenue account of the Council covering day to day spending on services other than the provision of housing. Credited to the fund are charges made by the Council, specific Government and other grants and receipts from the Collection Fund.

Governance Framework - Authorities have a responsibility to ensure that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to and engages with and leads the community. The principles of this framework were laid down by the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

Government Grant - Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in the form of cash or transfers of assets to an authority in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the authority.

Heritage Assets - These assets are held due to their historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities. They are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations, which are held and maintained for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

Impairment - A measure of abnormal consumption of the economic benefit of an asset over and above the normal annual depreciation.

Infrastructure Assets - Assets that are inalienable, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of infrastructure assets are highways and footpaths.

Intangible Assets - Intangible assets are non-financial assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by the Council through custody or legal rights, such as software. Intangible assets are capitalised at cost and depreciated to the revenue account over their useful economic life.

Internal Borrowing - Whilst capital resources cannot be used to fund revenue works, revenue reserves can be used to support the costs of capital projects, either permanently, or temporarily. Temporary revenue funding is known as Internal Borrowing and these funds are repaid over the life of the asset in a process called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). When the Council has the revenue reserves to do this it is usually a cheaper option than external borrowing.

Joint Venture - A joint venture is a joint arrangement whereby the parties who have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the net assets of the arrangement.

Leasing - A method of utilising assets where a rental charge is paid for a specified period of time, instead of outright purchase.

Loans outstanding - The total amounts borrowed from external lenders for capital and temporary revenue purposes but not repaid at the balance sheet date.

Materiality - Materiality is a concept within auditing and accounting relating to the importance of an amount, transaction, or discrepancy. Information is material if its omission or misstatement could influence the economic decision of users taken on the basis of the financial statements and depends on the size of the item or the particular circumstances of its omission or misstatement.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) - MRP is the minimum amount which must be charged to an Authority's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for credit liabilities, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

National non-domestic rates (NNDR) – NNDR is a tax levied on business properties and sometimes known as Business Rates. This tax is set nationally by the Government. Sums based on rateable values are collected by billing authorities and shared between major preceptors.

Net book value - The amount at which assets are included in the balance sheet, i.e. their historical cost of current value, less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Net Debt - The authority's borrowings less cash and liquid resources. Where cash and liquid resources exceed borrowings, reference is made to net funds rather than net debt.

Operational assets - Assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Council in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Precept - The levy made by precepting authorities on billing authorities, requiring the latter to collect income from Council Tax payers on their behalf, for example Lancashire County Council is a precepting authority which requires Rossendale Borough Council to collect an amount from each householder within the borough.

Prior Period Adjustment - Prior period adjustments are material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors.

Provision - An amount set aside in the accounts for liabilities which are likely or certain to be incurred but the exact amount and dates are not currently known.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) - An arm of Central Government which is the major provider of loans to finance long-term funding requirements for Local Authorities

Related Parties - Related parties are Central Government, other Local Authorities, precepting and levying bodies, subsidiary and associated companies, Elected Members, and all senior officers. For individuals identified as related parties, the following are also presumed to be related parties:

- members of the close family, or the same household
- partnerships, companies, trusts or other entities in which the individual, or member of their close family or the same household, has a controlling interest.



Reserve - Amounts set aside in one year's accounts which can be spent in later years. Reserves are often earmarked for specific purposes, including the financing of future capital expenditure, replacement or renewals and the funding of future defined Council initiatives.

Revenue Expenditure - Spending on day-to-day items including employees' pay, premises costs and supplies and services.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS) - Expenditure that does not result in creation of a non-current asset, but can be classified as capital for funding purposes. Such expenditure is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and an adjustment made in the Movement in Reserves Statement to enable the expenditure to be funded from capital resources rather than impact on the Council Tax. Examples include works on property owned by other parties, renovation grants and capital grants to other organisations.

Abbreviations used within the Statement of Accounts

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

CPI Consumer Price Index

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

FRS Financial Reporting Standard

GAAP Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities

IAS International Accounting Standards

IFRIC International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee

IFRS International Financial Reporting Standards IPSAS International Public Sector Accounting Standards

LASAAC Local Authority Accounts Advisory Committee

LGPS Local Government Pension Scheme NDR Non-Domestic Rates

PSAA Public Sector Audit Appointments

PWLB Public Works Loan Board

RSG Revenue Support Grant

SeRCOP Service Reporting Code of Practice

SSAP Statements of Standard Accounting Practice

TMPs Treasury Management Practices

Report Title:	Internal Audit Charter		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Head of Internal Audit (Internal Audit Service)	Cabinet Portfolio	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan ☐	General Exception ☐	Special Urgency ☐
Integrated Impact Assessment:			
	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Mark Baskerville Audit Manager	Telephone:	01772 538615
Email:	mark.baskerville@lancashire.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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Audit and Accounts Committee's terms of reference require it to advise the Council on planned internal audit activity and results including the standards within which the service operates.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to consider and approve the Internal Audit Charter.

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 The Charter establishes the framework within which the Internal Audit Service operates to best serve the Council and to meet its professional obligations under professional standards. It defines the purpose, authority and responsibility of internal audit activity, establishes the Service's position within the organisation; authorises access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defines the scope of internal audit activities.

- 3.2 The Charter is designed to ensure the Service operates in accordance with the mandatory definition, code, standards, and advice set out in the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and the Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the relevant standard setter for Internal Audit in local government in the United Kingdom.
- 3.3 The charter is subject to periodic review by the Head of Internal Audit, and a copy is attached.
- 3.4 This paper reports an updated Internal Audit Charter.
- 3.5 To support the Audit and Accounts Committee in fulfilling its responsibility to oversee the operation of the Internal Audit Service.

4. RISK

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involve risk considerations as set out below.
- 4.2 Failure to comply with the Global Internal Audit Standards issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) would undermine the ability to provide the Council with the necessary level of assurance in relation to their governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The report supports the Leader and Chief Executive's report in the Annual Governance Statement.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 Any financial implications are commented upon in the report.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 Any legal implications are commented upon in the report.

7.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 N/A.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 N/A

Audit and Accounts Committee
Internal Audit Charter and Mandate



Introduction

This charter establishes the framework within which Lancashire County Council's Internal Audit Service operates to best serve Rossendale Borough Council (the Council) and meet its professional obligations under applicable professional standards. It defines the purpose, authority, and responsibility of Internal Audit activity, establishes the Internal Audit Service's position within the organisation, authorises access to records, personnel, and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements, and defines the scope of Internal Audit activities.

It will be subject to periodic review by the Head of Service – Internal Audit ('Head of Internal Audit') and presented to the Audit and Accounts Committee for approval.

Relevant Regulations and Interpretation

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the relevant standard setter for Internal Audit in local government in the United Kingdom. From 1 April 2025, the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and the Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector will replace the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Internal Audit Service therefore operates in accordance with this mandatory definition, code, standards, and advice.

The new GIAS are organised into five domains: Purpose, Ethics and Professionalism, Governing the Internal Audit Function, Managing the Internal Audit Function, and Performing Internal Audit Services. These domains encompass 52 standards that provide comprehensive guidance for Internal Audit practices. The principles within these domains emphasise the importance of serving the public interest, maintaining ethical conduct, ensuring effective governance, managing audit functions efficiently, and performing audit services with due diligence.



Global Internal Audit Standards Five Domains, 15 Principles



Authority and Requirement for Effective Internal Audit

The authority and requirement for Internal Audit in local government is established under the Local Government Act 1972 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Specifically:

Local Government Act 1972:

Section 151: Requires every local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs, which includes measures to prevent and detect fraud.

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:

Part 2, Section 3: Mandates that local authorities must have sound systems of internal control, which include arrangements for the management of risk, control, and governance processes, encompassing counter fraud measures.

Authority and Requirement for Effective Counter Fraud Arrangements

Local Government Act 1972:

Section 151: Requires every local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs, which includes measures to prevent and detect fraud.

Section 222: Empowers local authorities to prosecute or defend legal proceedings if it is considered expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of its inhabitants. This includes prosecuting individuals who commit fraud against the authority.

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:

Part 2, Section 3: Mandates that local authorities must have sound systems of internal control, which include arrangements for the management of risk, control, and governance processes, encompassing counter fraud measures.

Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA 2023):

Section 199 of ECCTA 2023 comes into force on 1 September 2025. It creates a new offence, under which an organisation will be liable where a specified fraud offence is committed by an employee or agent, for the organisation's benefit, and the organisation did not have reasonable fraud prevention procedures in place. It is a defence for the organisation to prove that, at the time the fraud offence was committed, it had in place such prevention procedures as it was reasonable in all the circumstances to expect the body to have in place.

Definitions

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) defines Internal Auditing as:

Internal Auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

Within Rossendale Borough Council, the board is defined as the Audit and Accounts Committee.

Senior management includes the council's Corporate Management Team, which comprises the Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Directors and Monitoring Officer.

The 'chief audit executive' is deemed to be the Head of Internal Audit.

Responsibilities

Role of Internal Audit

The Regulations set out that the Council must ensure that they have a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that financial and operational management is effective; and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has taken the decision to outsource their internal audit provision to Lancashire County Council's Internal Audit Service. However, responsibility for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit remains with the Council.

Internal Audit provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps organisations achieve their objectives by systematically evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. This service adds value by:

- Identifying areas for improvement
- Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations
- Providing insights that enhance decision-making and organisational performance

Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

Board and Audit Committee:

- Ensure the Internal Audit function is independent and has sufficient resources.
- Approve the Internal Audit charter, risk-based audit plan, and internal audit resources.
- Oversee the performance and effectiveness of the Internal Audit function.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Management:

- Support the Internal Audit function by providing access to necessary information and resources.
- Ensure that management actions are taken in response to Internal Audit recommendations.
- Foster an organisational culture that values Internal Audit and risk management.

Head of Audit (CAE):

- Develop and maintain a risk-based audit plan.
- Ensure the Internal Audit function adheres to the IIA standards and other relevant standards.
- Report on the Internal Audit function's performance and findings to the board and audit committee.

Internal Auditors:

- Conduct audits in accordance with the IIA standards and the Internal Audit charter.
- Maintain objectivity, integrity, and confidentiality.
- Communicate audit findings and recommendations clearly and effectively.
- Maintain professional competence through continuous training and development.

External Auditors:

- Collaborate with the Internal Audit function to enhance audit coverage and efficiency.
- Consider the work of Internal Auditors when planning and conducting

external audits.

- Share relevant findings and insights with the Internal Audit function.

These responsibilities ensure that the Internal Audit function operates effectively and adds value to the organisation by providing assurance and insights on governance, risk management, and control processes.

Independence, Objectivity, and Integrity

Everyone in the public sector must comply with the Nolan Principles, which include selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. However, Internal Audit has additional requirements for independence, objectivity, and integrity.

Independence

- Internal Auditors must be free from conditions that threaten their ability to perform their duties impartially. This means:
 - **Organisational Independence:** The Internal Audit function must report functionally to the board or audit committee, ensuring it has the authority to act independently.
 - **Individual Independence:** Internal Auditors must avoid conflicts of interest and not engage in activities that could impair their unbiased judgment.

Objectivity

- Internal Auditors must maintain an unbiased mental attitude and avoid conflicts of interest. This requires:
 - **Professional Judgment:** Internal Auditors should not subordinate their judgment to others and must make decisions based on objective criteria.
 - **Impartiality:** Auditors must perform their work without any bias, ensuring that their findings and recommendations are based solely on evidence.

Integrity

- Internal Auditors must adhere to high ethical standards and be honest and forthright in their work. This involves:
 - **Ethical Conduct:** Auditors must act with integrity, ensuring their actions and decisions are in the best interest of the organisation.
 - **Professional Competence:** Auditors must maintain their professional knowledge and skills through continuous training and development, ensuring they stay updated with the latest auditing standards and practices.

These additional requirements ensure that Internal Auditors can provide reliable and objective assurance and consulting services, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and control processes within the organisation.

Reporting Lines and Relationships

Functional Reporting

The Head of Internal Audit reports functionally to the Audit and Accounts Committee. This ensures that the Internal Audit function operates independently from management and can provide unbiased assurance.

Direct Access

The Head of Internal Audit has direct access to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Head of Financial Services, who is also the council's finance officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and other senior leaders, including the Monitoring Officer. This access ensures that the Internal Audit function can communicate important findings and recommendations directly to those in positions of authority.

Regular Access to the Audit and Accounts Committee

The Head of Internal Audit has regular access to the Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee, which typically meets at least four times a year. The Head of Internal Audit reports to each meeting of the committee under its terms of reference. The committee is responsible for approving the annual audit plan and overseeing the performance of the Internal Audit function.

These reporting requirements, as set out in the GIAS, ensure that the Internal Audit function can operate independently and effectively, providing valuable insights and assurance to the organisation.

Access to Information

Right of Access for Internal Audit

Internal Auditors respect the value and ownership of information they receive and the reports they produce, and do not disclose information without appropriate authority unless there is a legal or professional obligation to do so. They are prudent in the use and protection of information acquired in the course of their duties and shall not use information for any personal gain or in any manner that would be contrary to the law or detrimental to the council's legitimate and ethical objectives.

The Internal Audit function has unrestricted direct access to all records, premises, and personnel necessary to perform its duties effectively. These rights of access apply equally to partner organisations that have links with or provide services on behalf of the Council, where the Council has a statutory or contractual entitlement to exercise such right. These rights shall be included in all contractual arrangements entered into with such organisations. This right of access is essential to ensure that Internal Auditors can carry out their responsibilities without any limitations or hindrances. Specifically:

Access to Records

Internal Auditors have the authority to access all records, documents, data, and correspondence relating to Council business, regardless of whether the format they are held (physical form or electronically). This includes any unofficial funds operated by an employee as part of their duties. This access allows auditors to gather the evidence needed to evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes, or to aid any investigation.

Access to Premises

Internal Auditors have the authority to enter any premises or land of the organisation to conduct audits. This includes access to all departments, offices, and facilities, ensuring that auditors can observe operations and verify the existence and condition of assets.

Access to Personnel

Internal Auditors have the authority to interview any employee or officer of the organisation to provide such explanations, information or other assistance concerning any matter under examination as part of any audit engagement. This access is crucial for understanding processes, identifying potential issues, and obtaining insights that may not be evident from documents alone.

Access to Property

Internal Auditors have the authority to require any employee of the Council to produce cash, stores, or any other Council property under his or her control.

Access to Computer Systems

Internal Auditors have the authority to access all Council computer systems as and when required. This ensures that auditors can review electronic records, data, and systems to perform comprehensive audits.

These rights of access are fundamental to the Internal Audit function's ability to provide independent and objective assurance. Any restrictions on access to records, premises, personnel, or computer systems would impair the audit function's independence and objectivity, thereby reducing its effectiveness.

Internal Audit Resources and Effectiveness

Sufficiency of Resources

The Internal Audit function shall be provided with sufficient resources, including professional audit staff possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and professional qualifications to effectively fulfil its responsibilities. This includes resources for counter fraud and investigation work designed to comply with the four pillars of the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally strategy: Govern, Acknowledge, Prevent, and Pursue.

Continuous Professional Development

The Internal Audit staff shall engage in continuous professional development to maintain and enhance their competencies, ensuring they remain current with industry standards and best practices.

Access to Specialised Skills

The Internal Audit function shall have access to specialised skills from within or outside the organisation as necessary to address specific audit requirements and complexities, including counter fraud and investigation activities.

Independence and Objectivity

Internal Audit resources shall be independent and objective, free from any conflicts of interest, to ensure unbiased and effective audit activities.

Adequate Budget

The Internal Audit function shall be allocated an adequate budget to meet its objectives and execute its audit plan effectively, ensuring the necessary resources are available, including those required for counter fraud and investigation work.

Responsibility for Internal Audit Resources

The responsibility for ensuring that Internal Audit resources are in place lies with the Corporate Management Team and the Audit and Accounts Committee. The Audit and Accounts Committee reviews and approves the Internal Audit plan and resource requirements, ensuring that the Internal Audit function is adequately resourced.

Rossendale Borough Council: Audit Charter and Mandate

Section 10.01 of the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) requires the Head of Audit to seek budget approval from the Audit and Accounts Committee. Despite this, the Audit and Accounts Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring that sufficient budget and resources are allocated to Internal Audit. They can raise concerns with management if they believe additional budget and resources are necessary to support the internal audit function effectively. Additionally, the Head of Audit will promptly communicate the impact of insufficient financial resources to the Audit and Accounts Committee and senior management, as per the GIAS requirements.

The Audit and Accounts Committee can make recommendations to senior management and the governing body regarding the adequacy of resources for the Internal Audit function. The Head of Audit is responsible for managing the Internal Audit function, identifying resource needs, and presenting these needs to the committee. The Head of Audit ensures that the Internal Audit team has the necessary skills and competencies to perform their duties, including those related to counter fraud and investigation work. The committee ensures that the Internal Audit function remains independent and objective, and it monitors the implementation of the Internal Audit plan and the use of resources, including resources for counter fraud and investigation as part of the service.

Section 4.1 of the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) requires the Head of Audit to report to the Audit and Accounts Committee if resources are not adequate to fulfil the internal audit mandate effectively. This ensures that the internal audit function can operate independently and provide the necessary assurance and advisory services without any limitations

Competency

The Head of Internal Audit and audit managers are required to hold appropriate professional audit qualifications. These are defined as full membership of one of the institutes of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB) or professional membership of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA). It is expected that senior auditors will either hold or be close to and actively working towards full professional qualification but, exceptionally, they may be qualified by experience at a demonstrably professional level.

The county council's performance and development opportunities are applicable to all staff within the Internal Audit Service, which supports continuous staff development.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

The Head of Internal Audit operates a quality assurance and improvement programme that both monitors the ongoing performance of Internal Audit activity and periodically assesses the Internal Audit Service's compliance with the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). This includes both internal and external assessments and is set out in a separate quality assurance and improvement programme.

The results of the quality assurance and improvement programme, including any areas of non-conformance with GIAS, are reported annually to the Corporate Management Team and the Audit and Accounts Committee. This report will include information regarding:

- The scope and frequency of both the internal and external assessments.
- The qualifications and independence of the assessor(s) or assessment team, including potential conflicts of interest.
- Conclusions of assessors.
- Corrective action plans.

Non-Audit Work

The Head of Internal Audit shall maintain independence and objectivity in the performance of their duties and shall ensure that any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are appropriately managed. Where the Head of Internal Audit holds management responsibilities outside the Internal Audit function, appropriate safeguards shall be established to preserve the independence and objectivity of Internal Audit activity.

Report Title:	Internal Audit Annual Report 2025/26		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Head of Internal Audit (Internal Audit Service)	Cabinet Portfolio	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan ☐	General Exception ☐	Special Urgency ☐
Integrated Impact Assessment:			
	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Mark Baskerville Audit Manager	Telephone:	01772 538615
Email:	mark.baskerville@lancashire.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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is provided to support the Audit and Accounts Committee in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor performance against the internal audit plan, and to consider a summary of internal audit activity and the level of assurance it gives over the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to consider the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2025/26.

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 The Global Internal Audit Standards issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors) require the Head of Internal Audit to provide An annual conclusion on the council's control environment and a written report to those charged with governance, timed to support the Annual Governance Statement. This Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit meets these requirements.

3.2 This paper reports progress with the delivery of each audit on the 2025/26 annual audit plan and includes an update on progress to deliver the 2026/27 annual plan.

3.3 To support the Audit and Accounts Committee in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor Internal Audit performance.

4. RISK

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involve risk considerations as set out below: adequacy of Council management of risks in respect of the areas subject to audit.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 Any financial implications are commented upon in the report.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

6.1 Any legal implications are commented upon in the report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

Audit and Accounts Committee

Internal Audit Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2026



Appendices

Appendices A and B are attached to support this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	Extracts from audit reports of all completed individual assurance assignments.
Appendix B	The scope and responsibilities of Internal Audit in support of the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion.
Appendix C	A definition of the levels of assurance and residual risks.

Rossendale Borough Council

Internal Audit Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2026

1 Introduction

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report summarises the work that the Rossendale Borough Council's (the Council) Internal Audit Service has undertaken during 2025/26 and the key themes arising in relation to internal control, governance and risk management across the Council.

The role of Internal Audit

- 1.2 The Internal Audit Service (the Service) is an assurance function that provides an independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the relevant standard setter for Internal Audit in local government in the United Kingdom.
- 1.3 The Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and the Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector provide the relevant standards, and the Service operates in accordance with this mandatory definition, code, standards, and advice. The GIAS require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an annual audit conclusion on the Council's control environment and a written report to those charged with governance, timed to support the Annual Governance Statement. This report presents my conclusion based upon the work the Internal Audit Service has performed during 2025/26.
- 1.4 An Internal Audit Charter is in place that establishes the framework within which the Internal Audit Service operates to support the Council in meeting its governance, risk management and control responsibilities, while complying with applicable professional standards.
- 1.5 The scope of our work, management and audit's responsibilities, the basis of my assessment, and access to this report are set out in Appendix B to this report.

Interim progress reports

- 1.6 Summaries of the individual pieces of audit work completed throughout the course of the year have been provided in progress reports to each meeting of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee. Any audit reports will be provided to any members if they wish.

2 Summary assessment of internal control

Annual Audit Conclusion

- 2.1 I can provide reasonable assurance overall over the adequacy of design and effectiveness in the operation of the Council's frameworks of governance, risk management and control. This is a positive assurance

opinion which maintains the level of assurance provided in previous years.

- 2.2 In forming my opinion, I have considered the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Service during the year. This shows 75% of completed assurance audits receiving a Substantial assurance opinion and the remaining audits receiving Reasonable assurance. No audits resulted in a Limited or No Assurance opinion. This indicates that, across the areas reviewed, key controls are generally well designed and operating effectively to support the achievement of the Council's objectives.
- 2.3 The Council's core financial systems and governance audits continue to result in positive assurance, including payroll, accounts payable and receivables and Capita administered systems. Audits demonstrated effective financial governance, clear accountability, appropriate segregation of duties, sound budgetary control, robust reconciliation processes and effective arrangements for the administration and recovery of significant sources of income. In several areas, audit work identified evidence of continued improvement and the embedding of recommendations made in previous years, particularly in relation to financial management, debt recovery arrangements and the operation of key financial controls.
- 2.4 We also provided positive assurance over the Council's capital programme arrangements. Governance, project approval, budget management and risk management arrangements were operating effectively, supporting the delivery of an increasingly ambitious programme of regeneration activity. Member and senior officer oversight arrangements provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny, helping to ensure that investment decisions align with corporate priorities and that major projects are subject to effective monitoring and control.
- 2.5 In audits receiving Reasonable assurance we identified opportunities to strengthen arrangements further rather than significant weaknesses requiring urgent attention. On asset management, the Council is improving its understanding of the property portfolio and developing opportunities to maximise asset value. Completion of an asset management strategy and commercialisation plan and addressing capacity and skills challenges, should support these arrangements to operate at their full potential. Similarly, data management has a generally sound control framework supported by strong technical and operational controls, but improvements are needed to strengthen data governance arrangements, organisational oversight, training compliance and the consistency of policy coverage across services.
- 2.6 We are progressing the planned audit of contract management arrangements, a draft report on the IT audit of cyber security has been issued and a requested IT audit of CCTV was deferred and will now start in July 2026.
- 2.7 A common theme arising from the year's audit work is that fundamental controls are generally in place and operating effectively, but there remain opportunities to strengthen governance documentation, strategy development, policy frameworks and organisational consistency. In several areas, controls rely on experienced officers, established working practices and local management oversight rather than fully documented procedures or corporate frameworks. While this has not resulted in significant control failures, further formalisation of arrangements would

improve resilience, support succession planning and strengthen assurance over the longer term.

- 2.8 The Council continues to operate within a challenging and changing environment, including the increasing demands associated with regeneration activity, digital transformation and preparations for Local Government Reorganisation. Based on the work completed during the year, the Council has generally demonstrated an ability to manage these pressures effectively whilst maintaining appropriate standards of governance, risk management and internal control. Management has been receptive to audit findings and has agreed actions to address identified improvement opportunities, providing assurance that the control environment will continue to develop and strengthen.
- 2.9 Descriptions of the audit work completed are set out below and Appendix A contains summaries of audit reports not previously reported to the Committee. An explanation of the assurance provided by internal audit assignments is set out in Appendix C.
- 2.10 It should be noted that this opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the Council and is not an absolute assurance of the effectiveness of internal control arrangements and the management of risk. Neither this report nor the work of Internal Audit should be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound internal control practices. The purpose of this opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Council which underpin the assessment of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control, which are summarised in the Annual Governance Statement.

Management's responses to our findings

- 2.11 We have discussed the issues we raised during the year with service managers and members of the Senior Management Team and agreed action plans to address the need for improved controls. Follow-up work indicates that risks identified in previous years are largely being addressed and that work is in hand to implement some agreed actions although others had not been implemented.

The Council's control framework

- 2.12 Our work has been organised in accordance with the Internal Audit Service's planning principles and an understanding of the Council's controls at the start of the year, which was set out as follows:

A framework for governance, risk management and control							
Governance and democratic oversight							
Corporate governance framework		Decision-making		Oversight and scrutiny		Policy setting	
Business effectiveness							
Risk management	Performance monitoring and management		Organisational design		Financial governance and planning		Working in partnership with others
Service delivery							
Growth, environment, transport & community services				Children's services & education		Adult services, health & wellbeing	
Economic development & planning	Programmes & project management		Community services	Children's services	School improvement & services	Adult Services	Public health
Service support							
Legal services	Skills, learning & development		Core business systems	Property management	Programme management	Business intelligence	Customer access
Business processes							
Financial systems & processes		Procurement		Facilities management		Human resources	
Budget monitoring		Contract monitoring & management		Information management		Payroll processing	
Investment				Business continuity		ICT systems	

3 Summary of assurance provided by the Service

3.1 The table below summarises the assurances we provided on 2025/26 audits completed to July 2026, which contributed to our annual assurance opinion, including comparative figures from previous years. This excludes follow-up work from previous audits. The table at 3.2 reports the status of each audit on the 2025/26 annual plan.

Year	Final Reports Issued	Assurance provided				
						N/A
2025/26	12	9	2	0	0	1
	100%	75%	17%	0%	0%	8%
2024/25	13	10	2	1	0	0
2023/24	12	5	5	0	0	2
2022/23	16	4	10	1	-	1
2021/22	19	5	11	-	-	1
2020/21	11	4	3	-	-	3

3.2 A summary of the audits completed in the year is set out below showing the assurance level for each audit assignment.

Control Area	Audit Progress	Assurance
Governance and democratic oversight		
LGA Improvement and Assurance Framework	Final	Consultancy
Rossendale Leisure Trust	Deferred 26/27	
Business effectiveness		
Capital Programme	Final	Substantial
Contract management	Progressing	
IT - CCTV	Deferred	July 2026 start
IT - Cyber Security (continued)	Draft report	To be confirmed

Service delivery		
Asset management	Final	Reasonable
Service support		
Data management	Final	Reasonable
Business processes		
Payroll	Final report	Substantial
Council tax	Final report	Substantial
Business rates/ NNDR	Final report	Substantial
Housing benefits	Final report	Substantial
Accounts payable	Final report	Substantial
Accounts receivable	Final report	Substantial
General ledger and budget setting	Final report	Substantial
Income collection/ banking	Final report	Substantial

Stage of audit process	Number	Percentage
Complete/ final report	12	80%
Draft report	1	6%
Progressing	1	6%
Not yet started	0	0%
Deferred/ Cancelled	1	6%
Total number of audits	15	100% (rounded)

Progress against the 2026/27 internal audit plan

- 3.3 The table below reports progress with delivery of audits on the 2026/27 audit plan agreed by the committee in April. Two audits are at the initial stages with meetings held with senior managers to agree the scope and approach. With agreement from the Director of Finance, three audits of Capita administered areas – housing benefits, business rates and council tax – which were audited annually will now be audited every two years. This is due to the substantial levels of audit assurance routinely provided and to increase resources to support demand for in-year Local Government Re-organisation audit work.

Control Area	Audit Progress	Assurance
Governance and democratic oversight		
Rossendale Leisure Trust	Not started	
Business effectiveness		
Treasury Management and Investment Strategy	Not started	
IT Audit - Backup and recovery	Q2 start	
IT Audit – Security incident detection and response	Q2 start	
IT Audit – Patch and vulnerability management	Q2 start	
Service delivery		

Regeneration Portfolio – project management	Not started	
Environmental health – food safety	Planning	
Service support		
Complaints Handling	Progressing	
Business processes		
Payroll	Q3 start	
Accounts payable	Q4 start	
Accounts receivable	Q4 start	
General ledger and budget setting	Q4 start	
Income collection/ banking	Q4 start	

Stage of audit process	Planned Number	%
Complete and reported to committee	0	0%
Draft report stage	0	0%
Progressing	2	15%
Not started	11	85%
Total number of audits	13	100%

Implications for the annual governance statement

- 3.4 In preparing its annual governance statement the Council should consider this annual assurance opinion in relation to its control environment, risk management processes and corporate governance. The Council should therefore reflect the progress made in delivering the actions set out in the Council's improvement plan, describing the impact of completed actions on corporate governance and its plans to implement the remaining actions.

4 Organisational independence

- 4.1 The Service has access to and support from the Council's senior management team and can operate independently within the organisation, so is properly able to fulfil its responsibilities. In accordance with its Charter the Service remains independent of the Council's other functions and, except for its support to management in relation to counter fraud work, no member of the Service has any executive or operational responsibilities.
- 4.2 The Service's work programme and priorities are determined in consultation with the senior management team and the Audit and Accounts Committee but remain decisions for the Head of Internal Audit who, with the Audit Manager, has direct access to and freedom to report in their own names and without fear or favour to all officers and members. During the year, there have been no matters arising which have impacted on the independence of the Service or inappropriate scope or resource limitations on internal audit work.

5 Internal audit performance

- 5.1 The Internal Audit Service entered 2025/26 with six auditor vacancies at different levels, which created capacity constraints during the year. Some temporary support was obtained during the period. Recruiting experienced auditor roles proved challenging, and several vacancies were filled by trainees and less experienced auditors.
- 5.2 This has provided an opportunity to build future capacity within the team, with a focus on staff development, skills, capability and resilience. While audit plan delivery should be considered in the context of these staffing challenges and the investment required to support development, the work completed was sufficient to support the annual audit conclusion. Overall, the service has responded positively and is well placed to continue strengthening during 2026/27.

Internal Audit Organisation Chart



Client satisfaction

- 5.3 Internal Audit invites feedback on the quality of service provided by issuing a 'satisfaction questionnaire' at the end of each audit. This is an important process in terms of identifying how the audit was received by the service area and of identifying aspects of the audit process that can be improved. Responses from auditees indicated that, overall, they were satisfied with the way we conducted our work with them. There were no common themes in the responses received that highlighted particular areas for Service improvement.

Quality assurance and improvement programme

- 5.4 The Relevant Internal Audit Standard Setters (RIASS), including CIPFA, have issued an Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector. This Application Note now forms the basis for internal audit practice across the UK public sector. It is designed to help internal audit functions demonstrate conformance with the new global standards while addressing the unique context of

UK public sector bodies.

- 5.5 The UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Advisory Board (IASAB) will periodically review the Application Note and consider whether any future updates or Topical Requirements from the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) should be adopted in the UK context.
- 5.6 The Internal Audit Service has established and regularly reviews a quality assurance and improvement programme. GIAS requires that all aspects of Internal Audit activity are considered by a combination of ongoing internal monitoring, periodic self-assessments or internal assessments by others with sufficient knowledge, and independent external review at least once every five years.

Type of review	Internal review		External review
Frequency	Ongoing	Periodic	At least 5-yearly
Audit assignment quality	✓		✓
Professional and operational framework		✓	✓

External review

- 5.7 The GIAS require a five-yearly external quality assessment (EQA). The last EQA, was completed in March 2023 and was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. The results of this EQA were reported to the committee in April 2023. This confirmed that the Internal Audit Service 'generally conforms' to the full range of standards set out in the International Professional Practice Framework. To remain within the five yearly cycle another external review should be completed in March 2028.

Internal review

- 5.8 The Internal Audit Service has designed procedures and an audit methodology that conform to PSIAS and are regularly reviewed. Every auditor in the team is required to comply with these or document the reasons why not, and to demonstrate this compliance on every audit assignment. The audit managers assess the quality of each audit concurrently as it progresses. These reviews indicate that there is good evidence of compliance with our audit methodology and input from the audit managers to support the work of the auditors. As was confirmed by the results of the EQA.

Next Steps for the GIAS

- 5.9 Following the introduction of the Standards and the accompanying UK Public Sector Application Note, the Internal Audit Service is reviewing its arrangements to ensure continued alignment with the updated professional framework.
- 5.10 A self-assessment of the updated requirements has commenced. This will include reviewing internal audit methodology, documentation, reporting processes and staff awareness to identify any areas where further improvement or clarification is required. The outcome will inform the ongoing quality assurance and improvement programme and help demonstrate continued conformance with professional standards.

Audit Report Summaries

Capital Programme

Overall assurance rating	Audit findings requiring action			
 Substantial assurance See Appendix A for Rating Definitions	Extreme	High	Medium	Low
	0	0	0	1
Governance and oversight arrangements for the Capital Programme are established and operating as intended. A fully financed programme was approved for both 2025/26 and 2026/27 by Full Council following Cabinet consideration. Reports to Members set out scheme costs, funding sources and overall affordability, with external funding incorporated within the approved programme. Alongside formal reporting, the Cabinet Regeneration Board provides regular Member-level oversight and challenge based on programme updates. At scheme level, Cabinet and Council minutes confirm that major projects, including the Bacup and Rawtenstall Market schemes, were approved by Members before significant expenditure was committed. For Bacup, reports evidence feasibility work and consideration of costs, affordability and value for money. For Rawtenstall, appraisal is demonstrated through funding approvals, consultation and progression through RIBA design stages aligned to agreed objectives. Risk management is embedded across the programme, with risks identified and monitored at programme and project level. Mitigation actions are applied where required, supporting the management of delivery, affordability and funding risks. Programme level oversight was provided through the Programme Board which, when it met, provided effective senior officer scrutiny and challenge across delivery, affordability, timelines and key dependencies. Where required, schemes were paused, revised or reworked. The Programme Board did not meet after August 2025 due to resourcing constraints. During this period, oversight continued through established officer led regeneration and finance discussions, supported by senior management and finance input. While these arrangements maintained oversight, they were not formally constituted or minuted and provide a lower level of documented assurance. A recommendation has been made to introduce contingency arrangements to support continuity of Programme Board governance where key individuals are unavailable.				

Section Two – Background and Scope

Agreed recommendation from the audit	Reference	Priority
Management will consider the introduction of contingency arrangements to support continuity of Programme Board meetings in the absence of key individuals.	4.1	●

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit and Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

Rossendale Borough Council delivers a programme of capital investment to support renewal and regeneration, including major schemes such as the Bacup and Rawtenstall market renewal projects. These projects are intended to support economic regeneration and require effective governance, clear accountability, and robust financial and performance management.

This review examines the adequacy and effectiveness of governance and oversight arrangements for the capital programme, with a focus on project appraisal and approval, budget and resource allocation, and the monitoring and delivery of schemes.

Weak governance, appraisal, or monitoring arrangements increase the risk that projects progress without robust business cases or strategic alignment, cost and delivery issues are not identified promptly, and intended outcomes and value for money are not achieved.

2.3 Financial Information

The Council approved capital expenditure of £24.272m in 2025/26 and £30.177m in 2026/27, reflecting a significant increase in planned investment year-on-year. The programme supports regeneration and operational priorities and is funded through a combination of external grants, borrowing, capital receipts, and reserves.

2.4 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Governance and corporate oversight;
- Project assessment and approval;
- Risk management;
- Capital budget control and financial reporting; and

Section Two – Background and Scope

- Performance monitoring, delivery and accountability.

The audit involved discussions with key officers and a review of relevant policies, procedures, and documentation to gain an understanding of the arrangements in place for managing the capital programme for renewal and regeneration. The conclusions set out in Section Three are based on this and evidence obtained on a sample basis. This included testing controls in relation to the Bacup and Rawtenstall market project developments that were approved in 2024 with budgets of £8.38m and £4.2m respectively.

Asset Management - Commercialisation

Overall assurance rating



Reasonable assurance

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	2	1

Rossendale Borough Council's arrangements for the commercialisation of its land and property assets are generally effective. The control framework operates adequately overall, but improvements are needed to strengthen certain areas to fully achieve its objectives. A comprehensive understanding of the council's property portfolio is essential to maximise income and reduce costs. To this end, a property asset review project started in 2022 with the aim of identifying and reviewing all council land and property, to be completed over five years. At the time of audit five of the ten Wards had been reviewed and senior managers had recently approved additional resources to help meet the deadline.

There are no documented property asset management strategy or commercial plans setting out the council's long-term priorities, objectives, or cost-saving measures. Managers agree that a plan is needed, but due to a lack of resource it has not been completed. However, cabinet reports and business plans document processes for acquisitions and disposal within the financial limits. Oversight is provided by the Programme Board, made up of members and senior managers who monitor progress of programmes, projects, ward reviews, and resource planning. An Income and Savings Group has been established, comprising senior managers, to develop and review projects to maximise income from land and buildings, reduce operating costs, raise revenue through asset disposals and strategic partnerships with businesses and community stakeholders, and generate income through acquisitions, rental income and leases renewals. Managers recognised the need to develop and strengthen staff skills, particularly in operational and commercial areas such as dealing with negotiations and purchasing. However, there are no formal training matrix, mandatory courses, or documented procedure notes to guide staff in their duties.

The Team effectively use monitoring spreadsheets to manage asset compliance and utilisation, financial information to maximise income and reduce costs, and to document the ward review project. A council strategic priority is to utilise digital technology to deliver responsive, efficient and cost-effective services, with an outcome of maximising income to support effective management of property assets. Managers are currently exploring implementing technology through current and new systems, to reduce spreadsheet work and deliver service efficiencies and cost savings. Monitoring spreadsheets are supported by asset case files stored in a strongroom, including key documents such as ownership deeds and signed lease agreements. Weekly debtor reports are reviewed by Finance and Property Services teams, who take action to recover unpaid debts, including reminders, payment plans, or legal proceedings. There are no corporate key performance indicators specific to asset management

Section Two – Background and Scope

commercialisation. However, Members and senior managers regularly attend oversight groups developing and updated ideas to support commercial opportunities and the Team work collaboratively with corporate accountants to inform strategic decision making. Risks and mitigating actions are managed through the corporate risk register and the business plan.

Agreed recommendation from the audit	Reference	Priority
Consideration should be given to developing and publishing a single property asset management strategy and commercial plan which sets out the council's objectives, priorities and arrangements for effective management of its land and property assets to maximise income and reduce costs. Content could include: • Service objectives, vision and strategies; • Legal and regulatory compliance requirements; • Governance, oversight, and reporting arrangements, including an assessment of key risks; • Commercial priorities and long-term savings plan to inform property rentals, renewals, usage and expiries; • Collaborative work with businesses and community stakeholders; • Framework for acquisitions and disposals in line with the Scheme of Delegation approval limits; and • Service roles and responsibilities.	4.1	
Staff skills and competencies should be developed to support service requirements and delivery through: • Identifying and administering relevant training; and • Producing procedure guidance notes listing daily job processes to support understanding and delivery of key tasks and as aide memoire in the event of staff absences.	4.1	
To support the council's strategic priority of utilising digital technology to deliver responsive, efficient and cost-efficient services, opportunities to automate the asset management procedures and processes should be identified and implemented where practicable and cost-effective.	4.3	

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit & Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period April 2025 to December 2025 and has been conducted in conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.2 Context

The Economic Development Department is responsible for implementing the Council's Economic Development Strategy. Its role includes promoting growth through collaboration with strategic partners, businesses, and community stakeholders. The Property Services Team (the Team) within the Department manages property related activities aimed at maximising income and reducing costs through asset sales, acquisitions, leases, and community projects. They oversee 400 tenants and handle major strategic projects involving garages, allotments, industrial sites, offices, and residential units, as well as managing the day-to-day queries about leases, property ownership, and applications from individuals or organizations seeking to buy or lease Council-owned land.

2.3 Financial Information

The Economic Regeneration net budget in 2025/26 was £207.2k, compared with £225.5k in 2024/25.

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of asset management commercialisation has not previously been carried out.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Strategy and governance;
- Property monitoring and compliance;
- Maximising asset utilisation; and
- Reporting and risk.

Data Management

Overall assurance rating



Reasonable

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	4	0

The audit reviewed the Council’s data management arrangements across key services and provides an overall Reasonable assurance rating. The Council has established a solid governance framework, with responsibilities allocated for the roles of Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Data Protection Officer (DPO), defined data ownership, and some ongoing oversight activities. Strong technical controls, system security measures, and established operational processes, particularly within Revenues and Benefits, demonstrate positive practice. However, current policies do not fully cover essential data governance requirements such as GDPR principles and lifecycle management, areas normally addressed through a dedicated data protection policy.

Most Benefits and Council Tax applications were submitted online and supported by appropriate lawful bases, privacy notices, and an existing Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA). Across the areas reviewed, personal data was processed under Legal Obligation or Public Task, meaning consent was not required. The Garden Waste service collected only limited personal data but relied on a generic privacy notice and had no service-specific DPIA; transparency could be improved by adding clearer privacy information within FAQs and at the point of registration. Legal Services processed basic personal data, and occasionally special category data, within the IKEN system through document attachments and emails. System controls were limited, although data collection responsibilities remained with originating services. Planned system replacement is expected to strengthen data handling. Reintroducing the annual Data Management Questionnaire would further support compliance across all services.

Access controls were generally strong across all services, though the level of maturity varied. Revenues and Benefits demonstrated the most robust approach, with conflict-of-interest checks, annual access reviews, detailed audit trails, and external assurance. Garden Waste also had solid controls through role-based access, MFA for corporate users, and available audit logs. IKEN access was restricted to only four authorised users within the Legal Services team which minimised risk. Data was securely hosted across all services with Revenues and Benefits using ISO 27001-certified UK Tier 4 data centres with encryption and Garden Waste operated within Bartec’s encrypted cloud environment. Legal Services stored limited information on the locally hosted IKEN system. No breaches or unauthorised access had been reported. Physical and server security remained strong, supported by enhanced building entry controls and virtual hosting with automated backups. Revenues and Benefits and Garden Waste had clear retention periods with automated deletion of out-of-date records. In contrast, IKEN relied on staff manually entering closure

Section Two – Background and Scope

and deletion dates before data could be removed, a known issue that is expected to be resolved through the planned system replacement. Data sharing was managed through formal agreements that set out required standards for security, handling, and retention.

Freedom of Information (FOI) training delivered by Legal Services had recently been expanded to include Data Protection whilst comprehensive Information and Cyber Security training was available, though completion was not mandatory or consistently monitored. Evidence of uptake was only identified within Revenues and Benefits, indicating inconsistent embedding of training across the organisation.

Agreed actions from the audit	Reference	Priority
The Council should develop and implement a dedicated Data Protection Policy that combines all GDPR and Data Protection Act requirements, including roles and responsibilities, the full data lifecycle, expectations for DPIAs, privacy notices, incident reporting, training and data subject rights.	4.1	●
Develop and implement service-specific privacy notices and Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for each area with distinct processing activities and make these easily accessible to data subjects.	4.2	●
Reinstate the annual Data Management Questionnaire capturing key data governance controls, including data quality, retention, privacy notices, DPIAs, security, and staff training. Ensure these are reviewed by the SIRO/DPO to strengthen organisational oversight and ensure early identification of compliance gaps.	4.3	●
The Council should introduce mandatory data protection and information security training for all relevant staff, supported by routine monitoring of completion rates and timely follow-up of non-completion.	4.4	●

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit & Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period April 2025 to January 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The Council relies on effective data management to support the delivery of its statutory services, safeguard sensitive information, and enable informed decision-making across the organisation. As the Council modernises through new digital systems, shared services, and greater use of data in service planning, ensuring the accuracy, accessibility, and security of its information become increasingly important. Robust data governance is essential not only for operational efficiency but also to ensure compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. This audit sought to assess the adequacy of the Council's data management arrangements, including policies, controls, and practices, to determine whether they effectively supported organisational objectives and mitigated risks related to data quality, security, retention, and usage. To achieve this, we looked at arrangements within Revenues and Benefits, Legal Services and the Operations Service.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.3 Scope of Audit

In this audit we reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Governance and accountability;
- Data collection, retention and sharing;
- Data storage and access; and
- Data handling and security risks.

Payroll

Overall assurance rating



Substantial

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	0

Overall, the audit concluded that payroll processes are well-managed, with evidence of strong internal controls and ongoing improvements in documentation, system access, and procedural compliance.

The organisational structure chart was produced and approved by the Corporate Management Team in July 2025. All officers listed on the chart were accurately reflected in the payroll system, with correct alignment of names and role titles. Tax thresholds were correctly input into the CHRIS21 payroll system in accordance with central government guidance and system access was appropriately restricted.

Starting and final salary payments were correctly calculated and processed in line with contractual terms. New starters were added to the organisational structure chart, and leavers had accurate end dates on the payroll system. Improvements were noted in the collation and retention of HR documentation for new starters, including completed personal file checklist, signed contract, proof of identity, and evidence of right to work in the UK. Exit interview completion rates showed improvement compared to the previous year, supported by increased involvement from HR in assisting line managers. Not all leavers agreed to participate or attended their scheduled interviews, but we acknowledge that there will always be some level of non-engagement.

Controls over overtime, mileage, and expense claims were effective. All claims were calculated using the correct rates, supported by retained evidence such as receipts, and approved by line managers prior to processing. Voluntary deductions were appropriately supported by either direct officer requests or third-party instructions. Sickness absences were supported by completed and signed sickness declaration forms retained on file. No officers were on maternity leave during the period reviewed, and therefore no testing was undertaken in this area.

Reconciliation procedures were robust. Exception reports were produced monthly to support the review of payroll accuracy prior to approval by the Head of Finance and Principal Accountant. Net pay posting reports were confirmed to match the Civica system totals for the period, providing assurance over the completeness and accuracy of payroll transactions.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period January to August 2025 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The council uses the Complete Human Resource Information System (CHRIS21) to administer and calculate payroll. HR and payroll functions are undertaken by council officer's and system access is restricted to those in HR, payroll and ICT service.

The council employed 172 officers at the time of our review, with an approximate monthly net pay of £370k.

2.3 Previous audit

An internal audit of payroll was last carried out in September 2024. This resulted in a substantial assurance opinion being issued with one improvement action.

2.4 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Non-compliance with tax legislation related to employees, including the incorrect processing of deductions from salaries may lead to fines and penalties being imposed by HM Revenue and Customs;
- Access to the payroll system is not restricted or personal data is not stored securely;
- Unauthorised amendments to pay are processed resulting in inaccurate or untimely payment of salaries;
- Amendments relating to new starters and leavers are processed incorrectly or without sufficient authorisation, potentially resulting assets belonging to the Council being lost or stolen;
- Salaries and deductions are incorrectly calculated leading to employees being over or under paid;
- Bogus employees are set up on the payroll system enabling misappropriation of Council funds

Council Tax

Overall assurance rating



Substantial assurance

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	0

Overall, we are satisfied that the control framework for the administration of Council Tax is operating effectively, with key controls consistently applied across the areas reviewed. A revised Debt Management Policy has been developed and progressed through the appropriate governance channels, including Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet approval. The policy provides comprehensive coverage of recovery processes across both Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

Property bandings and precepts recorded within the system were accurate and aligned with those published on the Council’s website. Valuation Office Agency (VOA) reports were reconciled to the Northgate system in a timely manner, with evidence of independent checking to support accuracy and completeness.

Discounts and exemptions were correctly applied, with sufficient supporting evidence retained to demonstrate eligibility. Where required, property inspections were undertaken in line with the service’s inspection schedule, while in other cases, appropriate alternative documentation was available. End dates were consistently recorded where applicable, ensuring that reliefs were applied only for valid periods. Recovery processes for accounts in arrears were operating in accordance with the Debt Management Policy. Appropriate action was taken in response to missed payments, including the issue of reminders, arrangement of instalment plans, and progression to liability orders and enforcement action where necessary. Reminders were generally issued promptly, with any delays appropriately justified and subsequently addressed.

Write-offs were processed in line with policy requirements and authorised at the correct level, including Cabinet approval for higher-value cases. Refunds were appropriately supported, with all accounts verified as being in credit at the time of processing and segregation of duties clearly evidenced. Performance monitoring arrangements remain well established, with regular engagement between Council and Capita staff through operational and governance meetings. Collection rates are reported through formal channels, including Overview and Scrutiny Committee. While performance for the final quarter of 2024/25 fell marginally below target, the variance was minimal and attributed to ongoing challenges in recovering historic arrears. As such, no further action has been deemed necessary by management.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

Council Tax administration and recovery is outsourced to Capita PLC. The council's Service Assurance (SA) team monitor contract performance against a service level agreement. The systems referred to in this report are NEC, for managing property database and recovery action, and the Info@Work electronic document management system (EDMS) for storing supporting evidence.

2.3 Financial Information

As at end of March 25 the total Council Tax collected was £48,730,112.24

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of Council Tax was previously carried out in 2024-25. This resulted in a substantial opinion being issued.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Debt Management Policy
- System Accuracy
- Discounts and Exemptions
- Recovery Action
- Refunds and Write Offs
- Performance and Oversight

Business Rates/ NNDR

Overall assurance rating



Substantial assurance

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	0

Overall, we are satisfied that the control framework to administer Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) continues to operate effectively. Billing calculations were accurately generated using annually updated system rates, which were confirmed to be consistent with the parameters published by central government. Valuation Office Agency (VOA) schedule reports were reconciled to the NEC system promptly (within four weeks of receipt) and were independently reviewed and authorised by a second officer.

Reductions and exemptions were administered appropriately and supported by adequate evidence and authorisation. Discounts reviewed were supported by relevant documentation or approved application forms prior to being awarded, whilst exemption applications were assessed and confirmed as eligible before being applied, with end dates recorded where applicable. An inspection timetable was maintained to monitor empty properties and ensure exemptions remained valid, with testing confirming that inspections were undertaken in accordance with the agreed schedule and appropriate action was taken where necessary.

A revised Debt Management Policy has been developed and progressed through the Council's governance process. During the audit, we confirmed that the policy had been approved by Management Team, reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for the recovery and write-off of both Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates debt, covering pre- and post-liability order action, action following enforcement agents and write-off procedures.

Refunds and write-offs were processed in accordance with established procedures and were supported by appropriate evidence and authorisation. All write-offs reviewed had been adequately approved, with supporting documentation retained on the I&W documentation system. Refunds were supported by sufficient evidence and were processed for appropriate reasons in line with the Debt Management Policy. In addition, all refunds exceeding £100 were reviewed and approved by an officer independent of the individual who processed the transaction, providing assurance over the effectiveness of segregation of duties controls.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were reviewed and agreed by the Operational and Governance Board in April 2024, including the annual NNDR

Section Two – Background and Scope

collection target of 98.4% for 2024/25. Performance exceeded the target throughout the year and the final collection rate achieved was 98.4%, meeting the agreed target. We also confirmed that KPI targets and performance outcomes were reported quarterly to Members through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the Council's performance reporting arrangements.

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The council outsource the NNDR service to Capita PLC. The council's service assurance (SA) team monitor contract performance through key performance indicators which are reported to members quarterly. The systems referred to in this report are NEC, for managing accounts, properties and recovery action, and the Info@Work electronic document management system (EDMS) for retaining supporting evidence.

2.3 Financial Information

As at end of March 25 the total net Liability for NNDR was £14.3m.

2.4 Previous Audit

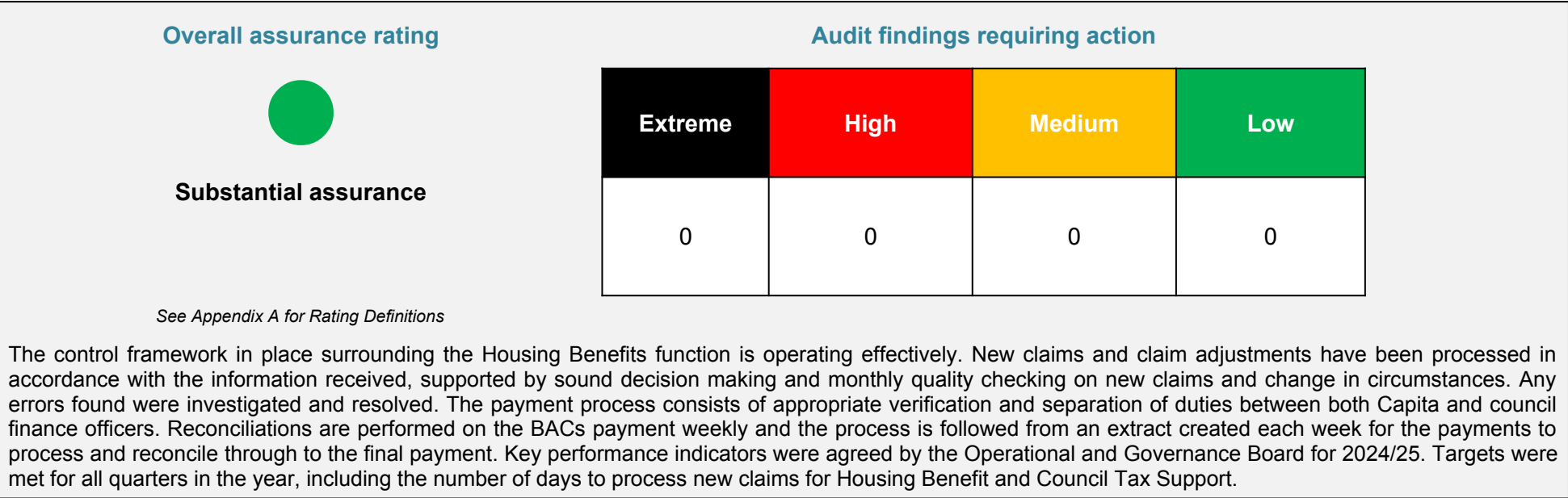
An internal audit of NNDR was previously carried out in 2024/25. This resulted in a substantial opinion being issued.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Debt Management Policy
- System Accuracy
- Reductions and Exemptions
- Refunds and Write-offs
- Performance and Oversight

Housing Benefits



2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The council outsources the housing benefit (HB) and council tax support (CTS) claims service to Capita PLC. The council's Service Assurance team monitor performance against this contract through key performance indicators and thematic exercises, and report quarterly to Members for oversight.

There is a risk that the council may fail to maintain an accurate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support database, which could lead to fraudulent or incorrect payments. In addition, delays in processing benefit claims may result in poor value for money and reputational damage to the council. There is also a risk that incorrect or fraudulent claims-such as those involving void properties or multiple property claims-may be accepted, causing financial loss. Furthermore, if changes in claimants' circumstances are not identified promptly, this could lead to overpayments and potentially fraudulent payments.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.3 Financial Information

There were 378 housing benefit and 1459 council tax support new claims during the period April 2024 to March 2025, with an average monthly BACS payment of £966k.

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of housing benefit and council tax support was last carried out in 2024. This resulted in a substantial assurance opinion being issued with no proposed actions.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- New Claim Eligibility and Processing
- Change in Circumstances and Quality Checking
- Reconciliation
- Performance and Oversight

Income Collection/ Banking

Overall assurance rating



Substantial assurance

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	1

Rossendale Borough Council operates a strong and well-established financial control framework, particularly in relation to electronic income receipting, banking, and reconciliation. Clear statutory roles, defined officer delegations, robust audit and procurement requirements, committee oversight, and transparent reporting provide a solid foundation for effective financial governance and are supported by a comprehensive and regularly reviewed Constitution.

Controls over electronic income, which represents the vast majority of income by value and volume, are robust and operating effectively. Automated feeds into the financial system, regular reconciliations, clear responsibility for allocation and investigation, and documented management review provide a high level of assurance. Income coding and receipting processes are accurate and consistent, with only minor evidence-retention improvements identified.

Banking and reconciliation arrangements are effective. Bank reconciliations are completed regularly, independently reviewed, and increasingly timely, with historic variances largely resolved. Unallocated and non-billed income is actively monitored, investigated, and resolved within reasonable timescales. While processes rely heavily on manual spreadsheets, compensating review controls are effective.

The main area of control weakness relates to petty cash and cheque handling. Low volumes and values significantly limit risk exposure, but weaknesses in physical security and documentation reduce overall assurance in this area. These issues are partially mitigated by management oversight and reconciliations, but improvements are desirable to strengthen control design and evidential standards. Improvement action has already been taken in response to audit findings, and a secure key safe has been fitted in the Finance office and key holders have been formally recorded.

Overall, despite structural constraints associated with a small finance team and issues regarding physical handling, the control framework provides a substantial level of assurance.

Section Two – Background and Scope

Agreed actions from the audit	Reference	Priority
To ensure processes and controls are operating as intended, management should consider standardising and requiring completion of paying-in books, with clear retention requirements.	4.3	●

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2025 to 1 April 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The Council uses the Webpay receipting system to record income, which is reconciled in conjunction with other systems, such as the Civica modules for general ledger and debtors and the Northgate modules for council tax and national non-domestic rates (NNDR). Cash and cheque transactions have significantly reduced, with the council's stated aim to no longer accept cash directly. Most income is now received electronically.

2.3 Previous Audit

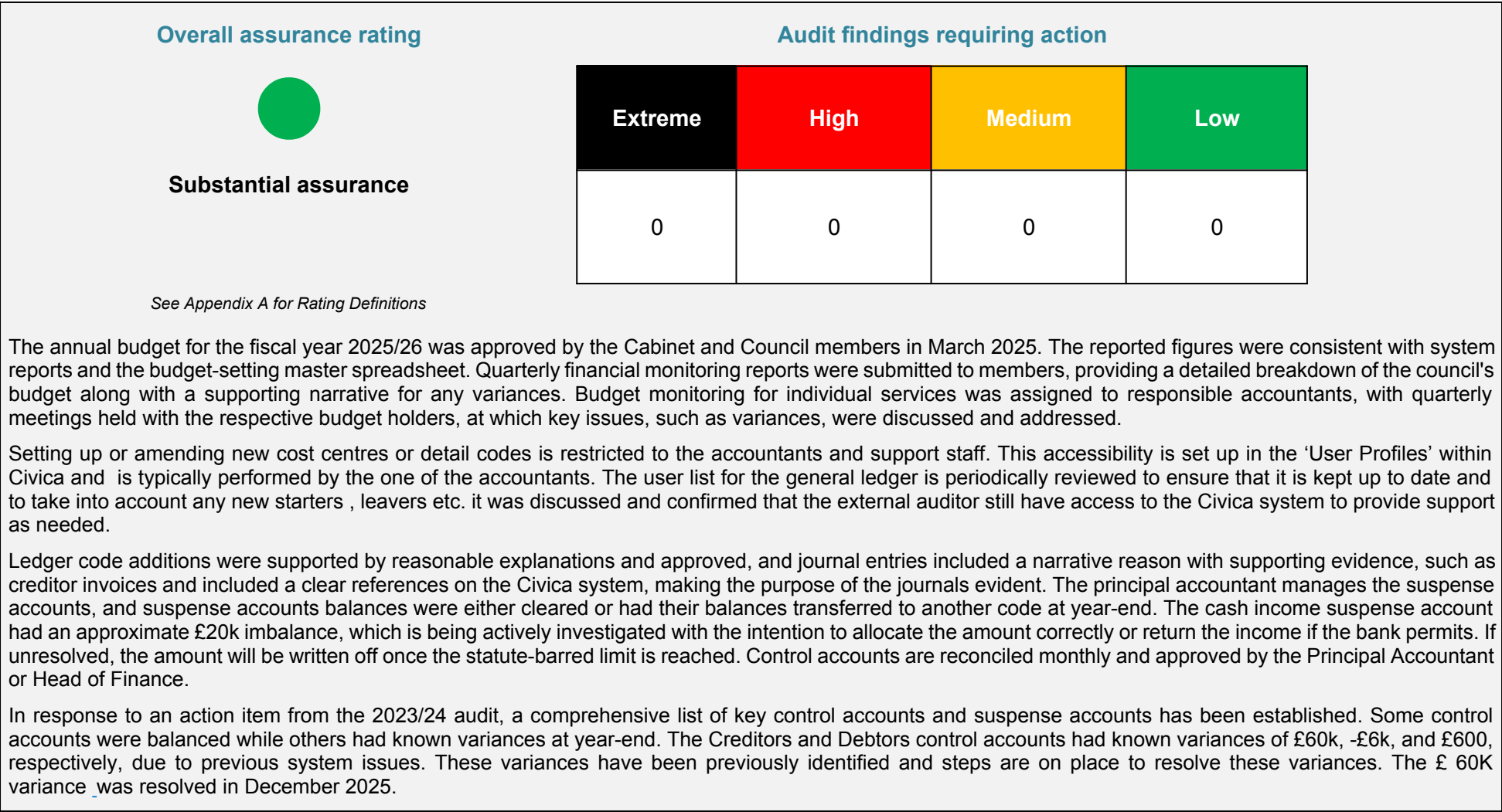
An internal audit of Income and Bank Reconciliation was previously carried out in 2024/25. This resulted in a Substantial Assurance opinion being issued.

2.4 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Financial Procedures and Separation of Duties
- Identifying, receipting and banking income
- Reconciliation

General Ledger



Section Two – Background and Scope

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The purpose of this internal audit is to evaluate the accuracy, completeness, and integrity of the general ledger. The general ledger is a critical component of the company's financial reporting system, serving as the primary record of all financial transactions. This audit aims to ensure that the general ledger accurately reflects the company's financial position and performance, and that it complies with relevant accounting standards and internal policies.

2.3 Financial Information

The council agreed a net revenue budget for 2025/26 of £11,535m in March 2025.

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of the General Ledger previously carried out in 2025. This resulted in a substantial opinion being issued.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Budget Setting and Monitoring
- Code Creation and Amendment
- Journals and suspense accounts
- Control Account Reconciliation

Accounts Payable

Overall assurance rating



Substantial assurance

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

Audit findings requiring action

Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	0

The audit provides an overall substantial assurance opinion that key controls are well designed and operating as intended. The audit reviewed the Council’s Accounts Payable arrangements, with particular focus on the effectiveness of key financial controls and compliance with statutory 30-day payment requirements.

Core invoice processing and payment controls are well designed and operate effectively once invoices are recorded in the financial system. There is appropriate segregation of duties for most transactions, supported by secondary approval and dual bank authorisation for higher-value payments. Sampled purchase orders were approved within delegated limits, creditor payment runs are subject to senior officer review and final authorisation by the Head of Finance, and a clear audit trail is retained. Payment performance following invoice input is strong, with 95% of invoices paid within 30 days based on Civica input dates, indicating that Accounts Payable processes are functioning effectively.

Overall control effectiveness is reduced by issues occurring before Accounts Payable involvement. A number of invoices were already more than 30 days old at the point they were recorded as received, meaning that reported payment performance based on input dates may overstate actual compliance with statutory 30-day payment expectations and reduce transparency, if invoices are received to the Council but not forwarded promptly to Accounts Payable. Inconsistent purchase order discipline and delays in the completion of goods receipt notes are also contributing to delayed invoice input by Accounts Payable, with delayed PO and/or GRN invoices more likely to be paid late. Management has highlighted several contributory factors to delayed invoice input, including late invoicing by some suppliers (particularly agency suppliers), invoices being sent directly to service areas rather than to Finance, firewall activity blocking emails, and capacity constraints affecting timely purchase order and goods receipt processing. While these issues sit outside the direct control of Accounts Payable, they have an impact on payment timeliness. Work is ongoing with services and suppliers to improve engagement and compliance in this area. We acknowledge that further controls beyond ongoing engagement and education, such as changes to reporting arrangements, would not be cost-effective.

Non-compliance with segregation of duties requirements for goods receipting was identified in a small number of low-value cases. These instances occurred within officers’ approval limits and in service areas experiencing capacity pressures, and do not indicate a systemic failure of control. The current wording of Section 20.3 of the Constitution could be reviewed at the next scheduled update to provide greater operational clarity and better reflect working arrangements in smaller teams.

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.2 Context

The Finance Service administers the creditor database, processes invoices and reconciles spending to the general ledger. The council uses Civica financial software in conjunction with an imaging software package to create and automatically match invoices to purchase orders and goods received notes once completed by services.

2.3 Financial Information

The Council has paid a total of 4617 purchase ordered invoices with a total spend of circa £17.5 million within the 2025-26 period.

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of Accounts Payable was previously carried out in 2024/25. This resulted in a Substantial Assurance opinion being issued.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Approvals and Separation of Duties
- Purchase Orders and Invoices
- Payment Processing and Exception Reports
- General Ledger Coding
- Control Account Reconciliation

Accounts Receivable

Overall assurance rating	Audit findings requiring action			
	Extreme	High	Medium	Low
Substantial assurance	0	0	0	0
See Appendix A for Rating Definitions				

The audit provides substantial assurance that the Council's arrangements for managing sundry debt and debtors are largely effective and operating as intended. The controls that support day-to-day income management, including invoice raising, income collection, reconciliations, and write-offs, are consistently applied and well understood by officers. Collection performance for newly raised debt is strong, supported by clear procedures, effective system controls, and recent improvements to policy and governance.

Invoice processing is well controlled, with appropriate authorisation and good standards of accuracy and timeliness. Income collection arrangements are functioning effectively, with prompt allocation of payments and high recovery rates for new debt. Financial systems provide strong assurance that income is correctly recorded and monitored and write-offs are processed in line with approved policies and governance requirements. Oversight of debt has improved during the year, with clearer reporting, stronger engagement with services, planned training, and evidence of improved performance.

The main area of ongoing risk relates to historic aged debt, particularly balances that pre-date April 2020, including amounts that may be irrecoverable due to statutory time limits. While these debts are visible in reports, progress in resolving them has been limited due to large volumes and lack of resources. We are encouraged by confirmation that any debt up to and including 31/03/2025 will be managed by Capita for recovery over a 6-12 month period. These debts will remain on the RBC ledger, and there is sufficient doubtful debt provision in place if write-off is required. As the Council prepares for Local Government Reorganisation, continued focus on ownership, tracking, and timely decisions on recovery or write-off will be important to support transparency and a sound opening financial position for the successor authority.

Management has acted in response to previous audit recommendations and completed action relating to letter generation highlighted by the review, with action regarding aged debt ongoing. Overall, the Council continues to manage current debt well. Addressing historic debt decisively remains the key challenge to strengthening the Council's financial position ahead of reorganisation, and we acknowledge the steps the council is taking to address this.

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Section Two – Background and Scope

2.2 Context

The council use the Civica Debtor system to manage and maintain the debtor database and raise invoices. This system is administered by the Finance Service, who control user access and report the overall debt position to senior managers and members. All service areas can raise debtor invoices or request that invoices are raised on their behalf. The system generates reminders and final notices to be issued at defined intervals if a debt is not paid promptly. If the system recovery procedure is exhausted, the Finance Service liaises with individual services and the Legal Service to escalate recovery, with action such as termination of service and pursuing legal recovery options.

2.3 Financial Information

Invoices raised in the year, to the end of Q4 totalled £5.87 million. As of 24th March 2026, £67.5k (4.8%) of new debts raised in the year were considered outstanding or overdue (discounting instalment plan accounts and those within 30 days of invoice) giving a collection rate of 95.2%.

2.4 Previous Audit

An internal audit of Accounts Receivable was previously carried out in 2024/25. This resulted in a Moderate (Reasonable) Assurance opinion being issued.

2.5 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Invoice guidance and amendments
- Policy and recovery processes
- Ledger coding and reconciliation
- Aged debt and write off

Recommendations from Audits Reported in July 2026

Capital Programme

Agreed recommendation from the audit	Reference	Priority
Management will consider the introduction of contingency arrangements to support continuity of Programme Board meetings in the absence of key individuals.	4.1	●

Asset Management – Commercialisation

Agreed recommendation from the audit	Reference	Priority
Consideration should be given to developing and publishing a single property asset management strategy and commercial plan which sets out the council's objectives, priorities and arrangements for effective management of its land and property assets to maximise income and reduce costs. Content could include: • Service objectives, vision and strategies; • Legal and regulatory compliance requirements; • Governance, oversight, and reporting arrangements, including an assessment of key risks; • Commercial priorities and long-term savings plan to inform property rentals, renewals, usage and expiries; • Collaborative work with businesses and community stakeholders; • Framework for acquisitions and disposals in line with the Scheme of Delegation approval limits; and • Service roles and responsibilities.	4.1	●
Staff skills and competencies should be developed to support service requirements and delivery through: • Identifying and administering relevant training; and • Producing procedure guidance notes listing daily job processes to support understanding and delivery of key tasks and as aide memoire in the event of staff absences.	4.1	●
To support the council's strategic priority of utilising digital technology to deliver responsive, efficient and cost-efficient services, opportunities to automate the asset management procedures and processes should be identified and implemented where practicable and cost-effective.	4.3	●

Data Management

Agreed actions from the audit	Reference	Priority
The Council should develop and implement a dedicated Data Protection Policy that combines all GDPR and Data Protection Act requirements, including roles and responsibilities, the full data lifecycle, expectations for DPIAs, privacy notices, incident reporting, training and data subject rights.	4.1	●
Develop and implement service-specific privacy notices and Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for each area with distinct processing activities and make these easily accessible to data subjects.	4.2	●
Reinstate the annual Data Management Questionnaire capturing key data governance controls, including data quality, retention, privacy notices, DPIAs, security, and staff training. Ensure these are reviewed by the SIRO/DPO to strengthen organisational oversight and ensure early identification of compliance gaps.	4.3	●
The Council should introduce mandatory data protection and information security training for all relevant staff, supported by routine monitoring of completion rates and timely follow-up of non-completion.	4.4	●

Income Collection/ Banking

Agreed actions from the audit	Reference	Priority
To ensure processes and controls are operating as intended, management should consider standardising and requiring completion of paying-in books, with clear retention requirements.	4.3	●

Appendix B

Scope, responsibilities and assurance

Approach

- C.1 The Internal Audit Service operates in accordance with Global Internal Audit Standards 2024. The scope of internal audit work encompasses all of the Council's operations, resources and services including where they are provided by other organisations on its behalf.

Responsibilities of management and internal auditors

- C.2 It is management's responsibility to maintain systems of risk management, internal control and governance. Internal audit is an element of the internal control framework assisting management in the effective discharge of its responsibilities and functions by examining and evaluating controls. Internal auditors cannot therefore be held responsible for internal control failures.
- C.3 We have planned our work so that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting significant control weaknesses. We have reported all such weaknesses to management as they have become known to us, without undue delay, and have worked with management to develop proposals for remedial action.
- C.4 Internal audit procedures alone do not guarantee that fraud will be detected. Accordingly, our examinations as internal auditors should not be relied upon solely to disclose fraud or other irregularities which may exist, unless we are requested to carry out a special investigation into such activities in a particular area.
- C.5 Internal audit's role includes assessing the adequacy of the risk management processes, key internal control systems and corporate governance arrangements put in place by management and performing testing to ensure those controls were operating effectively for the period under review.

Basis of our assessment

- C.6 My opinion on the adequacy of control arrangements is based upon the result of internal audit work undertaken and completed during the period in accordance with the plan approved by the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee. Sufficient, reliable and relevant evidence has been obtained to support the recommendations made.

Limitations to the scope of our work

- C.7 Other than as set out in the audit plan for the year there have been no limitations to the scope of the audit work.

Limitations on the assurance that internal audit can provide

- C.8 There are inherent limitations as to what can be achieved by internal control and consequently limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn from our work as internal auditors. These limitations include the possibility of faulty judgement in decision making, of breakdowns because of human error, of control activities being circumvented by the collusion of two or more people and of

management overriding controls. Further, there is no certainty that internal controls will continue to operate effectively in future periods or that the controls will be adequate to mitigate all significant risks which may arise in the future.

- C.9 Decisions made in designing internal controls inevitably involve the acceptance of some degree of risk. As the outcome of the operation of internal controls cannot be predicted with absolute assurance any assessment of internal control is judgmental.

Access to this report and responsibility to third parties

- C.10 This report has been prepared solely for Rossendale Borough Council. It forms part of a continuing dialogue between the Internal Audit Service, the chief executive, Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and management of the Council. It is not therefore intended to include every matter that came to our attention during each internal audit assignment.
- C.11 This report may be made available to other parties, such as the external auditors. However, no responsibility is accepted to any third party who may receive this report for any reliance that may be placed on it and, in particular, the external auditors must determine the reliance placed on the work of the Internal Audit Service.

Audit assurance and residual risks

Note that our assurance may address the adequacy of the control framework's design, the effectiveness of the controls in operation, or both. The wording below addresses all of these options and we will refer in our reports to the assurance applicable to the scope of the work we have undertaken.

- **Substantial assurance:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated.
- **Reasonable assurance:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated overall, but some action is required to enhance aspects of it and/ or ensure that it is effectively operated throughout.
- **Limited assurance:** there are some significant weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that put the achievement of its objectives at risk.
- **No assurance:** there are some fundamental weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that could result in failure to achieve its objectives.

Classification of residual risks requiring management action

All actions agreed with management are stated in terms of the residual risk they are designed to mitigate.

- **Extreme residual risk:** critical and urgent in that failure to address the risk could lead to one or more of the following: catastrophic loss of the county Council's services, loss of life, significant environmental damage or significant financial loss, with related national press coverage and substantial damage to the Council's reputation. *Remedial action must be taken immediately*
- **High residual risk:** critical in that failure to address the issue or progress the work would lead to one or more of the following: failure to achieve organisational objectives, significant disruption to the Council's business or to users of its services, significant financial loss, inefficient use of resources, failure to comply with law or regulations, or damage to the Council's reputation. *Remedial action must be taken urgently.*
- **Medium residual risk:** failure to address the issue or progress the work could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management. *Prompt specific action should be taken.*
- **Low residual risk:** matters that individually have no major impact on achieving the service's objectives, but where combined with others could give cause for concern. *Specific remedial action is desirable.*

Report Title:	Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Head of Internal Audit (Internal Audit Service)	Cabinet Portfolio	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan	☐ General Exception	☐ Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:			
	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Mark Baskerville Audit Manager	Telephone:	01772 538615
Email:	mark.baskerville@lancashire.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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The attached report sets out the planned audits for delivery in 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee are asked to consider the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27.

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 The Audit and Accounts Committee's terms of reference require it to advise the council on the planned activity and results of internal audit.

3.2 This paper reports progress with the delivery of each audit on the 2026/27 annual audit plan.

3.3 To support the Audit and Accounts Committee in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor Internal Audit performance.

4. RISK

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involve risk considerations as set out below. The responsibility for implementing, maintaining and reviewing the system of internal control rests with the council, but the process by which the effectiveness of its system of internal control is reviewed and the governance statement is made includes obtaining assurances on the effectiveness of key controls. In practice, these will be substantially drawn from internal audit assurances delivered through audit plan to the chief executive and leader of the council who are jointly required to sign the annual governance statement.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 Any financial implications are commented upon in the report.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 Any legal implications are commented upon in the report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 N/A.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 N/A.

Rossendale Borough Council

Internal Audit Service

Report to Audit and Accounts Committee

Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27



Rossendale Borough Council - Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Internal Auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation achieve its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

2 Aims of Internal Audit

- 2.1 The primary aims of Internal Audit include:
- **Enhancing Governance:** Strengthening the effectiveness of governance processes.
 - **Risk Management:** Evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management processes.
 - **Control Processes:** Assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of control processes.
 - **Objective Assurance:** Providing independent and objective assurance to the board and management.
 - **Advisory Services:** Offering advice and insights to improve organisational operations and decision-making.

3 Development of the Annual Plan

- 3.1 The annual plan was developed in compliance with the Global Internal Audit Standards, which came into effect for UK Local Government on 1st April 2024. These standards guide the worldwide professional practice of Internal Auditing and serve as a basis for evaluating and elevating the quality of Internal Audit. Developing an annual plan is crucial for several reasons:
- **Strategic Alignment:** It ensures that the Internal Audit activities are aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives and priorities. This alignment helps in focusing audit efforts on areas that are most critical to the organisation's success.
 - **Risk Management:** An annual plan is developed based on a comprehensive risk assessment. This approach ensures that Internal Audit addresses the most significant risks facing the organisation, thereby enhancing risk management processes.
 - **Resource Allocation:** It helps in the efficient allocation of Internal Audit resources. By planning ahead, the Internal Audit team can ensure that they have the necessary skills, tools, and time to effectively carry out their audits.
 - **Compliance and Standards:** Developing an annual plan ensures compliance with professional standards, such as those set by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). These standards require a risk-based approach to planning, which helps in maintaining the quality and effectiveness of Internal Audit.
 - **Stakeholder Expectations:** It ensures that Internal Audit meets the expectations of key stakeholders, including the committee, senior management, and other relevant parties. By involving stakeholders in the planning process, Internal Audit can address their concerns and provide valuable insights.
- 3.2 By developing an annual plan, Internal Audit can systematically and effectively contribute to the council's governance, risk management, and control processes, ultimately supporting the achievement of their organisational objectives.

4 Requirements for an Annual Audit plan

- 4.1 When developing an annual audit plan, the Global Internal Audit Standards require:
- **Risk-Based Approach:** The Internal Audit plan must be based on an assessment of the organisation's strategies, objectives, and risks. This assessment must be informed by the Chief Audit Executive's (CAE) understanding of the organisation's governance, risk management, and control processes.

Rossendale Borough Council - Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27

- **Alignment with Corporate Priorities:** The Internal Audit plan must support the strategic objectives and success of the organisation and align with the expectations of the board, senior management, and other key stakeholders.
- **Integrated Assurance:** The Internal Audit plan should integrate assurance activities to ensure comprehensive coverage of the organisation's risk landscape.

5 Purpose of the plan

- 5.1 The annual plan is a critical tool for ensuring that Internal Audit effectively supports the organisation's objectives. By adhering to the new Global Internal Audit Standards, the plan ensures a risk-based, strategically aligned approach that enhances governance, risk management, and control processes. Internal Audit focus should be proportionate and appropriately aligned.
- 5.2 The plan will be subject to ongoing review, in consultation with the council's senior management, to ensure it continues to reflect organisational needs and risks. This is particularly relevant given local government reorganisation and the probability that Internal Audit will need to provide a flexible resource to support unplanned activity. We will report significant amendments to the plan to Audit and Accounts Committee.

6 Delivery of the plan

- 6.1 The planning and scheduling of audit activities will be coordinated with management. The detailed scoping of each audit will also be discussed and agreed to ensure that all relevant areas are covered comprehensively. The results of all audits will be communicated to the relevant management levels upon completion. Our audit team will provide an assessment and assurance opinion on the effectiveness and adequacy of the control framework in the audited area, based on our findings.
- 6.2 We will continue to support management by offering prioritised recommendations aimed at enhancing governance, risk management, and internal control frameworks to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency. They will be documented in an action plan and categorised into those that enhance governance and control, and those that improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- 6.3 Throughout the year, we will engage with senior management to provide updates on audit performance, significant findings, and to address any issues that may impact current and future audit plans.
- 6.4 We will also continue to explore and implement opportunities to enhance service delivery through the use of technology and remote information capture. This approach will help maximise the efficiency of our audit resources and minimise the impact of audit activities on operational staff.

7 Degrees of assurance

- 7.1 We categorise our assurance levels using one of the following four definitions:
- **Substantial:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated overall.
 - **Reasonable:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated overall, but some action is required to enhance aspects of it and/ or ensure that it is effectively operated throughout.
 - **Limited:** there are some significant weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that put the achievement of its objectives at risk.
 - **No:** there are some fundamental weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that could result in failure to achieve its objectives.

8 Deployment of audit resources and fees

- 8.1 The content and outline scope of each audit within the proposed plan, as well as an estimate of the number of audit days considered appropriate, is provided in the table below. The plan provides for a total resource of 185 audit days which includes an unallocated contingency of 30 days, to provide audit support for issues arising in-year from local government reorganisation.

To ensure that the fees charged reflect the resource costs incurred, the auditor and manager is charged at different rates. The daily rate for auditors is £418 and for audit managers £495. The approximate total cost for the 2026/27 plan will be £81,000.

Rossendale Borough Council - Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27

Corporate Priorities	1. Thriving Local Economy 2. High Quality Environment 3. Healthy and Proud Communities 4. Effective and Efficient Council
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Audit Title	Audit Scope	Corp. Priority	Audit Days	Total Days
Governance				
Rossendale Leisure Trust	Effectiveness of action take to implement recommendations from the RLT review	2, 3	12	12
Business effectiveness				
Treasury Management and Investment Strategy	Effectiveness of, and compliance with, council strategy and policy including CIPFA codes and cash and investment controls	4	12	42
IT Audit - Backup and recovery	Establish whether backups are complete, secure, and tested, supporting resilience and recovery objectives	4	15	
IT Audit – Security incident detection and response	Ensure the council can identify, contain, investigate, and remediate security incidents in a timely and effective manner	4	15	
Service delivery				
Regeneration Portfolio – project management	Effectiveness of the management of regeneration projects.	2, 4	11	22
Environmental health – food safety	Audit of inspection planning and delivery, and enforcement activity	2, 3, 4	11	
Service support				
Complaints Handling	Compliance with the council's complaints policy and guidance	4	12	12
Business processes				
Payroll	Annual audit of the effectiveness of financial controls	4	8	40
Accounts payable	Annual audit of the effectiveness of financial controls	4	8	

Rossendale Borough Council - Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27

Accounts receivable	Annual audit of the effectiveness of financial controls	4	8	
General ledger and budget	Annual audit of the effectiveness of financial controls	4	8	
Income collection/ banking	Annual audit of the effectiveness of financial controls	4	8	
Follow up of agreed recommendations				
Capital Programme		1, 2, 3	1	4
Contract management		4	1	
Asset management		4	1	
Data management		4	1	
Counter fraud				
Operation of the National Fraud Initiative		4	3	5
Support to the council's whistleblowing and counter fraud work		4	2	
Other work				
Internal Audit management including planning, managing delivery, liaison with management team, committee reporting and scheduling resources.			18	48
Contingency - Local Government Reorganisation readiness - action to support the council in preparing for LGR in response to matters arising through the year			30	
Total resource for the council				185



External Audit Progress Report

Rossendale Borough Council

July 2026

Contents

1. [Audit progress](#)
2. [National publications](#)

01

Audit progress

Audit progress

Purpose of this report

This report provides the Audit and Accounts Committee with information about progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditor.

Background to the external audit at the Council

To provide the Audit and Accounts Committee with a brief understanding of the recent history of the Council's external audit, we have set out a chronology and some further background contextual information.

The requirements for external audit in local government are enshrined in legislation – the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. The Act sets out the scope of external audit which is further detailed in a Code of Audit Practice, issued by the National Audit Office under the 2014 Act. The 2014 Act and the Code of Audit Practice set out the two main responsibilities for external auditors as being:

- To audit local authorities' financial statements and issue an Audit Report.
- To satisfy themselves the local authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the value for money arrangements responsibility and the auditor's commentary on the arrangements in place is reported in their Auditor's Annual Report.

External auditors for local authorities are appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd under the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. Forvis Mazars are appointed as the Council's external auditor until its demise through the proposed Local Government Reorganisation for Lancashire.

During 2019/20 and 2020/21 a large number of external audits were delayed, and this impacted on the ability of auditors to complete 2021/22 and future years audits. A significant backlog of unaudited accounts built up as a result. In 2024 legislation was enacted to put in place 'backstop dates' by when local authorities must publish their audited accounts for all years up to 2027/28. Where external auditors were unable to complete their audit by the backstop date for a financial year the auditor would issue a 'Disclaimer of Opinion' providing no assurance on the financial statements. The backstop dates are:

Financial year	Backstop date
2022/23 and earlier	13 December 2024
2023/24	28 February 2025
2024/25	27 February 2026

Financial year	Backstop date
2025/26	31 January 2027
2026/27	30 November 2027
2027/28	30 November 2028

Audit progress

We were appointed as the Council's external auditor for the year ended 31 March 2019. At the date of our appointment, the predecessor auditor had not yet completed the audit of the Council's 2017/18 financial statements.

The Council subsequently experienced significant delays in the preparation and publication of its annual financial statements. The 2019/20 Statement of Accounts was not produced until early 2023, while the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial statements were both published in late 2023. The 2022/23 financial statements were subsequently published in early 2024.

Since then, the Council has made significant progress in addressing the historic backlog and has published its financial statements for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 within the statutory deadlines.

However, as a consequence of the historic backlog and the impact this had on our ability to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence over opening balances and comparative information, we have issued disclaimer opinions on the Council's financial statements for each of the years ended 31 March 2019 to 31 March 2025.

Progress on the audit for the year ending 31 March 2025

Whole of government accounts

The final element of our 2024/25 audit relates to the work the National Audit Office (NAO) require auditors to carry out on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return. We have now received confirmation from the NAO that no further work is required on the WGA return. We will issue our audit certificate in the coming weeks.

Progress on the audit for the year ending 31 March 2026

Audit of financial statements

The primary focus of our 2025/26 audit is to determine whether or not we can develop and deliver an effective audit strategy for rebuilding assurance on the unaudited opening balances from the prior periods before the Council's demise. This means we will issue a disclaimer of opinion on the 2025/26 financial statements. For information, if we conclude we can develop an appropriate strategy, the Council would move to a 'Qualified' audit opinion for up to two years before moving back to an unmodified opinion .

Audit progress

Value for Money Arrangements

We will be reporting on the Council's value for money arrangements by the end of November 2026, when our Auditor's Annual report is required to be issued.

02

National Publications

National publications

	Publication/update	Key points	
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)			
1	Code Of Practice On Local Authority Accounting In The United Kingdom 2026/27	The 2026/27 Code has been developed by CIPFA/LASAAC and has effect for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2026	
2	Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities 2026/27	SeRCOP is prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework established by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code)	
3	CIPFA Bulletin 23 – Closure of the 2025/26 financial statements	Bulletin covers the closure of accounts for 2025/26	
National Audit Office (NAO)			
4	Responding to changing demand for school places	Report focusing on the falling pupil numbers in primary schools	
Forvis Mazars			
5	Mapping public sector risk, resilience and readiness	Report examining the key challenges and opportunities facing public and social sector organisations across the UK	

National publications and technical updates

CIPFA

1. Code Of Practice On Local Authority Accounting In The United Kingdom 2026/27

Local authorities in the UK are required to keep their accounts in accordance with 'proper (accounting) practices'. Public sector organisations responsible for locally delivered services are required by legislation to comply with the terms of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). This 2026/27 edition of the Code has been developed by CIPFA/LASAAC and has effect for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2026.

The Code specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of a local authority. The Code applies to local government organisations across the UK including local authorities, police bodies, fire services and other local public service bodies.

[CIPFA Code of Practice 2026/27 | CIPFA](#)

2. Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities 2026/27

SeRCOP is prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework established by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). It applies to all local authority services throughout the UK from 1 April 2026 for the preparation of 2026/27 budgets and performance indicators, and the completion of government statistical reporting requirements. SeRCOP is reviewed annually to ensure that it develops in line with the needs of local government, transparency, best value and public services reform.

[SeRCOP 2026/27 | CIPFA](#)

3. CIPFA Bulletin 23 – Closure of the 2025/26 financial statement

This bulletin covers the closure of accounts for the 2025/26 year and provides further guidance and clarification to complement the 2025/26 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: Guidance Notes for Practitioners (Code Guidance Notes). It addresses frequently asked questions and other issues that have arisen, along with corrections to the 2025/26 Code.

[CIPFA Bulletin 23 – Closure of the 2025/26 financial statement | CIPFA](#)

National publications

NAO

4. Responding to changing demand for school places

This report examines DfE's approach to supporting the school system in England respond to falling pupil numbers, seen in primary schools since 2018/19. The report:

- describes responsibilities, how pupil numbers have changed and what this means for school finances and outcomes for children
- assesses whether DfE has a good understanding of the changes in pupil numbers and provision of school places
- evaluates the effectiveness of DfE's overarching response to changes in national demand for school places, through its sector support and oversight The report shares lessons about these capabilities and the management and leadership environment that is required for government to provide better services.

[Responding to changing demand for school places - NAO report](#)

National publications

Forvis Mazars

5. Mapping public sector readiness, risk and resilience

Our mapping public sector risk, resilience and readiness 2026 report examines the key challenges and opportunities facing public and social sector organisations across the UK.

Based on insights from more than 100 senior leaders, it explores how organisations are responding to financial pressures, workforce challenges and digital transformation while building resilience for the future.

This year's report focuses on four key themes:

- Financial sustainability and organisational resilience
- Workforce challenges, recruitment and skills development
- Digital transformation, AI and cyber resilience
- Outlook and sentiment across the public sector

[Mapping public sector risk, resilience and readiness - Forvis Mazars](#)

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Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

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Report Title:	Corporate Risk Management Report Quarter 4 (Q4) 2025/26 (January, February, March 2026)		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	29 th July 2026
Report of:	Head of Financial Services	Cabinet Portfolio:	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected:	All
Key Decision:	☐ Forward Plan ☒	☐ General Exception	☐ Special Urgency ☐
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required: ☐ No ☐	Attached: ☐	No ☐
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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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☐
	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.	☒

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report concludes 9 performance measures reported as 'green' and 1 corporate risk reported as 'red' on the RAG status.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **Audit & Accounts Committee to note and consider the Council's risk performance during Q4 2025-26 as detailed in this report and Appendix 1.**

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

Corporate Risk Register

- 3.1 The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by Corporate Management Team. During Q4, 2 risks were rated green, 7 amber and 1 red.
- 3.2 The Council continues to monitor its Corporate Risk Register. During Q4, the majority of risks remain within 'amber' status.
- 3.3 Risk 3 – Incident resulting in death or serious injury or HSE investigation – is currently reported as 'red'.
- 3.4 Progress continues against agreed HSE actions, including memorial inspections, policy updates and IOSH leadership training.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Risk Register continues to be monitored by the Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis in line with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, and is referred to within the Q4 Performance Management Report, pages 17-26.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 Financial implications and risks arising are identified within this report

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 As recommended by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office, the Council is required to monitor and report on the use of authorisations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). There have been no authorisations sought in Q4. There are no immediate legal considerations attached to the recommendations within this report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment is required; performance management supports equitable service delivery and monitoring across all Valley Plan priorities.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Effective performance management is important to the Council, and the Council is committed to improving its services. In completing this report, consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team and Lead Member for Resources.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Performance management arrangements will inform transition planning under any future Local Government Reorganisation arrangements to ensure service continuity and governance oversight.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Appendix 1 - Q4 Performance Management Report

Quarter 4 Corporate Risk Register

Risks are those things which might present a barrier to the Council delivering the things we have set out to achieve. Embedding risk management across the Council will ensure there is a robust and consistent process to enable the Council to make the most of its opportunities and make appropriate decisions based on accurate, relevant, timely and complete information.

As part of the Council's annual business planning process, the Council reviews the potential risks it is facing and how it might mitigate the occurrence of such risks.

Service level risks where the impact and/or likelihood of the risk occurring could be high and effect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives and priorities are escalated to a Corporate Risk. Corporate Risks are monitored by the Council's Corporate Management Team on a regular basis.

The Council uses a risk matrix to analyse the probability and impact of risks. Scores are determined by multiplying the 'likelihood' score with the 'impact' score.

Likelihood	Almost certain	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Likely	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Moderate	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Remote	1	1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5
			Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
			Impact				

Likelihood – How likely is it that the risk may occur.

Impact – How serious might the consequences of the impact be.

A risk scoring 25 is the highest level of risk, and a risk scoring 1 is the lowest level of risk.

Risk RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating status indicators	
Status	Status description
RED	The likelihood and impact of the risk is high
AMBER	The likelihood and impact of the risk is medium
GREEN	The likelihood and impact of the risk is low

Risk 1 – Sustainability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Responsible Officer – Kimberly Haworth

Description

The Council's latest Medium Term Financial Strategy update indicates an underlying funding gap of c£574k in 2025/26, increasing each year thereafter to £934k in 2028/29. The Council must take appropriate action in order to balance its annual expenditure against its available annual income and other revenue resources. The Council has a legal obligation to publish an annual balanced budget; this means its budget expenditure must equal its available income and any available reserves. Council reserves are limited and equate to only circa 4 years given the anticipated funding gap. Therefore, additional income must be identified or annual costs reduced in future years. The current cost of living crisis may also add to the pressure on the Medium Term Financial Strategy through pay award, utility costs, contract inflation and Council Tax/NNDR collection rates.

Risk Consequence

If the Council is not able to prepare a balanced budget there would be legal ramifications, but would ultimately impact on the level of services the Council is able to deliver to Rossendale residents and would result in major reputational damage.

Mitigation

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy does not indicate a significant narrowing of the gap in the next four years. New income generating opportunities will need to be identified to generate additional revenue, along with improved efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Departments across the council will need to be challenged to become more effective.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
2	5	10	AMBER

Q4 Update

The income and savings groups has drafted a list of savings and income proposals which are being worked through to assign responsibility and action for delivery. Some of the savings have already been delivered through efforts to effectively manage utilities. Some items will need formal approval for delivery. The Council is forecasting an underspend of c£1m at the end of Q4 lessening the pressure on reserves and following on from the underspend reported at the year ended 31st March 2025. This places the Council in a favourable position moving forwards, however the focus on identifying and promoting efficiencies remains important.

The 2026/27 settlement was relatively positive for the Council and this is demonstrated in the revenue budget of £14m for 2026/27. The Council has sufficient resources to deliver its core service objectives throughout the duration of the medium-term financial strategy leading to Local Government Reorganisation. Monitoring of the Revenue and Capital budgets of the Council and appropriate check challenge and action off the back of this monitoring remains a key control to minimise the risk of failure. This risk should remain on the Council's corporate risk register through Local Government Reorganisation.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
2	5	10	AMBER

Risk 2 – Major Disaster affecting the Delivery of Council Services

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

The Council has statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and to carry out emergency planning and business continuity management activities to minimise the impact of a civil emergency or business interruption on people living, working and visiting the borough.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have robust contingency plans in place could result in the failure to deliver Council services, such as, the collection of residential and trade waste, burial services and payment of suppliers and benefits.

Mitigation

A robust Council Emergency and Business Continuity Plan is in place. Service continuity plans are updated and tested regularly through a quarterly Emergency Planning meeting. The plans are embedded with the Corporate Management Team as critical working documents to support the continued delivery of essential council services. All managers have a copy of the overall plan and their service plan and keep them under review. The Council is a member of Lancashire County Council Local Resilience Forum. Officers attend meetings and undertake regular training exercises. The council plans are available on the Resilience Direct website. Mutual aid agreements are in place with all Local Authorities across Lancashire.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	2	4	8	AMBER

Q4 Update

The Local Emergency Response Plan is maintained and regularly reviewed and the internal Emergency Planning Team meets quarterly, with the last meeting held in January 2026. Officers continue to attend relevant Local Resilience Forum meetings to remain up to date with current arrangements, contribute to the development of plans and take part in exercises to test LRF plans. During Q4, appropriate officers attended specific courses related to the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) and LRF's Teams Channel in an emergency response.

Local Authorities across Lancashire are discussing the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and how they can prepare in advance of the changes. Requests for information are beginning to be received to assist with planning through the LGR process.

A contractor was appointed to carry out remediation works at the large sink hole over Limy Water in Rawtenstall Cemetery, which will commence once the Environmental Agency Works Permit has been granted. Officers have planned engagement with the local community to advise of the works and to highlight the potential responsibilities under riparian ownership. Planned culvert works to reduce the impact of flooding in the Strongstry area have been delayed due to administrative queries from LCC.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	3	4	12	AMBER

Risk 3 – Incident resulting in Death or Serious Injury or HSE Investigation

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the Council has a duty of care towards the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and others who may be affected by our work. In the event of a RIDDOR reportable accident, there is a risk of a Health and Safety Executive investigation and potential for a civil claim for damages.

Risk Consequence

Failure to comply with current legislation and demonstrate compliance may result in harm to staff and others, financial loss and enforcement action.

Mitigation

The Council has health and safety policies and procedures including a Health and Safety Incident Reporting Procedure in place along with a safe working culture. Actions need to be completed to address and implement a consistent approach across the Council in order to secure compliance.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	3	5	15	AMBER

Q4 Update

Following the accident at Rawtenstall Cemetery, officers have continued to fully co-operate with the Health and Safety Executive investigation, and a programme of work implementing a new Memorial Safety policy, carrying out and recording memorial inspections, risk assessments for managing memorials, safe systems of work for memorial work and training of six memorial inspectors has been completed and accepted by Health and Safety Executive.

Health and Safety management training for all Senior Officers has been completed, with follow-up actions being implemented.

The Drugs and Alcohol Policy, Lone Working Policy and Corporate Health and Safety Policy have been reviewed and approved by the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). Joint workplace inspections with Unison have continued.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	5	4	20	RED

Risk 4 – Changes to Government policy on the delivery of the Council’s services

Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington

Description

As a statutory body, the Council is subject to changes in policy and legislation proposed or implemented by central government that could affect how services are delivered to residents and businesses. This includes potential changes arising from local government reorganisation, which may impact the Council’s structure, responsibilities, and service delivery models.

Risk Consequence

There is a risk that the Council may fail to respond effectively and prepare for policy changes or structural reforms, including local government reorganisation, leading to disruption in service delivery, loss of local influence, or resource pressures.

Mitigation

The Council is an active member of the Local Government Association and District Councils Network, which provide updates on government policy and consultations. The Council also subscribes to daily briefings from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), including government news and policy analysis. The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council meet regularly with the borough’s MPs to raise local priorities and discuss emerging national issues. The Corporate Management Team continually monitors and assesses government positions on funding distribution, policy developments, and potential local government reorganisation proposals to ensure timely preparation and response.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	1	2	2	GREEN
The Council’s Policy, Performance, and Communications Officer receives regular policy bulletins and legislative updates from government departments and undertakes a weekly horizon scanning exercise. Updates are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and cascaded to relevant officers. ‘Horizon Scanning and Policy’ is a standing agenda item at the Corporate Management Team’s weekly meeting, facilitating ongoing discussions on recent announcements, funding opportunities, and other government updates to determine any required actions. Staff also attend webinars, and the Chief Executive regularly participates in the North West Chief Executives and Lancashire Chief Executives meetings, both with representation from the Local Government Association. Officers continue to represent Rossendale through Lancashire-wide LGR working groups, including the Chief Executives Group and the HR and Workforce, Finance, Legal, Communications and Data workstreams. Participation in these groups will continue to ensure Rossendale’s interests are represented and that the Council remains fully engaged throughout the reorganisation process. A dedicated Project Management Office (1 Manager and 2 Officers) has been agreed to support the Council’s processes and transition as LGR progresses. Recruitment to these post will be carried out Q1 2026/27.				
Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	1	2	2	GREEN

Risk 5 – Sustainable Workforce

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description				
There is a requirement to have a sustainable workforce to deliver the Council services to residents and customers.				
Risk Consequence				
Failure to have a fully resourced, trained staff could result in the failure to deliver statutory and non-statutory service in a safe and professional manner to residents and customers.				
Mitigation				
The Council has robust HR policies and procedures, an agreed Authorised Establishment, performance management framework and Service Area Business Continuity Plans in place to mitigate any staffing challenges such as loss of staff due to the impact of an epidemic or pandemic. HR will work with managers to develop workforce succession planning. The Council provides an attractive benefit package including final pension scheme, flexible working, generous annual leave, a purchase leave scheme, free onsite parking, family friendly policies, discounted gym memberships and a cycle scheme to attract and retain staff.				
Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	2	3	6	AMBER
Q4 Update				
Sickness absence at Q4 stands at 12.27 days per employee, this declining when compared to Q3.				
Q4 turnover was 7 employees. Exit interviews identified varied reasons for departure including travel time, career opportunity at other local authorities and performance issues during the probationary period. No systemic organisational concerns requiring intervention were identified.				
Recruitment and retention challenges persist in critical service areas, particularly Environmental Health and Operations vehicle maintenance unit (workshop). To mitigate these difficulties, alternative opportunities have been explored and put in place which includes joint working with another local authority and recruiting part qualified professional officer to develop experience and enhance retention.				
Due to a vacant post within payroll, people and policy, significant pressures have been put on people and policy team. Due to the nature of this specialised role and challenges to recruit to this role. mitigated through an interim contractor with third-party, which will remain in place subject to Local Governemnt Reorganisation to ensure payment of salaries for both RBC staff and RLT staff.				
Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	4	3	12	AMBER

Risk 6 – Insufficient data and cyber security

Responsible Officer - Andrew Buckle

Description

Cyber security presents one of the most challenging areas for both the public and private sectors. With the proliferation and severity of attacks constantly increasing this represents a major threat.

Risk Consequence

Cyber-attack resulting in a complete loss of all systems coupled with malware being spread across the entire network. Data breach resulting in information loss causing reputational damage and resulting in a financial penalty due to non-compliance with statutory requirements such as General Data Protection Regulation, Payment Card Industry Data Security.

Mitigation

To protect against a data breach the Council, host all council data in Tier 3 Data Centres located in different geographical regions and are backed up daily. The Council's Data Centres hold the following accreditations: ISO27001:2013 and the Payment Card Industry Data Security. The Council adopts a Risk Insight approach to determine the threat Landscape and more importantly its evolution. The Council has received notification of meeting the Public Services Network which means the Councils' infrastructure met all the security requirements to allow connection to the Public Services Network. A cyber security training is to be provided for all staff.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
3	5	15	AMBER

Q4 Update

As part of our Defence in Depth security approach and increased risk in supply chain and third-party vendors. The following work has been conducted:

- Deployment of LogRhythm Security Information and Event Management used to detect, investigate, and respond to cyber-security threats in real time.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
2	1	10	AMBER

Risk 7 – Poor communications and public relations

Responsible Officer – Clare Law

Description

Effective communication and public relations are vital for informing, maintaining, and strengthening relationships with our stakeholders, supporting the successful delivery of the Valley Plan 2025–2029, and ensuring effective and efficient Council services.

Risk Consequence

Failure to proactively communicate, respond to emerging issues, or inadequate or inappropriate communications could significantly damage the Council's reputation at a local, regional, or national level. Reputational damage can negatively impact staff morale, public trust, and weaken relationships with stakeholders, ultimately affecting the successful delivery of our Valley Plan 2025-2029 and services.

Mitigation

The Council has a range of digital, traditional, and internal communication methods to ensure effective outreach and engagement with stakeholders. The Council's Communications Team supports officers in delivering timely, consistent messaging that aligns with and reinforces the objectives of the Valley Plan 2025–2029. For high-profile or potentially controversial issues, an established escalation and sign-off process is followed to ensure communications are reviewed, authorised, and aligned with corporate priorities and reputational risk management.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	4	2	8	AMBER

Q4 Update

Recruitment has been completed for a full-time Communications and Engagement Manager, who will join the Council on 1st April 2026, strengthening in-house capacity and resilience.

In partnership with VIVA PR, the Council continued to deliver external communications across its website, social media channels, and through media releases. 13 press releases were issued during Q4, supporting the promotion of Council services, projects, and achievements. The Council has served notice on the VIVA PR contract, which will end in May 2026. Planning for the transition of external communications back in-house will begin in Q1, once the new Communications and Engagement Manager is in post. Bringing the service in-house is expected to strengthen oversight, consistency, and productivity.

The Council's Facebook following increased to 10,724, a growth of 4.4% (448) in the quarter. Instagram following grew by 2.2% and is now 2,168.

Work has begun on the first edition of Valley Voice, a printed newsletter designed to reach residents who are less digitally engaged. This will be distributed in Q1, supporting inclusive communications and reducing the risk of information gaps. Proactive messaging has also been developed and shared to support the introduction of food waste collections in April, helping to prepare residents for service changes and reduce the risk of confusion or misinformation.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	3	2	6	AMBER

Risk 8 – Non – Delivery of Corporate Programmes

Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington

Description

The Council has agreed the 5 corporate programmes for 2025/26 to support the delivery of Corporate Plan. These are; Town Centre Regeneration, Property – Asset Review, Climate Change, Operations, and Customer Digital Strategy.

Risk Consequence

Failure to deliver the corporate programmes would have a detrimental impact on the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan 2025-29 – Our Place, Our Plan, and result in a reputational risk to the Council's commitment to the residents. The failure to deliver the corporate programmes could potentially have a negative impact on the Council's revenue budgets (by failure to deliver income generating projects) and delivery of the medium-term financial strategy, and the associated economic and social benefits may not be realised.

Mitigation

Each programme has a Programme Sponsor (member of the Corporate Management Team), a Programme Manager and Finance Officer. Each programme will have a robust plan and live risk register. The Programme Sponsor will be responsible for the strategic overview, and the Programme Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day management of activity. The Council's Programme Board meets quarterly to review the progress of its programmes. The Programme Sponsor is responsible for highlighting any concerns to the Corporate Management Team.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	1	2	2	GREEN

Q4 Update

Following the review of the Valley Plan 2025–29 – Our Place, Our Plan, 5 programmes have been identified, with individual projects monitored at an operational level to support delivery. Oversight of these programmes is provided through quarterly Programme Board meetings, attended by the Corporate Management Team, Programme Managers, and the Police and Performance Officer.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	2	2	4	AMBER

Risk 9 – Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets

Responsible Officer – Kimberly Haworth

Description

National lockdowns due to Covid-19 resulted in Council owned leisure facilities closing for extended periods. During closure no income was received and outside of lockdown periods, income was significantly reduced. The cost of living crisis will have a significant negative impact on utility and salary costs for the Trust. This has impacted the financial sustainability of the Trust.

Risk Consequence

If the Council owned leisure assets are to be sustained in the longer term, the operators of the facilities have little recourse to additional funding to survive other than through the Council. This financial impact was managed in 2021/22 through additional government grants and Council support, however the real impact is likely to be felt in 2022/23, 2023/24 and continues in 2024/25.

Mitigation

A report on the impact of all facilities has been produced by KKP and recommendations to minimise impact have been implemented. Senior Council officers are attending the Trust Board to ensure we work together to minimise costs and an intensive monitoring process is in place. Funding through a Covid-19 specific Sport England Fund has been received though this is limited in its amount and did not cover retrospective losses. Constant monitoring of future business plans and work in partnership to maximise income and reduce costs continues.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
2	5	10	AMBER

Q4 Update

A report reviewing the sufficiency, operations and governance arrangements for the Council owned leisure assets and the Trust has now been completed. Some preliminary preliminary findings from the review were used to make provisions in the draft 2026/27 budget for investment in the Trust. The Trust forecast remains at a position which will deliver an outturn which will be close to budget. Monitoring and control remain critical to mitigating this risk. Alongside appropriate multi-party decision making and actions arising from the finalised review which is likely to be in the first half of the 2026/27 year.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
2	4	8	AMBER

Risk 10 – Waste Transfer Station

Responsible Officer – Andy Taylor

Description

Following LCC's decision not to enter into a contract with Whinney Hill for the disposal of Residual Waste and Central Government's decision on the introduction of Domestic Food Waste Collections our current Waste Transfer Station no longer meets legislative requirements and as such needs replacing.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have an operational Waste Transfer Station at April 2026 will result in additional costs for running residual waste and food waste directly to Farrington.

Mitigation

The Council has a single source collaborative plan review document which will be updated and actioned on a monthly basis. A permanent resource requirement is being assessed for the Economic Development team and will feed into the budget setting process for 2025-26. On the assumption that this is accepted, recruitment of permanent, qualified staff will support delivery.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	4	3	12	AMBER

Q4 Update

Full Council approval has been granted for the project, Caulmert have been appointed to RIBA Stage 5 and we are currently awaiting tender documents from Barnfield. It has been agreed to award the build contract to Barnfield subject to them being able to deliver the contract under budget. The site clearance element of the project has been completed in March. A full build timescale has been submitted by Barnfield as part of the tender process and we are awaiting the final sign off of the contract. The build is expected to commence in Q1 2026/7

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	3	1	3	GREEN