



LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

COUNCIL MEETING

**Wednesday, 18 June 2025 - 6.00
p.m.**

Morecambe Town Hall

Lancaster City Council welcomes members of the public to attend meetings. However, space in the public gallery is limited to 30 seats due to Fire Regulations. The seats are allocated on a first come, first served basis and no standing is permitted. If you require support in accessing the building, please contact Democratic Services on 01524 582656, or email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk The Council intends to livestream the meeting – please click the link [HERE](#) to watch on MS Teams

Mark Davies,
Chief Executive,
Town Hall,
Dalton Square,
LANCASTER,
LA1 1PJ



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Sir/Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Lancaster City Council to be held in the Town Hall, Morecambe on Wednesday, 18 June 2025 commencing at 6.00 p.m. for the following purposes:

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **MINUTES**

To receive as a correct record the Minutes of the Meetings of the City Council held on 9 and 12 May 2025 (previously circulated).

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

4. **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any announcements which may be submitted by the Mayor or Chief Executive.

6. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

To receive questions in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rules 11.1 and 11.3 which require members of the public to give at least 3 days' notice in writing of questions to a Member of Cabinet or Committee Chairman.

7. **PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES**

To receive any petitions and/or addresses from members of the public which have been notified to the Chief Executive in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

8. **LEADER'S REPORT** (Pages 4 - 8)

To receive the Cabinet Leader's report on proceedings since the last meeting of Council.

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

9. **MOTION IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL TRANS AND INTERSEX COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON THE DEFINITION OF 'SEX' IN EQUALITY LAW** (Pages 9 - 12)

To consider a motion on notice submitted by Councillor Phillip Black and seconded by Councillors Joanne Ainscough, Catherine Armistead, Louise Belcher, Matthew Black, Ruth Colbridge, Claire Cozler, Jean Parr, Jackson Stubbs and Jason Wood.

10. **APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

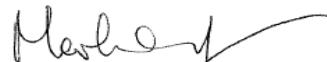
Group Administrators to report any changes to Committee Membership.

11. **QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12**

To receive questions in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rules 12.2 and 12.4 which require a Member to give at least 3 working days' notice, in writing, of the question to the Chief Executive.

12. **MINUTES OF CABINET** (Pages 13 - 39)

To receive the Minutes of Meetings of Cabinet held 11 February, 15 April and 20 May 2025.



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Chief Executive

Town Hall,
Dalton Square,
LANCASTER,
LA1 1PJ

Published on, 10 June 2025.



Leader's Report

18 June 2025

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

1.1 Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meetings held 11 February, 15 April and 20 May later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently.

2.1 No urgent Cabinet decisions have been taken since the last Leader's Report

3.0 Leader's Comments

3.1 The last six weeks has been busy with many election events: at county level involving a complete change of administration, at district level a bye election, our installation of a new Mayor and the election of council Leader and committee chairs. We await the consequences of any change of direction at Lancashire County Council and warmly welcome Cllr Margaret Pattison as new Mayor.

3.2 Eden Morecambe Project.

This has been a busy six weeks with a number of briefings for cabinet and members and a very well attended Community Conversation at the Mazuma

stadium. The new Chief Executive Andy Jasper has announced the project is now in design development phase with images released of the intended development, the intention to return to Planning before the end of the year and work on the transport requirements undertaken by WSP. John Pye has joined the Eden team as Project Director and will be based in Morecambe for much of his time. Residents and businesses expressed concern in the Community conversation about transport matters and the project completion and opening date, now 2029, but welcomed the new team members.

3.3 Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Since the submission of the initial proposal from Lancashire in March there has been limited action whilst we awaited the delayed response from government. This has now arrived and post county election we are about to re-commence LGR meetings here in Lancaster and at District level. There are no new requirements in the letter from government except a suggestion that Neighbourhood Councils be developed to support resident engagement but a briefer email has more recently arrived suggesting that adult services should not be split between unitaries ahead of the Casey Commission. A recent MHCLG webinar suggested that whilst the original programme for LGR to be complete in Lancashire by 2028 is still in place civil servants are aware it might extend to 2029. The new county administration has declared its intention to hold a referendum on Devolution and latest government contact on the subject of a Lancashire Mayor no longer states its intention that the county should have mayoral elections in the coming year. We have met with possible unitary counterparts, Ribble Valley and Preston and chief executives from district authorities have continued to work on assembling the necessary information in order to support the November submission to government.

3.4 AI Growth Zone

Since the government announcement of its intention to set up AI Growth Zones there has been intense activity between local partners to draw together the essential elements of se-industrialised land, power connections, low carbon generation and the wider innovation and business interest to put in a firm bid by the end of May. It is a testament to local partners that this was achieved, and particular thanks go to Rich Grant from Milliamp for the time and expertise given to driving this project.

3.5 City Council Priorities

There has been a review of the work of the Fit For The Future groups which cover both budget concerns and development areas aligning within the Council Plan. New groups have commenced work related to the future use of AI, further digitalisation of services, Planning, Commercialisation and Williamson Park and Salt Ayre.

3.6 Cabinet Meetings

Cabinet has met formally twice in this period. It has taken advantage of fewer formal requirements to have a number of briefings to ensure work on priorities

goes ahead smoothly. In particular we have met with: Dr Andy Knox to gain fuller understanding of health inequalities, the changes to the health service and the role of the city council: with Paul Stubbins regarding the work of Audit Committee and audit concerns and with our Legal department regarding the new procurement legislation.

3.7 Assets and Development

City council officers and the Leader attended the Leeds UKREiiF conference to meet with current and prospective investors in the district and the wider northwest. There was notable interest in AI but also in Canal Quarter and possible sites allocated through the Local Plan. Internally, the work of the Assets Group continues to review the current state of our assets and ensure best use is made of them to support the work of the city council. Currently the market is being tested regarding the future of Ryelands House and we are expecting a decision in July as to its future. Work also on-going on the future of the Reebok building now returned to us. The disposal of Palatine House has been completed. Homes England officers visited Lancaster this month to talk with officers regarding a pipeline of housing sites but in particular support for the Skerton site build out. It appears there may be some support forthcoming for revenue as well as capital to enable councils to prepare to commence building, a matter on which our chief officer has done some vigorous lobbying. The completion of the small Alder Grove modern methods construction development has generated a good deal of interest including from Homes England, both in its construction, its A EPC and the internal design, the development is a testament to the vision and skills of officers and partner businesses.

3.8 Events, celebrations and achievements

We have had a lively six weeks. Perhaps for us as a council most notable has been achieving finalist position in a number of Municipal Journal Award categories including the coveted Local Authority of the Year award. Even to be nominated is a substantial achievement so congratulations to all of us - it really is a huge testament to the whole team of officers but also to every member for doing the work you do in wards, committees and boards with diligence and patience. Other notable events include the King's visit, the launch of the third round of the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth commission which will include both Chief Executive and Leader as civic commissioners, attendance at both the Lancashire VE Day service and the flag raising at both town halls and the Leader's visit to the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment Heritage event in Liverpool. Carnforth held its Annual Meeting and it was a pleasure to be asked to speak, good too to see a Carnforth representative at the Eden Conversation eager to develop Carnforth's place as "Northern Gateway" to the attraction.

- 3.9 Overall, Mark Davies is a frequent promoter of our district as "punching above its weight", which interpreted means having high ambitions, working harder and faster than you could have thought possible and standing alongside partners who are deeply persuaded of the worth and value of our joint endeavour. Given all the difficulties life throws in our way at present, I hope in the next few weeks, members will take the opportunity to congratulate both themselves and any

officers with whom they have contact, for the undoubted achievements of Lancaster city council.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 20 May 2025

Government Waste Strategy Delivery
AI Growth Zone Collaboration Bid

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 3 June 2025

Projects and Performance Quarter 4 – 2024-25
Strategic Risk Register
Appointments to Outside Bodies
Lancaster City Centre Car Parking Portfolio Improvements - Design Development, Planning and Implementation
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3c
Canal Quarter Regeneration Phase III (Heron Works) - Progressing Development Design, Planning Approval, and Delivery

No Officer Delegated Key Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report.

The following Individual Cabinet Member Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report.

ICMD 24	UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Grant Award. Theme: Employability and Support for Business	Published on 28.04.25 Taken by: Cllr Nick Wilkinson
ICMD 27	Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund	Published on 03.04.25 Taken by: Cllr Caroline Jackson
ICMD 28	Halton-with-Aughton Neighbourhood Development Plan	Published on 11.04.25 Taken by: Cllr Sue Tyldesley
ICMD 29	Procurement of Refuse Collection Vehicles for Mixed Waste Collection	Published on 11.04.25 Taken by: Cllr Paul Hart
ICMD 30	Procurement of a New Supplier of Liquid Fuel for Fleet Vehicles	Published on 17.04.25 Taken by: Cllr Paul Hart
ICMD 32	Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide SPD	Published on 07.05.25 Taken by: Cllr Sue Tyldesley

ICMD 33	UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Grant Award. Theme: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Published on 08.05.25 Taken by: Cllr Peter Jackson
ICMD 1	Decommissioning of Bridge House, Mainway, as a Council Dwelling Block	Published on 22.05.25 Taken by: Cllr Caroline Jackson CALL-IN WAIVED
ICMD 2	Eden Project Morecambe – Appointment of Funding Monitor	Published on 27.05.25 Taken by: Cllr Caroline Jackson CALL-IN WAIVED

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meeting held on 20 May and 3 June 2025

MOTION ON NOTICE

MOTION IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL TRANS AND INTERSEX COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON THE DEFINITION OF 'SEX' IN EQUALITY LAW

Like trans and intersex people across the country, the local community is trying to make sense of the supreme court judgement and understand the implications in their daily lives. This is a period of upset, anxiety and uncertainty about the future that is impacting one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. As an employer, public service provider (particularly with facilities such as Salt Ayre Leisure Centre) and political organisation it is incumbent upon us to demonstrate our support for trans and intersex people in our district. Whilst we have no choice but to adhere to laws created in other places, we have the latitude to create and implement local policy founded in principles of equality, equity, dignity and compassion.

Council notes that:

- The Supreme Court ruling on the definition of 'sex' has prompted guidance from the Equality & Human Rights Commission that requires (in the language of the judgement):
 - Workplaces provide single-sex facilities for staff in addition to mixed-sex facilities
 - Public services can provide mixed sex facilities, but must also provide single-sex spaces.
 - Best practice is to provide mixed-sex facilities in addition to single-sex facilities, and indeed it is a requirement that suitable facilities are available for everyone.
 - A mixed-sex facility should have lockable 'rooms' rather than cubicles (i.e. have complete floor-to-ceiling sides and doors.)
 - Organisations which offer memberships to more than 25 people can do this on 'single-sex' basis.
- The Supreme Court ruling does not remove the protected characteristic status from trans individuals. **Under the Equalities act of 2010 trans people retain a legal right to a life free of discrimination and harassment.**
- Whilst possessing a gender recognition certificate (GRC) does not exempt a trans individual from the implications of this ruling, the Gender Recognition act of 2004 still applies. **The legal sex of a person possessing a GRC is that which they have acquired in line with their identity.**
- The council has operated family and unisex changing facilities at Salt Ayre, and unisex toilets in the Storey Institute, successfully for many years.
- Enforcement of a law is a matter for the Police and justice system.
- Further guidance is expected in June and the issue will go before Parliament in the summer months.
- People and Organisational Development Committee are considering a draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy along with reports from consultants on related matters. This is a workstream due for completion in July 2025.

Council's concerns related to this judgement:

- The guidance from the EHRC suggests there is provision from excluding trans people from any single-sex space based on their appearance/presentation.
- Repeated instances of challenges and accusations against people attempting to use facilities that they are entitled to use are being reported, typically where these individuals do not conform to stereotypical appearance/presentation (hair-cuts, clothing, build, body-hair, medical conditions such as Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) etc).
- Evidencing ones 'biological sex' when challenged is virtually impossible.
- Policing the use of all facilities is effectively impossible.
- Binary definitions of sex and gender are gross oversimplifications of the scientific biological reality and ignore cultural context and individual identity.
- This ruling leaves intersex individuals in a legal grey area and they are largely excluded.
- The Equality Act 2010 makes the non-voluntary disclosure of a persons status as trans to be a criminal offence. However under current guidelines individuals will be forced to 'out' themselves, either directly by responding to challenges or by accessing single sex facilities aligned to their sex as assigned at birth, or indirectly by conspicuously seeking to use limited mixed use facilities where single-sex spaces are otherwise readily available.
- There is no burden of proof for a complainant or accuser to demonstrate their own legal right to access a single-sex space when challenging that same right for others.
- Non-trans users of single-sex spaces will in practice be no safer than before this ruling, and may in fact be at greater risk due to false challenges and accusations.
- Trans users of single-sex spaces that match their sex as assigned at birth are self evidently less safe in being forced to do so.
- The default mixed-sex facilities that trans people will be expected to use will be disabled facilities, negatively impacting the availability of these facilities for their intended users.

Resolutions:

- The base principle in dealing with the supreme court judgement and consequences, now or in the future, whilst acting within the law, will be to seek to create policy that maximises trans inclusivity at all times in our workplace and services.
- Council declares our unequivocal support for the trans and intersex communities at this difficult time, and reaffirms our long standing commitment to embrace diversity and inclusion and to continue to actively embody this as an organisation.
- The Council will actively welcome trans and intersex people and seek to provide additional inclusive events, services and facilities.

- That People and Organisational Development Committee will be tasked with determining further responses to guidance and mandatory requirements in future as these are published. That the specifics of any policy response determined by the committee will be in line with the spirit of this motion as per the first resolution.
- The Chief Executive will write to the Minister for Women and Equalities, Cat Smith MP and Lizzi Collinge MP to share our concerns.
- A response will be made to the EHRC consultation on behalf of the Council. In light of tight submission deadline (30th June), Council delegates the formulation and submission of this response to the Chief Officer for People Policy, in consultation with members of the People and OD Committee. Whilst Council will not dictate the exact content, the response will reflect our concerns and conform with the spirit of this motion as per the first resolution.
- Best practice to maximise inclusivity will be sought from / shared with, other authorities and trans-inclusive LGBT+ charities etc.

PROPOSERS:

Councillors Phillip Black, Jason Wood, Matthew Black, Joanne Ainscough, Catherine Armistead, Ruth Colbridge, Jean Parr, Jackson Stubbs, Louise Belcher and Claire Cozler.

OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

Lancaster City Council is a co-operative, kind and responsible council that recognises the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion which plays an important part in everything that we do. Our equality policy sets out Lancaster City Council's commitment to advancing equality and celebrating the diversity across the district. It has been written so that everyone will know what we are committed to.

Furthermore, the Council has recently completed full and wide-ranging Equality, Diversity and Inclusion review, to support delivery of our vision which to create a council where inclusion is embedded in every decision, interaction, and service. By building on our foundations, we aim to empower every colleague to thrive and contribute to a workplace culture that values all roles and voices equally, from community based to office-based roles, for majority and non majority groups.

As both a large employer and provider of services we continuously review our policies to ensure that as a minimum they are consistent with what the law says. Policies then inform our operational approach. Our People and Policy team at the Council are reviewing relevant policies in light of the ruling, other appropriate legislation as well as the emerging guidance that accompanies it, and work closely with colleagues to ensure that our provision of facilities are legally compliant in line with the EHRC interim update, whilst awaiting further guidance in July 2025. This work, and delivery of the resolutions, can be delivered within existing resource in conjunction with the People and OD Committee.

Chief Officer – People and Policy

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

"At this stage we await further guidance on the practical implications of this Supreme Court ruling. As stated in the officer briefing note we will ensure that we are complying with the law when providing facilities."

11TH FEBRUARY 2025

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Option 1: Adopt the Strategy Advantages The Council will be able to make use of the Flexible Capital Receipts provision in delivering its Fit for the Future programme.
Disadvantages None identified from this report.
Risks Capital receipts, savings and transformation benefits may not be realised as anticipated in the Strategy; the associated risks will be mitigated through the implementation of the Fit for the Future programme.
Option 2: Do not adopt the Strategy Advantages None identified from this report.
Disadvantages The Council will be unable to consider funding savings initiatives and service transformation through use of capital receipts, and may therefore be unable to achieve the savings, outcomes and benefits anticipated from these projects.
Risks Not adopting a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy at this point would severely constrain the Council's ability to deliver its Fit for the Future programme.

The officer preferred option is Option 1, to enable the Council to make use of the Flexible Capital Receipts provision in supporting its savings and service transformation initiatives over the coming years.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Dowding:-

"That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

To recommend that Full Council approves the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2025/26 set out in the report, in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Resources

Reasons for making the decision:

Approval by Council will enable the council to use capital receipts to fund savings and service transformation initiatives. Failure to adopt a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy will severely constrain the council's ability to pursue these initiatives.

The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy would form part of the council's Policy Framework. From a strategic perspective, enabling the use of capital receipts to deliver savings and service transformation initiatives will give the council scope to pursue its Outcomes-Based Resourcing programme with greater flexibility and effectiveness.

Statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) enables local authorities to make flexible use of capital receipts to fund projects which are likely to generate savings to the authority and / or other public bodies. To make use of this provision, authorities must submit to the Secretary of State a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy setting out how the provision will be applied in the next financial year.

At this point the Leader confirmed a revision to the order of the agenda to enable all the Housing related reports to be considered consecutively.

68 REVIEW OF LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer Housing & Property which sought approval for the reviewed Housing Allocation Policy, which sets out the Council's approach to the allocations and lettings of Council accommodation and that of partner Registered Providers with whom nomination agreements exist.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	Option 1: That the proposed allocation policy be adopted	Option 2: That the proposed allocation is not adopted
Advantages	Ensures the service is operating the allocation of council dwellings in a way which reflects current guidance, helps to deliver on local objectives, and is legally compliant	None
Disadvantages	None	An alternative approach to reviewing and developing a new allocation policy would need to be proposed which delivers the required policy framework
Risks	None	The Council continues working to the old version which requires update and doesn't reflect the necessary changes referred to in section 3.

The Officer Preferred Option is Option 1. The proposed allocation policy has been developed to reflect current requirements and guidance and has been the subject of legal review to ensure legislative compliance.

Councillor Caroline Jackson proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

“That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

That the revised Housing Allocation Policy as appended to the report adopted.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Housing & Property

Reasons for making the decision:

The Housing Allocation Policy is a statutory policy which sets out the Council’s approach to the allocation and lettings of council homes. It is aligned with the wider district Tenancy Strategy produced and published by the Council.

The allocation of council dwellings is carried out in an environment which creates a number of challenges, chiefly an under-supply of quality, affordable housing within the district. Lancaster City Council’s Housing Allocation Policy must support delivery of an allocations service which is fair and transparent, and responsive to the housing needs of applicants, whilst making best use of limited housing stock. The proposed policy is designed to balance these competing factors.

69 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)

Cabinet received a joint report from the Chief Officer for Housing & Property and the Chief Officer Resources (Section 151 Officer) that sought Cabinet decisions on Council Housing rent setting proposals and HRA revenue and capital budget proposals.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The options with regards to rent setting are set out under section 4, the maximum permitted increase being CPI+1%. By applying this increase, it allows for a budget that can deliver on the Council’s ambitions on improving housing standards and addressing the climate change emergency, whilst adhering to the Rent Standard and wider legislative requirements.

In relation to garage rents, it is recommended that following recent rent freezes an increase in line with dwelling rent increases is appropriate and will support maintenance requirements without adversely impacting occupancy levels.

With regard to the revenue budget generally, Cabinet could consider other proposals that may influence spending in current and future years, as long as their financing is considered and addressed and coherent with the legislative and regulatory requirements of a Registered Provider.

The options available in respect of the minimum level of HRA balances are to retain the level at £750K in line with the advice of the Section 151 Officer, or adopt a different level. Should Members choose not to accept the advice on the level of balances, then this should be recorded formally in the minutes of the meeting and it could have implications for the Council's financial standing, as assessed by its external auditor.

The options available in respect of the Capital Programme are:

- i) To approve the programme in full, with the financing as set out;
- ii) To incorporate other increases or reductions to the programme, with appropriate sources of funding being identified.

Any risks attached to the above would depend on measures Members proposed, and their impact on the council housing service and its tenants. As such, a full options analysis could only be undertaken once any alternative proposals are known, and Officers may require more time in order to do this.

	Option 1: Set housing and garage rent levels as set out in this report, and approve the provisions, reserves and balances position (and their use); the revenue budgets and capital programme	Option 2: To propose alternatives to those outlined in Section of the report
Advantages	Increased rental income supports the Council to deliver against its Regulatory requirements and ensuring homes are safe and decent.	Unknown
Disadvantages	Increased rent levels for tenants.	Would require further options analysis.
Risks/Mitigation	The HRA budget set out in the report is sustainable in the long term. The risks associated with Option 1 are outlined in Appendix F – Risks and Assumptions.	Impact on housing service and council housing tenants unknown. Potential for housing service to fall foul of legislative and regulatory requirements, leading to unlimited fines and being 'named and shamed' by government.

The officer preferred option is **Option 1**: Set housing and garage rent levels as set out in this report and approve the provisions, reserves and balances position (and their use); the revenue budgets and capital programme, as set out and refer onto full Council.

The budget headlines were presented to the Tenants Voice meeting on 30th January 2025 who were broadly in agreement with the proposals described, including the rent increase. There was, however, a range of debate which should be noted including:

- That details of planned maintenance and capital programmes be presented to a future meeting of the Tenant Voice
- That the housing service should remained focussed on improving performance to ensure value for money in the context of a rent increase.

The budget headlines and the wider context of housing finances were presented and discussed at the Council Housing Advisory Group (CHAG) on 31st January 2025.

Cabinet have been consulted on the budget, rent setting proposals and other budgetary matters at their meeting of 14 January 2025.

The report highlights challenges faced within the current economic climate, particularly in the context of the increased regulatory and legislative requirements being placed on the social housing sector.

The longer-term financial forecasts contain numerous estimates and assumptions, and the service remains attuned to the risks contained within Appendix F, and in particular the impacts of further legislative and regulatory change which could affect business planning within the HRA.

Councillor Caroline Jackson proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the minimum level of HRA unallocated balances be retained at £750,000 from 01 April 2025, and that the full Statement on Reserves and Balances as set out at Appendix E be endorsed and referred on to Budget Council for approval.
- (2) That council housing rents be set in accordance with statutory requirements as follows:
 - for existing tenancies, rents will increase by 2.7% from 7 April 2025
 - for new tenancies within 2025/26, rents will be set at ‘formula rent’
- (3) That garage rents be increased at CPI +1% in line with dwelling rents
- (4) That a delegated decision to approve the tender of two programmes of work (over £200K and key decisions over £250K) during 2025/26 can be made by the Chief Executive (as per 7.4 in the report) and in line with procurement rules.
- (5) That further to consideration on 14 January 2025, the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 onwards, as set out at Appendix A to the report, together with the resulting Capital Programme as set out at Appendix C to the report, be referred on to Budget Council for approval.

Officers responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer for Housing & Property
Chief Officer Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Reasons for making the decision:

Lancaster City Council's Housing Service remains ambitious, while continuing to operate a sensible but forward-looking approach, seeking to meet Regulatory requirements and deliver safe and decent homes

The decision is consistent with the Council Plan. The proposals set out in the report impact positively on residents within Council Housing dwellings specifically in relation to climate change, wellbeing / social value, health and safety and community safety.

70**PURCHASE OF HOUSING STOCK****(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer Housing & Property which sought approval to accept government grant funding to increase housing provision for specific groups of refugees and homeless temporary accommodation.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	Option 1: Do not accept the grant funding	Option 2: Accept the grant funding
Advantages	No advantages identified - current BAU remain	Dedicated housing provision for this cohort will be increased at expected minimal financial input from the Council
Disadvantages	The Council will not increase provision of suitable housing for the specific cohort. The Council will continue to utilise costly bed and breakfast – hotel provision for accommodating homeless households.	Officer capacity will be required across different Council services to ensure the schemes funding requirements are met. Some financial resources may be required if a purchase price is above the limit provide by MHCLG or where renovation work requires more than the £21,000 figure awarded. This information will be presented within a full business case for further consideration.
Risks	By not accepting the funding and increasing dedicated housing provision for this specific cohort is likely to increase pressure on already stretched local housing both within social and private rented sector. It is likely that the homelessness service will	Timescales for delivery are tight with local authorities expected to use best endeavours to have properties available for occupation by 31st March 2026. Risks remain around the availability of suitable accommodation within the financial envelope available to ensure schemes are viable.

	continue to see increased demand putting additional pressures on temporary accommodation and the Council's budget. Increasingly it is likely as such by having to accommodate families the maximum threshold of 6 weeks for families placed in B+B provision will continue to be breached.	A full business case will be developed should funding be secured to consider opportunities for purchasing properties in the local area.
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The officer preferred option is Option 2 : for the Council to accept the grant funding so as to seek to provide much needed accommodation for specific cohorts of refugees and homeless households.

Councillor Caroline Jacksom proposed, seconded by Councillor Dowding:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That should Lancaster City Council be successful in its Expression of Interest Cabinet accepts the Local Authority Housing Fund grant as set out in the report and authorises the s.151 Officer to sign off the MOU.
- (2) That Cabinet endorse City Council Officers work to identify appropriate accommodation for this purpose and bringing forward a business case for further approval.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer – Housing & Property

Reasons for making the decision:

Lancaster has placed itself firmly as a welcoming district for refugee's seeking to settle in the UK and make new lives. However, this has put additional strain on an already stretched rented housing market, at a time when the local authority is facing financial pressure through the burden of accommodating homeless households within expensive hotel provision. The grant funding available from MHCLG provides an opportunity to increase housing provision for this cohort albeit on a small scale, and should not be over-looked.

The decision is consistent with Council Priorities:

A Sustainable District –Climate Emergency: Properties brought forward will be renovated to a high standard, therefore benefitting residents who moved with quality and warm homes.

An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy – opportunities for local contractors to be employed as part of the programme and local businesses to benefit through supply contracts.

Happy and Healthy Communities – proposals contribute to the well-being of Refugees and homeless households and provide quality housing for those in need.

A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council – providing much needed settled accommodation for refugees.

The decision is also consistent with the Housing Strategy and will link directly to the Homes Strategy for Lancaster District 2020-2025 by increasing provision of affordable housing.

71 GENERAL FUND BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK 2025/26

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Finance Officer that set out the latest position in respect of the budget and policy framework and Cabinet's proposed General Fund revenue budget for 2025/26.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Revenue Budget

Council may adjust its revenue budget proposals, so long as the overall budget for 2025/26 balances and fits with the proposed Council Tax level.

Other Budget Framework Matters (Reserves and Provisions)

Given known commitments, risks, and Council Tax restrictions there is little flexibility in financial terms, but Council could consider different budget strategies to be appraised for future years, or alternative arrangements for approving the use of various reserves, or different virement and/or carry forward limits. Overall, however, previous arrangements have worked reasonably well, and so no other fundamental changes are proposed.

Section 151 Officer's Comments and Advice

Council is required to note this formally in the minutes of the meeting; hence it is reflected in the recommendations.

Depending on the nature of any alternative proposals put forward, Officers may need time to assess the risks and implications. This is to ensure that relevant considerations are taken into account, to support informed and lawful decision making.

Officer preferred option

Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Reserves Position

To agree the recommendations as presented as the proposals to be put forward by Cabinet should fit with any external constraints and the budgetary framework already approved. The recommendations as set out meet these requirements; the detailed supporting budget proposals are then a matter for Members.

This report addresses the actions required to complete the budget setting process for

2025/26, and for updating the Council's associated financial strategy.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Peter Jackson:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the General Fund Revenue Budget of £27.201M for 2025/26 be approved, resulting in a Council Tax Requirement of £11.550M, excluding parish precepts, and a Band D basic City Council tax rate of £264.30.
- (2) That the supporting General Fund Revenue Budget proposals be approved, as summarised at Appendices A, B, B1 and B2 to the report.
- (3) That the budget transfer (virements and carry forwards) limits be approved as set out in Appendix D to the report.
- (4) That Council notes the Section 151 Officer's advice regarding robustness of budget estimates, the adequacy of reserves and balances, specifically the advice that the minimum level of balances be retained at £5.0M, to provide for added uncertainty.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Resources

Reasons for making the decision:

The budget framework in general sets out a financial plan for achieving the Council's corporate priorities and outcomes which incorporate the above cross cutting themes. Equalities impact assessments are undertaken for the relevant activities which are reflected in the budget.

The proposed budget incorporates measures to address the climate emergency and digital improvements as well as activities to address wellbeing, health, and community safety.

72 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME & CAPITAL STRATEGY

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Finance Officer that presented Cabinet's final budget proposals in order that the Council could approve a General Fund Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2034/35 and a Capital Strategy 2025/26 as required by regulation.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Cabinet may put forward alternative proposals or amendments to the proposed Strategy ahead of consideration by Full Council. For capital, Council may adjust its capital investment and financing proposals taking account of spending commitments and priorities, but its proposals for 2025/26 must balance.

Depending on the nature of any alternative proposals put forward, Officers may need time to assess the risks and implications. This is to ensure that relevant considerations are taken into account, to support informed and lawful decision-making.

The officer preferred option is to consider the Capital Programme and Strategy as attached allowing for any amendments being made under delegated authority prior to referral to Council.

This report addresses the actions required to complete the budget setting process for its Capital Programme and Capital Strategy.

If Cabinet, or Budget Council changes its Capital Programme from that which is proposed in this report then this would require a change in the prudential indicators which are part of the Treasury Management Strategy.

Questions were raised with regard to revenue and the movable floor at Salt Ayre and progress in relation to St John's church and the meeting were advised that clarification would be provided.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Dowding:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet recommends the following for approval to Budget Council:
 - the updated Capital Programme covering financial years 2025/26 to 2034/35
 - the Capital Strategy (Investing in the Future) 2025/26
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the S151 officer, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources to amend change in the prudential indicators should Cabinet or Full Council make any revisions to the Capital Programme.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Resources

Reasons for making the decision:

The Council's revenue and capital budgets should represent, in financial terms what the Council is seeking to achieve through its Policy Framework. The proposed capital programme and supporting strategy is part of the Council's budget and policy framework and fits into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The proposed budget incorporates measures to address the climate emergency and digital improvements as well as activities to address wellbeing, health and community safety.

73 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Finance Officer which presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy and associated documents for 2025/26 and provided an opportunity for consideration and comment ahead of formal presentation to Full Council 26 February 2025 for approval.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Cabinet may put forward alternative proposals or amendments to the proposed Strategy ahead of consideration by Full Council, but these would have to be considered in light of legislative, professional, and economic factors, and importantly, any alternative views regarding the Council's risk appetite. As such no further options analysis is available currently.

Furthermore, the Strategy must fit with other aspects of Cabinet's budget proposals, such as deposit interest estimates and underlying prudential borrowing assumptions, feeding into Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators. There are no options available regarding other components of the overall framework.

The officer preferred option was to approve the framework as attached to the report, allowing for any amendments being made under delegated authority prior to referral to Council.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Maddocks:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet recommends the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26, Appendices A to C to Budget Council for approval and that Delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources to amend change in the prudential indicators should Cabinet or Full Council make any revisions to the Capital Programme.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Resources

Reasons for making the decision:

Treasury Management forms part of the Councils budget framework. Effective Treasury

Management and use of the Councils' resources is fundamental to the delivery of its priorities and outcomes

74 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Finance Officer that provided an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasts for 2025/26 to 2029/30.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The risks to the Council are contained throughout the report and as the report is for noting, no alternative proposals have been put forward.

The Council continues to face unprecedented levels of financial and economic uncertainty as a result of National and International concerns. Local Government funding remains a key challenge for the Council as well as local issues such as those surrounding decommissioning plans for Heysham power station. This hampers the degree of confidence with forecasts can be made and inevitably some key estimates and assumptions are likely to change in the coming months.

Despite the work to date by Officers and Members to deliver on the Council's OBR programme, a significant budget gap remains which cannot be met from Council reserves. The overall size of the challenge the Council faces in addressing its underlying structural deficit and in formulating a balanced budget over the medium and longer term must be recognised as does the need to deliver considerable future savings.

The Council continues to deliver high-quality frontline services to the District's residents. Continued focus on the application of Outcomes Based Resourcing principles such as strategic prioritisation, service transformation and continuous improvement will play a significant part in achieving the level of savings required. ***The Council must, however, recognise that it will face a number of key decisions over the next financial year which will affect the manner in which it delivers its services.***

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Maddocks:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet notes the draft future years budget estimates as set out in the report as the latest information available.
- (2) That the update be referred on to Council 26 February 2025 for information. A final consolidated medium term financial strategy will be agreed by the s151 officer in consultation with the portfolio holder before being presented to Full Council in March.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Resources

Reasons for making the decision:

Performance, project, and resource monitoring provides a link between the Council Plan and operational achievement, by providing regular updates on the impact of operational initiatives against strategic aims.

75 Q3 DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive & s151 Officer to provide members with an update on financial performance during the first three quarters of 2024/25 (April – December 2024).

As the report was for commenting and noting no options were provided. Questions were asked in relation to council tax collection rates, business rates at Williamson Park and measures to pursue aged debts and the meeting was advised that clarification would be provided on these points.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for making the decision:

Performance, project and resource monitoring provides a link between the Council plan and operational achievement by providing regular updates on the impact of operational initiatives against strategic aims.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

MINUTES PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY, 2025.

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS SUBJECT TO CALL-IN CONTAINED
IN THESE MINUTES: MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY, 2025.**

CABINET**6.00 P.M.****15TH APRIL 2025**

PRESENT:- Councillors Caroline Jackson (Chair), Peter Jackson, Martin Bottoms, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Paul Hart, Sally Maddocks, Sue Tyldesley and Nick Wilkinson

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Davies	Chief Executive
Mark Cassidy	Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change
William Griffith	Chief Officer - Environment and Place
Rephael Walmsley	Senior Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Liz Bateson	Principal Democratic Support Officer

76 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 were approved as a correct record.

77 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

78 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

79 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members were advised that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure.

80 CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Maddocks)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer, Environment and Place to review and approve a revised Corporate Enforcement Policy in order to take account of updated guidance, codes of practice and new regulatory sanctions which have been introduced since the Council's Enforcement Policy was last reviewed in 2013.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	Option 1: Approve the proposed Policy	Option 2: Do not approve the proposed policy
Advantages	The Council will have an up to date policy.	None identified.
Disadvantages	None identified	The Council's existing policy will remain out of date.

Risks	None identified	The Council would be open to challenge when undertaking enforcement.
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The officer preferred option is Option1 to approve the proposed policy. Once this policy has been adopted, Council services will be able to start developing and/or amending their own specific policies for enforcement in their areas which reflect the principles set out in this overarching policy.

Councillor Maddocks proposed, seconded by Councillor Tyldesley:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved with a revision to the wording in 7.1 with the removal of ‘officers’ replaced with ‘processes and procedures’ so the paragraph would now read *‘Complaints about the conduct of processes and procedures should be made via the Council’s corporate complaints procedure.’*”

Councillors then voted on the revised proposition:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the draft Enforcement Policy be approved and adopted following a revision to the wording of the second paragraph in 7.1 which would now read *‘Complaints about the conduct of processes and procedures should be made via the Council’s corporate complaints procedure.’*
- (2) That the contents of the report noted.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Environment and Place

Reasons for making the decision:

The decision is consistent with the Council Plan. The enforcement policy helps the Council achieve its broader strategic goals relating to areas such as sustainable development, community safety and environmental protection. By setting out how we address breaches of regulations we will create a fair and equitable environment for residents and businesses.

81 PUBLICATION OF AN UPDATED LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION TIMETABLE

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Tyldesley)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer Planning and Climate Change that sought Cabinet approval for the publication of an updated Local Plan Preparation Timetable.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	Option 1: Approve the publication of an updated Local Plan preparation timetable for the Lancaster District Local Plan.	Option 2: Do not approve the publication of an updated Local Plan preparation timetable for the Lancaster District Local Plan.
Advantages	The Government has been unambiguous in its instruction to Local Planning Authorities in directing them to publish and submit a new local plan timetable that responds to the forthcoming guidance and regulations for preparing a new local plan. Though the Council has published an Interim Timetable it was submitted on the basis that Cabinet would consider the timetable and make a formal decision. By submitting a formally approved new local plan timetable the Council will comply with the Government's direction and demonstrate its commitment to achieving local development, most particularly the delivery of new housing to the district's residents, businesses, and stakeholders.	None are apparent.
Disadvantages	None are apparent.	The Council would fail to comply with the Government's unambiguous instruction to Local Planning Authorities to publish and submit a new local plan timetable that responds to the forthcoming guidance and regulations for preparing a new local plan. The Government has not specified what sanctions it might impose on Local Planning Authorities that fail to comply with the directive but by not complying the Council would signal to government that it either is not willing or not enabled to prepare a new Local Plan that demonstrates its commitment to achieving local development, most particularly the delivery of new housing, to the district's residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Risks	None are apparent. Whilst the Council will make a formal commitment to progress to its published timetable it may still need to be revised in future to take account of the impact of changing circumstances and events.	The Council might appear on a list of Local Planning Authorities that have not demonstrated the commitment and willingness to comply with responsibilities and obligations to plan for the homes, and other types of development that legislation and national guidance require. Considering the potential need to explore future funding for infrastructure or regeneration proposals an unwillingness or an inability to demonstrate commitment to preparing a Local Plan is not likely to enhance the Council's reputation as a responsible partner with government.
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The officer preferred option is Option 1: Approve the publication of an updated Local Plan preparation timetable for the Lancaster District Local Plan.

The report does provide Cabinet Members with the opportunity to formally consider and approve both the updated timetable and the statements about the matters that the local plan will address. The Government has signalled that it intends to be firm in achieving up to date local plans, the directive to prepare a new timetable is clear and there would seem to be little to achieved by not complying with the government's clear instruction.

Councillor Tyldesley proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

"That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved with the following two additional recommendations:-

- (2) *that in confirming the Local Plan Timetable to Government, officers state that this council is ready to start on a new Local Plan following publication of the appropriate Regulations and would like to schedule the first Gateway Assessment for the very beginning of January 2026 as one of the first Local Authorities to engage with the new process.*
- (3) *that officers take all possible steps to ensure that the process is complete to an adopted Local Plan before Local Government Reorganisation affects Lancaster. In this respect the timetable will be kept under review, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Planning, both when the new Regulations are published and subsequently at all relevant stages."*

By way of an amendment which was accepted as a friendly amendment Councillor Dowding proposed that the word 'district' be inserted after Lancaster in recommendation (3).

Councillors then voted on the revised proposition:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet approves the publication of an updated Local Plan preparation timetable for the Lancaster District Local Plan.
- (2) That in confirming the Local Plan Timetable to Government, officers state that this council is ready to start on a new Local Plan following publication of the appropriate Regulations and would like to schedule the first Gateway Assessment for the very beginning of January 2026 as one of the first Local Authorities to engage with the new process.
- (3) That officers take all possible steps to ensure that the process is complete to an adopted Local Plan before Local Government Reorganisation affects Lancaster District. In this respect the timetable will be kept under review, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Planning, both when the new Regulations are published and subsequently at all relevant stages.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Planning and Climate Change

Reasons for making the decision:

Cabinet is the part of the Council which is responsible for taking executive decisions and implementing the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan and Development Plan Documents are components of that Framework. The constitution states that decisions made about documents on the Policy Framework must be made by full Council, usually on the recommendation of Cabinet. The Local Plan Timetable is not in itself policy, it is the work programme for creating policy documents that will be decided by full Council. Cabinet is therefore the appropriate component of the Council to make decisions about the work programme for preparing policy documents.

82 PROJECTS AND PERFORMANCE: Q3 2024-25**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive that provided members with an update on corporate performance and strategic projects during quarter three of 2024 - 25 (October - December 2024).

As the report was for commenting and noting no options were provided. Questions were asked with regard to energy usage, Mainway, Williamson Park café , the Fair Work charter and solar array.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for making the decision:

Monitoring of strategic projects and key performance indicators provides a link between the Council Plan 24-27 by providing progress updates.

83 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER MANAGEMENT

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive that provided Cabinet with an update on the authority's progress in updating the Strategic Risk Register.

As the report was for noting and comments no options were provided. It was noted that SR24 the ICT Data Centre would be discussed at CAG in May.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for making the decision:

The Council have a Risk Management Policy, which is written to provide guidance on the management of risk. Risk Management is identified in the Council Plan 2024-27.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 6.52 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

MINUTES PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY 17 APRIL ,2025.

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:
TUESDAY 29 APRIL ,2025.**

CABINET

6.00 P.M.

20TH MAY 2025

PRESENT:- Councillors Caroline Jackson (Chair), Peter Jackson, Martin Bottoms, Paul Hart, Sam Riches and Nick Wilkinson

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Tim Hamilton-Cox, Sally Maddocks and Sue Tyldesley

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Davies	Chief Executive
Luke Gorst	Chief Officer - Governance and Monitoring Officer
William Griffith	Chief Officer - Environment and Place
Andrew Kipling	Accountancy Manager
Liz Bateson	Principal Democratic Support Officer

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 April 2025 were approved as a correct record.

2 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members were advised that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure.

5 GOVERNMENT WASTE STRATEGY DELIVERY

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hart)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer Environment & Place to consider and approve a different delivery model for waste and recycling operations, to deliver the outcomes required by the governments national waste strategy. The report was complimented by an informative power point presentation delivered by the Chief Officer.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Each option presented in the report has been investigated, modelled and forecast based through a number of pieces of work with a focus on a solution that offers an increase in

recycling rate, operational efficiency, resident participation increase and financial benefit.

Option 1 would move the districts residual collection frequency to three weekly at the same time as introducing weekly food waste recycling. Wheelie bin investment could offer alternate fortnightly recycling frequencies for residents whilst offering increased capacity to recycle greater volumes. This option offers a potential financial saving with the reduction of fleet vehicles and associated costs. Modelling forecasts an increase in recycling rate but offers significant risk in regard to resident understanding and participation, and also regarding operational planning issues as it offers its complexities. This option, due to its complexities, offers risk with the number of missed, or none presented bins likely to increase at which point this would involve cost increases on collection.

Option 2 would see the district having waste frequencies that would include three weekly collections of residual and recycling streams, with weekly food waste recycling. It is modelled on wheelie bin recycling investment to increase capacity and recycling rate. It is understood that this option will offer a higher recycling rate for the district, offers operational planning benefits and is easy to understand for the resident. The cost of this option is similar to current operations and therefore doesn't offer a financial efficiency.

Option 3 represents consideration to introduce food waste recycling weekly as mandated by government, but keep other collection methods as they are now, including boxes for recycling. Whilst this option will reduce the burden on the capital investment programme, it will stifle the district's ability to increase its recycling rate, offer no incentive for residents to participate in food waste recycling and will work against the authorities' priorities on zero waste to landfill.

	Option 1: Three weekly residual, alternate recycling (4 weekly per stream), plus food waste Residual bin – 3 weekly DMR ¹ bin – 4 weekly Paper bin – 4 weekly Food caddy - weekly	Option 2: Three weekly residual, three weekly recycling per stream, plus food waste Residual bin – 3 weekly DMR ¹ bin – 3 weekly Paper bin – 3 weekly Food caddy - weekly	Option 3: Keep current collection method plus food waste Residual bin – 2 weekly DMR ¹ box – 2 weekly Paper box – 2 weekly Food caddy - weekly
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential cost savings with a forecasted reduction of 1 vehicle • Increase in recycling rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in recycling rate versus current and small increase in rate • Provide consistent collection frequency across all streams • Provides a more operationally straightforward service • Reduction in missed bins • May help with crew familiarity doing same rounds each week • Easier to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No resident interruptions to service • Calendars remain the same • Crew familiar with current collection system • No system updates required

		for residents	
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex calendar system (every other week requires multiple streams to be presented at kerbside) • Operational challenges associated with complex service configuration • System updates required • Introduction of new calendars • Resident communication initiative required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Cost savings • System updates required • Introduction of new calendars • Resident communication initiative required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to increase recycling rate with status-quo • No cost savings • Lower participation rate in food waste recycling • Works against council priorities
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exponential increase in missed bin reports • Deterioration of resident perception • Impact on program adoption through negative feedback • Residents may see change in frequency as negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of changes may lead to small rise in missed bins until program is settled in • Residents may see change in frequency as negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding implications with no increase in recycling rate

¹ DMR - Dry Mixed Recycling (glass, plastic and cans)

The options available to the Council are outlined in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 of the report and all offer advantages and disadvantages. Any decision moving forward should consider a balanced approach to residents whilst taking into account the national strategy, financial position of the authority and operational efficiency.

Option 2 is the officer preferred option – to approve the proposed policy to move towards designated weekly food waste recycling, three weekly residual waste collections and three weekly recycling of current streams. It is felt that this will contribute to a smoother operation and be kinder to the public in knowing what is required on their behalf. It is anticipated that recycling rates will increase and therefore contribute to the national strategy.

The Portfolio Holder and the Chief Officer responded to a number of questions.

Councillor Hart proposed, seconded by Councillor Caroline Jackson:-

“That the recommendations as set out in the report be approved with Option 2 agreed as the delivery model with the following additional recommendation;

“ The proposals included in the report have been arrived at to ensure the Government’s waste strategy is implemented within the financial and operational context of the Lancaster District. They also seek to reduce the overall quantity of household waste, to increase the proportion of household waste that is recycled and to maximise our

eligibility for relevant Government funding in the future. They are underpinned by extensive analysis, due diligence and appropriate consultation.

It is very much recognised that prior to actual implementation, from April 2026, there will be a need for agreement of local policy with regard to specific waste collection issues. As such it is recommended that-

- (a) The Portfolio holder and Chief Officer lead the formation of a waste collection policy implementation group (consisting of cross party members and appropriate officers) to report back to report its recommendations back to Cabinet in the autumn. This group will develop a terms of reference that will include engagement and consultation with residents and service users.*
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a report and presentation on this matter at their meeting on 28th May . Cabinet further invites Overview and Scrutiny to consider the implications of the implementation of the Government's waste strategy in their work programme and make appropriate policy recommendations to Cabinet."*

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That in order to deliver the outcomes required by the national waste strategy, and having taken into account a range of factors including the need to reduce waste, increase recycling, provide a service that meets the needs of our residents and that is financially viable, Option 2 as set out in the report, be agreed as the delivery model for waste collection from 31st March 2026.
- (2) That having approved Option 2 as the delivery model Cabinet approve the capital investment of wheelie bin recycling as included in the development section of the Capital Programme, with a provisional operation commencement date of 1st April 2026.
- (3) The proposals included in the report have been arrived at to ensure the Government's waste strategy is implemented within the financial and operational context of the Lancaster District. They also seek to reduce the overall quantity of household waste, to increase the proportion of household waste that is recycled and to maximise our eligibility for relevant Government funding in the future. They are underpinned by extensive analysis, due diligence and appropriate consultation.

It is very much recognised that prior to actual implementation, from April 2026, there will be a need for agreement of local policy with regard to specific waste collection issues. As such it is recommended that-

- (a) The Portfolio holder and Chief Officer lead the formation of a waste collection policy implementation group (consisting of cross party members and appropriate officers) to report back to report its recommendations back to Cabinet in the autumn. This group will develop a terms of reference that will include engagement and consultation with residents and service users.
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a report and presentation on this

matter at their meeting on 28th May. Cabinet further invites Overview and Scrutiny to consider the implications of the implementation of the Government's waste strategy in their work programme and make appropriate policy recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Officer Environment & Place

Reasons for making the decision:

The decision enables Council services to start the implementation work stream as set out in the report and look to articulate the changes to residents.

This decision will assist the authority in complying with the national policy framework as set out within the Government Waste Strategy. There are also clear links to the Corporate Priorities 2024-2027 – including ambitions 1.5 reducing waste, 3.2 quality open space, 4.1 value for money, 4.3 investing in our skills and facilities, 4.5 innovative public service and 4.6 openness.

6 AI GROWTH ZONE COLLABORATIVE BID

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive to seek Cabinet's support for a collaborative bid to Government for an AI Growth Zone in the Lancaster District.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Supporting the proposal aligns with the Council Plan, supports our local economy and shows leadership in looking to take advantage of an opportunity for our District and the wider region.

Not supporting the proposal will forgo our opportunity to lead for our communities and collaborate with a range of partners.

The officer preferred option is that Lancaster City Council continues to work with partners to submit a collaborative proposal.

Councillor Caroline Jackson proposed, seconded by Councillor Bottoms:-

"That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

That Cabinet supports Lancaster City Council's involvement in the development of a proposal for an AI growth zone in the district.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Executive

Reasons for making the decision:

There is considerable interest in submitting a collaborative bid for an AI Growth Zone to be located around the Imperial Road site in Heysham and it is clear that we do meet the Government's criteria which is set out in Appendix A to the report.

The decision is consistent with the Council's aim for a 'An inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy' and the outcomes of sustainable innovation, sustainable skills and investment and regeneration.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 7.07 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

MINUTES PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY 22 MAY, 2025.

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:
MONDAY 2 JUNE ,2025.**