

## PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 September 2025, when the following Members were present:-

John Hanson (Deputy Mayor)

Joanne Ainscough

Mandy Bannon

Matthew Black

Gerry Blaikie

Dave Brookes

Roger Cleet

Wilson Colley

Maria Deery

Gina Dowding

Martin Gawith

Chris Hanna

Colin Hartley

Caroline Jackson

Jack Lenox

Isabella Metcalf-Riener

Hamish Mills

Andrew Otway

Sue Penney

Joyce Pritchard

Robert Redfern

James Sommerville

Jackson Stubbs

Paul Tynan

John Wild

Jason Wood

Suhir Abuhajar

Catherine Armistead

Louise Belcher

Phillip Black

Martin Bottoms

Keith Budden

Ruth Colbridge

Claire Cozler

Roger Dennison

Tom Fish

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Paul Hart

Ross Hunter

Peter Jackson

John Livermore

Abi Mills

Paul Newton

Jean Parr

Catherine Potter

Sarah Punshon

Sam Riches

Paul Stubbins

Sue Tyldesley

David Whitaker

Nick Wilkinson

**45 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor and Councillors Phil Bradley, Brett Cooper, Andrew Gardiner, Alan Greenwell, Chris Harris, Sally Maddocks, Sarah McGowan and Sandra Thornberry.

**46 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2025 were signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record.

**47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**48 ANNOUNCEMENTS - FORMER COUNCILLOR DARREN CLIFFORD**

The Deputy Mayor reported the sad death of former Councillor Darren Clifford on 16 September 2025. Darren was elected to the City Council in May 2015 to represent the Harbour ward in Morecambe, serving until he stepped down in May 2023.

For a time Darren served on the City Council's Cabinet with the portfolio for Culture, Leisure, Tourism & Climate Change.

Darren's funeral would be held on Friday 7 November 2025.

**Members stood in a minute's silence in his memory.**

**49 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

The Deputy Mayor advised that no questions had been received from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.

**50 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES**

The Mayor informed Members that no petitions or requests to address Council had been received from members of the public.

**51 LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader paid tribute to former Councillor Darren Clifford before presenting her report updating Members on various issues since her last report to Council. She then responded to a number of questions from Councillors.

***Resolved:***

That the report be noted.

**52 COMMUNITY CONCERN OVER BOMBARDMENT OF GAZA AND REAFFIRMING LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW**

Councillor Fish proposed the following motion having given the required notice to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15:-

"Council notes:

For 22 months, residents in Lancaster from a range of backgrounds, nationalities and faiths have held a weekly vigil in Market Square to express their horror as the avoidable tragedy in Gaza has unfolded.

The resulting deep humanitarian crisis has prompted a Lancaster-based campaign to fund a water well project in Gaza, led by a Lancaster University PhD graduate who lived here for many years and has since returned to Gaza. Around £35,000 has been raised so far.

Local residents came to speak to Full Council in 2023 imploring the Council to use its influence.

Ward councillors have been approached with requests to represent community concern over the conflict.

Our local communities - frustrated and disappointed in the Government's action to date - look to us to use our local community leadership role to put pressure on the Government and to ensure that the Council is not supporting the arms trade financially.

Lancaster and Lakes Jewish Community and Lancaster Islamic Society have been consulted in the creation of this motion to reduce the risk of harming community cohesion.

The Council's strategic risk register identifies an uncomfortable level of risk that 'International and national issues [can] impact on the strategic and financial context of the Council and/or partners, businesses and communities' (SR11), and unfolding political and military events worldwide, including in Ukraine and Palestine, reinforce this position.

There is immense legal risk associated with investments and cooperation with entities that assist or perpetrate violations of international law.

Lancashire County Pension Fund adopted the revised Responsible Investment Policy in March 2025 which states that 'Considering Human Rights as a priority for the Fund can support the objective of ensuring long-term, sustainable investment performance'.

Council believes:

- There is support for the Council to take action from all sections of our community.
- The Council should now take further action in its commitment to amplify the voices of our local communities who want the Council to support their call for human rights and international law to be respected in Gaza and adhere to robust ethical standards in line with its fiduciary duties in financial matters.
- The Lancashire County Pension Fund, to which the Council as an employer, as well as Council employees and other district residents contribute, should adhere to robust ethical standards, in line with its fiduciary duty towards scheme members and employers.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Request that the Council leader writes to the Prime Minister asking him to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to stop the catastrophic loss of life in Gaza and the West Bank, and the return of all hostages.
- 2) Request that the Cabinet member for Finance and Property asks the Chief Finance Officer to explore how the City Council can adopt the following principles to the best of its ability:
  - i. avoid any transactions with financial companies or financial instruments which have direct or indirect links with companies who are investing in or trading with entities implicated in human rights abuses, such as state violence and repression, war and occupation, grave violations of human rights as defined in international law (including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide);
  - ii. avoid any transactions with organisations involved in the production of weapons, weapon parts, or military equipment where there is a risk of the violations listed in (2)i being committed.
  - iii. incorporate wherever possible, and in line with applicable legislation and fiduciary duties, the Principles for Responsible Investment and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The above could be achieved by placing investment/debt with the UK Government's Debt Management Office and/or UK-based building societies, and by withdrawing treasury management investment from global financial counter parties. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Property to report back at next Full Council.

- 3) Request that the Cabinet Member for Procurement asks the Chief Officer for Governance to reduce the risk of transactions contravening (2)i and (2)ii via the Council's Procurement Strategy, within legal and other applicable frameworks.

This could be achieved by: the Council creating a self-certification system so that companies tendering for contracts confirm, as a condition of business with the Council, that they do not have supply chain business, investment or debt with companies or financial instruments involved in activities listed in (2)i or (2)ii and; ethical procurement being a guiding principle in the drafting of the Procurement Strategy."

Councillor Dowding seconded the motion.

An officer briefing note had been included with the motion on the agenda.

An amendment to the motion had been submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Ainscough. She proposed the amendment:

"This Council notes:

- For 22 months, residents in Lancaster from a range of backgrounds, nationalities and faiths have held a weekly vigil in Market Square to express their horror as the avoidable tragedy in Gaza has unfolded.
- The resulting deep humanitarian crisis has prompted a Lancaster-based campaign to fund a water well project in Gaza, led by a Lancaster University PhD graduate who

lived here for many years and has since returned to Gaza. Around £35,000 has been raised so far.

- Local residents came to speak to Full Council in 2023 imploring the Council to use its influence.
- Ward councillors have been approached with requests to represent community concern over the conflict.
- Our local communities – frustrated and disappointed in the Government's action to date – look to us to use our local community leadership role to put pressure on the Government and to ensure that the Council is not supporting the arms trade financially. • Lancaster and Lakes Jewish Community and Lancaster Islamic Society have been consulted in the creation of this motion to reduce the risk of harming community cohesion.
- The Council's strategic risk register identifies an uncomfortable level of risk that 'International and national issues [can] impact on the strategic and financial context of the Council and/or partners, businesses and communities' (SR11), and unfolding political and military events worldwide, including in Ukraine and Palestine, reinforce this position.
- There is immense legal risk associated with investments and cooperation with entities that assist or perpetrate violations of international law. • Lancashire County Pension Fund adopted the revised Responsible Investment Policy in March 2025 which states that 'Considering Human Rights as a priority for the Fund can support the objective of ensuring long-term, sustainable investment performance'.
- That the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires transparency in supply chains, and councils have a leadership role in ensuring procurement and investments do not enable forced or exploitative labour.
- That the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry report (A/HRC/60/CRP.3, September 2025) found reasonable grounds to believe that genocide is being committed in Gaza, highlighting states' duties to prevent, to avoid complicity, and to act consistently with international law.
- In September 2025, the UK formally recognised the State of Palestine, alongside other international partners. A wider wave of recognitions is ongoing. This Council welcomes this development and will align its language and expectations accordingly, while remaining sensitive to community cohesion and equality duties. Council believes: • There is support for the Council to take action from all sections of our community.
- The Council should now take further action in its commitment to amplify the voices of our local communities who want the Council to support their call for human rights and international law to be respected in Gaza and adhere to robust ethical standards in line with its fiduciary duties in financial matters.
- The Lancashire County Pension Fund, to which the Council as an employer, as well as Council employees and other district residents contribute, should adhere to robust ethical standards, in line with its fiduciary duty towards scheme members and employers.
- Ethical governance works best as a unified framework: integrating sustainability, Fair Work, Fair Tax, human rights, and anti-slavery so public money does not fund harm.

Council resolves:

To adopt a comprehensive Ethical Procurement and Investment Framework (2025–2029) that replaces the Procurement Strategy (2020–2024) and incorporates the intent of the Gaza motion alongside Fair Tax, Fair Work, and Modern Slavery commitments.

#### 1. Sustainability & Social Value

- Build on the Council's commitments to climate action, community wealth building,

and social value.

- Support local businesses and SMEs wherever possible, strengthening Lancaster's regenerative and distributive economy.
- Ensure procurement contributes to the Council's goal of a zero-carbon, fair, and resilient local economy.

## 2. Fair Tax & Financial Integrity

- Require contractors and partners to demonstrate responsible tax conduct and transparency of ownership.
- Avoid relationships with companies using tax havens or aggressive avoidance practices.
- Encourage recognition of standards such as the Fair Tax Mark, while ensuring fairness to SMEs and VCSEs.

## 3. Human Rights & Responsible Investment

- Exclude suppliers and investments linked to arms trading, violations of international law, or grave human rights abuses.
- Ensure procurement and investments are consistent with the UK's recognition of Palestine and with evolving international law and the Council's equality and human rights duties.
- Request that the Leader writes to the Prime Minister to urge a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the West Bank, the return of all hostages, and concrete diplomatic action to give effect to recognition of Palestine.

## 4. Fair Work, Modern Slavery & Labour Rights

- Embed the principles of Lancaster's Fair Work Charter into procurement and contracting, ensuring that public money supports decent pay, secure work, equality, and healthy workplaces.
- Require suppliers to publish Modern Slavery statements (where applicable), self-certify supply chain compliance, and demonstrate due diligence against forced, bonded, or child labour.
- Encourage adoption of recognised standards such as the Living Wage Foundation accreditation and support for collective bargaining, in line with the Charter. • Introduce supplier self-certification on Fair Tax, human rights, and modern slavery, with movement towards recognised third-party standards (voluntary).
- Update Contract Procedure Rules and publish a revised supplier toolkit covering climate, fair tax, human rights, fair work, and modern slavery.
- Require an annual Ethical Procurement & Investment Report to Full Council (including a section on international developments such as evolving recognition of Palestine)
- Establish a cross-party Ethical Governance Working Group to oversee delivery and prevent commitments from stalling.
- Write to the Lancashire County Pension Fund to welcome its Responsible Investment Policy, request implementation details, and seek assurance that exclusions cover tax avoidance, arms trading, modern slavery, and human rights abuses."

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Wood.

At the conclusion of a lengthy debate on the amendment a vote was taken. The amendment fell with 18 voting for, 28 against and 5 abstentions.

Council then debated the substantive motion for some time.

The Deputy Mayor called for a vote and the motion was clearly carried.

**Resolved:-**

Council notes:

For 22 months, residents in Lancaster from a range of backgrounds, nationalities and faiths have held a weekly vigil in Market Square to express their horror as the avoidable tragedy in Gaza has unfolded.

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- 1) Request that the Council leader writes to the Prime Minister asking him to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to stop the catastrophic loss of life in Gaza and the West Bank, and the return of all hostages.
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## **53 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2024/25**

Councillor Hamilton-Cox, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, presented a report of the Chief Finance Officer on the Treasury Management Outturn 2024/25.

He responded to questions from Councillors.

### ***Resolved:***

That the report be noted.

**The Deputy Mayor called for a five minute comfort break at this point. The meeting was adjourned at 7.35pm, reconvening at 7.40pm.**



**54 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MID YEAR REVIEW 2025/26**

Councillor Hamilton-Cox presented a report of the Chief Officer Finance with recommendations of Cabinet regarding the Capital Programme Mid Year Review 2025/26.

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

“That Council

- (1) Approves the adjustments to the capital programme as set out in Appendix C of the report.
- (2) Notes that relevant revenue adjustments in respect of minimum revenue provision and future borrowing requirements will be built into projected revenue estimates and considered alongside future reports to Cabinet in respect of the budget and policy framework updates.”

There was no debate.

A vote was then taken on the proposition, which was clearly carried.

***Resolved:***

That Council

- (1) Approves the adjustments to the capital programme as set out in Appendix C of the report.
- (2) Notes that relevant revenue adjustments in respect of minimum revenue provision and future borrowing requirements will be built into projected revenue estimates and considered alongside future reports to Cabinet in respect of the budget and policy framework updates.

**55 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council considered a report of the Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections, to consider making an appointment to a vacancy on the Local Government Association (LGA) Coastal Issues Special Interest Group (SIG).

The report asked that, firstly, Council consider the basis of appointment to the LGA Coastal Issues SIG, previously determined as nomination and voting at full Council.

Councillor Dowding, seconded by Councillor Wood, proposed:

“That the basis of appointment remain nomination and voting at Council.”

The Deputy Mayor called for nominations.

Councillor Dowding nominated Councillor Dennison, seconded by Councillor Hamish Mills.

Councillor Wood nominated Councillor Hartley seconded by Councillor Penney.

There were 31 votes in favour of Councillor Dennison and 19 votes in favour of Councillor Hartley. The Deputy Mayor declared Councillor Dennison appointed to the LGA Coastal Issues SIG.

***Resolved:***

That Councillor Dennison be appointed to the LGA Coastal Issues SIG until the next scheduled elections in May 2027.

**56 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was noted that the Labour group had appointed three substitute Members:

Councillor Cozler for the Planning Regulatory Committee;  
Councillor Ainscough for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and  
Councillor Potter for the Budget and Performance Panel.

**57 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Pages 11 - 12)**

The Deputy Mayor advised that two questions had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules as follows:

- (1) Councillor Matt Black to Councillor Peter Jackson regarding Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.
- (2) Councillor Matt Black to Councillor Hart regarding the 'Love Clean Streets' app.

Details of the questions and answers together with any supplementary questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

**58 MINUTES OF CABINET**

Council noted the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2025.

***Resolved:***

That the minutes be noted.

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Mayor

(The meeting finished at 8.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,  
please contact Debbie Chambers, Senior Manager, Democratic Support & Elections/Deputy  
Monitoring Officer - email [dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk)**

**Question asked by Councillor Matthew Black to Councillor Peter Jackson**

*Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is one of the jewels in our council's crown, providing high quality and affordable health, fitness, and recreation opportunities that benefit residents across our district.*

*I walk my dog alongside the centre every day, as many of our residents do, and I cannot help but notice the state of the area reserved for the Gravity attraction. It saddens me to see it in such poor condition. I remember how popular that part of the site once was, particularly for football and tennis, it now stands neglected.*

*Could the Cabinet Member confirm what plans, if any, exist for bringing this area back into community use? (For example whether any new activities such as the very popular paddle ball could be installed and/or a return for football teams to use all weather flood lit pitches.)*

Councillor Peter Jackson replied:

Thank you, I welcome the opportunity to share plans with Councillors. Plans are currently progressing on a number of fronts regarding this site, including feasibility of a new 3G football pitch or a project that would see a wind turbine to further reduce power costs (we would still be seeking to get an all weather football pitch on a different site if there is a wind turbine).

Padel is the fastest growing sport in the world at present and SALC has been identified as a site which could potentially have courts for public use. Discussions are currently taking place with a number of suppliers to look at the feasibility of delivering Padel Courts to SALC in order to generate additional revenue streams to the business, whilst increasing the recreational offer to our residents and visitors. Any development would involve design and planning to be considered, but officers continue to work on potential delivering within 2026. Looking at courts being operational by summer of 2026.

The Council's Play Pitch Strategy, identifies that there is a shortfall in provision of 3G pitches both for current, and future demand across the Lancaster District. All current district facilities are operating towards capacity at peak times, especially during the winter period. There are currently 205 teams currently playing within the district with grassroots football in both boys and girls teams, growing each year. With this in mind, officers continue to have regular open dialog with Lancashire FA, Football Foundation and internal finance colleagues to look at the feasibility of additional 3G football provision at both Salt Ayre and other locations within the district.

In response to Councillor Matt Black's supplementary question about timings, Councillor Peter Jackson replied that there would have to be negotiations with the football foundation regarding timings.

**Question asked by Councillor Matthew Black to Councillor Paul Hart**

*In July I was very pleased to receive an email announcing that Lancaster City Council would be using the new Love Clean Streets app. The app is designed to make it easier for residents to report issues in their community, such as graffiti, fly tipping and other forms of environmental damage. It promises to be a quick and effective way of ensuring problems are logged, tracked, and resolved, while giving residents confidence that the Council is listening and responding.*

*On 24th July I submitted a report through the app regarding highly offensive graffiti – sprayed in half-metre sized lettering – on a popular cycle track bridge. On 30th July I received a notification that the case had been closed. I thought this was excellent and that the system*

*was working as intended. However, the very next day, while cycling to work, I saw that the graffiti was still there – no work had been carried out. I therefore reopened the app and submitted a second report. Over six weeks have now passed, and the offensive graffiti remains untouched. We know the app allows staff to upload a photo once the job is complete, and indeed some reports do come with an “after” photo attached. So it is frustrating that cases are being closed without even that very basic check. This looks like an operational failure.*

*So my question is what exactly is going wrong operationally that results in reports being closed without the work being done?*

*I struggle to accept that this is down to “teething problems” or “glitches” in the system. Our residents need the assurance that when they take the time to report issues, the Council responds swiftly and effectively.*

Since the rollout of Love Clean Streets in July 2025, there has been an increase in public engagement and reporting. In July and August, 1,888 cases were received across Public Realm, representing a 41% rise compared to the same period last year. On average, cases were resolved and closed within 3.31 days, which meets the Council's service level agreement of 5 working days.

The specific case referenced was subject to an internal investigation. It was found that the case should not have been closed initially and resolution was delayed due to operational issues related to the fleet and personnel. The graffiti for this individual case was removed on 18th August 2025. The time from the original report was 25 days. During the time period of this case, operational issues relating to the vehicle to be used for the cleaning, and it being overweight for the location, didn't allow us to react as quickly as possible. Solutions have since been found and the issue is now rectified. The graffiti was removed by our internal team.

Feedback has been considered, and a new category, called 'offensive graffiti' has been added to the app to facilitate identification of urgent requests. If a case is reported to the district council for another authority for example the County Council or Network Rail it is closed, closed on the system. Based on the feedback from this particular case, officers are working with the app provider to update the messaging sent to residents when the case is closed, including guidance on how to report it to the relevant agency.

I have to observe that from personal experience anyone who has used Love Clean Streets will have had the app, put a report in and it comes back closed, so you assume it's been done. This has been going on for some time. Now, I discovered this evening that this particular bridge where the graffiti was is actually County Council property and when Skerton Bridge had graffiti on it, County removed it. I have to make further enquiries about why that didn't happen, but in any case, we have put new ways of working in place.

Councillor Matt Black asked a supplementary question:

*Going forward, what is the City Council doing to make sure that cases are not closed down?*

Councillor Hart replied that he was not privy to how the software worked, but he had been assured by officers that they had taken measures to stop this happening in the future.