

## CABINET

6.00 P.M.

13TH JANUARY 2026

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Caroline Jackson (Chair), Mandy Bannon, Martin Bottoms, Paul Hart, Sally Maddocks, Sam Riches and Sue Tyldesley

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Peter Jackson and Tim Hamilton-Cox

Officers in attendance:-

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

### 86 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 26 November and Tuesday 2 December 2025 were approved as a correct record.

### 87 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

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

### 88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

### 89 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

### 90 CORPORATE FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2026/27

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Officer Resources that asked Members to endorse the Fees and Charges Policy for 2026/27 and also to consider a range of charging options as deemed appropriate to the service area.

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

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
|            | Option 1: To support the inflationary increases/changes as outlined in the report. | Option 2: To not support the inflationary increases/changes as outlined in the report. |
| Advantages | Fees and charges contribute further to the general fund net                        | Maintains the cost of services at 25/26 levels or at less than                         |

|               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
|               | position.<br><br>Costs of delivering Council services have increased as has demand in some areas. Not increasing costs means that further pressure is created on the Council's ability to deliver its core services. | proposed in this report.   |
| Disadvantages | The draft revenue budget has been prepared with the inclusion of the items raised in this report. Any further proposals would require further consideration prior to being fed into the budget process.              | Costs of delivering Council services have increased as has demand in some areas. Not increasing costs means that further pressure is created on the Council's ability to deliver its core services.              |
| Risks         | Increasing fees to higher than suggested levels would most likely result in further resistance and potentially not achieve the targets originally set.   | Cost of living increases and the return from the pandemic have reshaped people's habits. The income targets already set may not achieve projected levels in 26/27, resulting in a shortfall within the accounts. |

The officer preferred option is option 1. Fees and Charges are reviewed on an annual basis and as outlined within the report, significant factors have become apparent as to why differing treatment is required within a couple of areas. It is felt that the recommendations made are of a fair nature and in-line with the attached policy.

Councillor Bottoms proposed, seconded by Councillor Tyldesley:-

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

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet endorses the Fees and Charges Policy as set out at Appendix A, to the report and during 2026/27 as part of the mid-year budget strategy review determines whether any other areas of income generation be explored further for 2026/27 onwards.
- (2) That Cabinet endorses the freezing of garden waste collection charges for 2026/27.
- (3) That Cabinet endorses the introduction of new fees and charges within Planning & Climate Change as detailed in section 3.2 of the report.
- (4) That Cabinet proposes the increasing of selected car parking pay and display

charges plus establishment of new charges as appropriate, in line with those listed in section 3.3 to the report, to be consulted upon with partners ahead of final decisions at Cabinet on 10th February 2026.

- (5) That Cabinet endorses the application of inflationary increases to fees and charges across all remaining areas as appropriate, as reported as part of the current 2026/27 budget setting process.

**Officer responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Officer Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The report forms part of the Council's budget proposals which will be consulted on as part of that exercise and specific elements of the report will also be shared with organisations that have a particular interest. Fees and charges form an integral part of the budget setting process, which in turn relates to the Council's priorities. Under the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), income generation is a specific initiative for helping to balance the budget.

**91 BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK UPDATE 2026/27 TO 2030/31**

**(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 budget strategy for 2025/26 and financial outlook up to 2030/31. Specifically, the report considered the budget and Council Tax proposals for 2026/27.

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

It is essential that the Council Tax rate is set in line with the Council Tax billing timetable. Any delay would put the Council at risk of not being able to collect the tax which would have serious cash flow implications. In terms of the actual budget position, work is ongoing to provide a balanced budget. Public consultation/stakeholder meetings will be held over the coming weeks (including Budget and Performance Panel). The feedback from these meetings will be considered by Cabinet and incorporated into a final budget proposal which will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 10 February 2026 and recommended to Council on 25 February 2026.

The latest budget position does not produce a balanced budget for 2025/26 and further intervention is necessary before Cabinet can be presented with a balanced budget.

Whilst the longer-term financial forecasts contain numerous estimates and assumptions, which will change over time, the forecasts clearly highlight potential annual and cumulative budget deficits over the next 5 years and the position the Council faces. Although this position is not unique to this Council, it is reflected nationally across many public sector bodies. The gaps identified for 2026/27, although are lower than previously forecasted, are still present. Members and Officers recognise the size of the challenge ahead including that of LGR and will look to manage the transitional change to ensure the Council delivers both its statutory and non-statutory services across the district.

Councillor Bottoms proposed, seconded by Councillor Riches:-

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

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet recommends to Council a 2.99% increase to the Lancaster City Council element of the Council Tax as set out in paragraph 3.3 (option one) of the report which is an increase to the Band D Council Tax from £264.30 to £272.20.
- (2) That the recommendations and proposals in this report be referred to Council on 28 January for initial consideration prior to public consultation/stakeholder meeting on 3 February by Budget and Performance Panel, in order that any feedback can be provided to Cabinet at its 11 February meeting.

**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 decision enables the proposals to be considered by the Budget and Performance Panel and at January Council allowing Cabinet to make further recommendations back to Council to complete the budget setting process for 2026/27.

---

Chair

(The meeting ended at 6.33 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email [ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk)**

**MINUTES PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY 15 JANUARY, 2026.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:  
FRIDAY 23 JANUARY, 2026.**

