

Minutes of Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2024, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor M Hindle (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	S Hore
J Atherton	K Horkin
S Atkinson	L Jameson
T Austin	G McCrum
K Barnsley	C McFall
S Bibby	R Newmark
D Birtwhistle	D O'Rourke
D Brocklehurst	S O'Rourke
I Brown	M Peplow
S Brunskill	R Ray
R Corney	M Robinson
L Edge	G Scott
R Elms	K Spencer
S Farmer	L Street
S Fletcher	N Stubbs
M French	R Walsh
M Graveston	A Wilkins-Odudu
S Hirst	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Economic Development and Planning, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Financial Services

720 PRAYERS

Canon Woodcock opened the meeting with prayers.

721 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors S Cowman, G Hibbert, J Hill, and J Rogerson.

722 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

723 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

724 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There was no public participation.

725 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on a wide range of events that he had attended since the last meeting. He noted his privilege at hosting the Clitheroe Castle candlelit vigil which marked the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine. He also highlighted a recent meeting with Clitheroe U3A, and his close involvement with the Friends of Calderstones Cemetery. The Mayor was also looking forward to hosting students later in March in regard to the planning of a Climate Change Summit, which would take place in June.

726 STATUTORY CONSULTATION WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYERS REPRESENTATIVES

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive which informed the Members of the meeting with national non-domestic rate (NNDR) representatives about the Council's 2024/25 budget proposals. This year's meeting was held on 26 February 2024 and was attended by both Whalley and Clitheroe Chamber of Trade representatives.

727 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 – 2028/29 AND SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH CATEGORY OF DWELLING IN THE COUNCIL'S AREA FOR 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report setting the budget for 2024/25 and to set the different amounts of council tax for different parts of the area where special items applied (Parish precepts).

The report set out the budget summary of the financial year 2024/25 which contained details of revenue and capital requirements.

The Leader presented his budget speech outlining the key economic issues that had been taken into account in setting the budget. He was pleased that, in contrast to some Authorities, Ribble Valley Borough Council had; no debt, the lowest District Council Tax in Lancashire, the 28th lowest Council Tax in England, and a healthy £17 million in reserves and balances. He reported that in the financial years to come, based on assumptions made on core funding from the government, the Council faced a budget deficit, and the Council would address a savings plan as recommended by the external auditors. He noted that the budget which was presented also kept the museum open under its existing opening times, invested a further £500k into the Castle bringing the total to nearly £1m, and included a five-year £13m capital programme which featured improvements to play areas, public toilets, car parks, and solar panels, adding that the Council remained the only authority to collect refuse weekly and not charge for green waste. He noted the robust processes in place in preparing the budget, beginning with the Budget Working Group. He reported that due to savings on the 2023/24 budget a further £1m would be set aside to fund one-off projects, named the Ribble Valley Golden Jubilee Fund. He welcomed proposals for the fund which would be considered using the same robust processes. The Leader expressed gratitude to all service Committees, the Council's staff, Members of the Council, and the Borough's residents.

Approval of the budget proposals contained in the report was proposed by Councillor S Atkinson and seconded by Councillor S Hore. Members debated the proposed budget.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor L Jameson, proposed an amendment to the budget from the Labour Group and Green and Progressive Liberal Group which included the following amendments to the revenue budget 2024/25:

- Freezing of all disabled and concession fees and charges at 2023-24 rates for 2024-25 funded by recovering the budget shortfall spread evenly across all non-disabled and non-concession fees and charges
- Increase the Council's Partnership Officer post from part time to full time (or job share) for 3-year fixed term contract
- Creation of a new Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Officer post for 3-year fixed term contract
- Provision of carbon literacy training and certification for Members, Heads of Service and Officers to equip them to move RVBC to net zero by 2030

He also proposed the following amendments to the capital budget 2024/25:

- Retention of the Salvation Army building in RVBC ownership and conversion of the building using an energy efficient retrofit into single person's accommodation including filming of the work to promote awareness of how older buildings can be upgraded to save energy and running costs
- Improvements to climate control in Council Offices to reduce energy costs, increase staff comfort and productivity
- Production of a guidance document and grant-bearing fund to assist with additional shop facade costs for businesses in RVBC Conservation areas
- A Ringfenced Enforcement Contingency Fund for Planning and Environmental Health teams
- Strategic Review of waste collection, recycling, street cleansing, dog fouling and litter/dog waste bin provision/emptying to look at ways to improve recycling rate, reduce carbon emissions, improve litter and dog fouling control while protecting existing jobs and keeping overall service cost neutral when adjusted for inflation
- A Fund for RVBC rental of empty premises for subsidised short-term community use e.g. mobile bank etc. - possible use of ACV's
- Clitheroe Castle grounds improvements
- Remedial works to landfill contamination to John Smith's Playing Fields in Longridge
- Donation to Olive Branch, Clitheroe
- Supply of two e-bikes to Ribble Valley Police Rural Task Force
- Unallocated capital reserve

The total cost of proposed amendments to the revenue and capital budget 2024/25 was £1.5m to be funded from the £1.5m underspend identified in the 2023/24 Revised Budget.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Stewart Fletcher.

Members debated the amendment. A recorded vote was taken on the amendment.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
J Alcock		X		
S Atkinson		X		
T Austin		X		

J Atherton		X		
K Barnsley	X			
D Brocklehurst	X			
S Bibby		X		
D Birtwhistle		X		
I Brown		X		
S Brunskill		X		
R Corney	X			
S Cowman				X
L Edge – Dep Mayor		X		
R Elms		X		
S Farmer		X		
S Fletcher	X			
M French	X			
M Graveston	X			
G Hibbert				X
J Hill				X
M Hindle - Mayor		X		
S Hirst		X		
S Hore		X		
K Horkin		X		
L Jameson	X			
G McCrum	X			
C McFall		X		
R Newmark		X		
D O'Rourke		X		
S O'Rourke		X		
M Peplow	X			
R Ray	X			
M Robinson		X		
J Rogerson				X
G Scott		X		
K Spencer	X			
L Street		X		
N Stubbs	X			
R Walsh		X		
A Wilkins-Odudu	X			
Total Votes Cast	For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
	13	23	0	4

The amendment was lost.

Members then returned to the substantive motion proposed by the Leader.

The Leader noted that the suggestions put forward in the amendment could be put forward for the Ribble Valley Jubilee Fund for consideration by the Budget Working Group, and onward approval by Policy and Finance Committee.

A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
J Alcock	X			
S Atkinson	X			
T Austin	X			
J Atherton	X			
K Barnsley		X		

D Brocklehurst		X		
S Bibby	X			
D Birtwhistle	X			
I Brown	X			
S Brunskill	X			
R Corney		X		
S Cowman				X
L Edge – Dep Mayor	X			
R Elms	X			
S Farmer	X			
S Fletcher		X		
M French		X		
M Graveston			X	
G Hibbert				X
J Hill				X
M Hindle - Mayor	X			
S Hirst	X			
S Hore	X			
K Horkin	X			
L Jameson		X		
G McCrum		X		
C McFall	X			
R Newmark	X			
D O'Rourke	X			
S O'Rourke	X			
M Peplow		X		
R Ray		X		
M Robinson	X			
J Rogerson				X
G Scott	X			
K Spencer		X		
L Street	X			
N Stubbs		X		
R Walsh	X			
A Wilkins-Odudu		X		
Total Votes Cast	For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
	23	12	1	4

The motion was carried and it was

RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL:

1. Approve the following submitted by the Policy and Finance Committee:
 - a) The revised revenue estimates for 2023/24 and the revenue estimates for 2024/25.
 - b) The revised capital programme for 2023/24 and the five-year capital programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29.
2. Approve the prudential indicators, borrowing limits and MRP Policy Statement as set out in Annex 1 of the report.
3. Note that, under delegated powers in accordance with section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council has determined the following amounts for

2024/25 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), as its council tax base for the year.

a) 25,321 being the amount of its council tax base for the whole district [item T in the formula in section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)]; and

b)

Parish Area	Tax base
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	487
Balderstone	201
Barrow	811
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	207
Billington & Langho	2,214
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	492
Bowland Forest (High)	75
Bowland Forest (Low)	82
Bowland with Leagram	82
Chatburn	403
Chipping	556
Clayton le Dale	520
Clitheroe	6,181
Dinckley	45
Downham	48
Dutton	103
Gisburn	244
Grindleton	358
Horton	52
Hothersall	77
Longridge	3,213
Mearley	8
Mellor	993
Newsholme	20
Newton	140
Osbaldeston	105
Paythorne	48
Pendleton	110
Ramsgreave	285
Read	585
Ribchester	675
Rimington & Middop	240
Sabden	550
Salesbury	192
Simonstone	498
Slaidburn & Easington	153
Thornley with Wheatley	174

Parish Area	Tax base
Twiston	37
Waddington	453
West Bradford	384
Whalley	1,914
Wilpshire	1,086
Wiswell	177
Worston	43
25,321	

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

4. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £4,322,041.

5. Calculate the following amounts for 2024/25, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a) £34,372,794 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

 - b) £29,423,127 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

 - c) £4,949,667 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 8.5(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 8.5(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).

 - d) £195.48 Being the amount at 8.5(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (8.3(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).

 - e) £627,626 Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

 - f) £170.69 Being the amount at 8.5(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 8.5(e) above by Item T (8.3(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

g) Aggregate of the basic amount of council tax for Ribble Valley Borough Council and Parish precept for Band D properties:

Parts of the Council's area	£
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	192.25
Balderstone	190.59
Barrow	205.64
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	179.14
Billington & Langho	182.94
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	211.34
Bowland Forest Higher	199.58
Bowland Forest Lower	187.76
Bowland with Leagram	181.67
Chatburn	200.32
Chipping	193.17
Clayton le Dale	178.38
Clitheroe	194.13
Dinckley	170.69
Downham	170.69
Dutton	180.40
Gisburn	199.38
Grindleton	197.11
Horton	170.69
Hothersall	188.87
Longridge	199.97
Mearley	170.69
Mellor	198.13
Newsholme	170.69
Newton	186.76
Osbaldeston	180.21
Paythorne	170.69
Pendleton	187.96
Ramsgreave	183.95
Read	195.04
Ribchester	191.17
Rimington & Middop	197.77
Sabden	201.32
Salesbury	199.57
Simonstone	187.56
Slaidburn & Easington	184.09
Thornley with Wheatley	179.31

Parts of the Council's area	£
Twiston	170.69
Waddington	221.25
West Bradford	193.78
Whalley	210.75
Wilpshire	191.41
Wiswell	222.48
Worston	170.69

Being the amount given by adding to the amount at 5(f) above to the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount contained in 3(b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

h) Aggregate of the basic amount of council tax for Ribble Valley Borough Council and Parish precept for Band D properties by valuation band:

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	128.16	149.53	170.88	192.25	234.97	277.69	320.41	384.50
Balderstone	127.06	148.24	169.41	190.59	232.94	275.29	317.65	381.18
Barrow	137.09	159.94	182.79	205.64	251.34	297.03	342.73	411.28
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	119.42	139.33	159.23	179.14	218.95	258.76	298.56	358.28
Billington & Langho	121.96	142.29	162.61	182.94	223.59	264.24	304.90	365.88
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	140.89	164.38	187.85	211.34	258.30	305.27	352.23	422.68
Bowland Forest Higher	133.05	155.23	177.40	199.58	243.93	288.28	332.63	399.16
Bowland Forest Lower	125.17	146.04	166.89	187.76	229.48	271.21	312.93	375.52
Bowland with Leagram	121.11	141.30	161.48	181.67	222.04	262.41	302.78	363.34
Chatburn	133.54	155.81	178.06	200.32	244.83	289.35	333.86	400.64
Chipping	128.78	150.24	171.70	193.17	236.10	279.02	321.95	386.34
Clayton le Dale	118.92	138.74	158.56	178.38	218.02	257.66	297.30	356.76
Clitheroe	129.42	150.99	172.56	194.13	237.27	280.41	323.55	388.26
Dinckley	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Downham	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Dutton	120.26	140.31	160.35	180.40	220.49	260.58	300.66	360.80
Gisburn	132.92	155.07	177.22	199.38	243.69	287.99	332.30	398.76
Grindleton	131.40	153.31	175.20	197.11	240.91	284.71	328.51	394.22
Horton	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Hothersall	125.91	146.90	167.88	188.87	230.84	272.81	314.78	377.74
Longridge	133.31	155.53	177.75	199.97	244.41	288.84	333.28	399.94
Mearley	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Mellor	132.08	154.10	176.11	198.13	242.16	286.19	330.21	396.26
Newsholme	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Newton	124.50	145.26	166.00	186.76	228.26	269.76	311.26	373.52
Osbaldeston	120.14	140.16	160.18	180.21	220.26	260.30	300.35	360.42
Paythorne	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Pendleton	125.30	146.19	167.07	187.96	229.73	271.50	313.26	375.92
Ramsgreave	122.63	143.07	163.51	183.95	224.83	265.70	306.58	367.90
Read	130.02	151.70	173.36	195.04	238.38	281.72	325.06	390.08
Ribchester	127.44	148.69	169.92	191.17	233.65	276.13	318.61	382.34
Rimington & Middop	131.84	153.82	175.79	197.77	241.72	285.67	329.61	395.54
Sabden	134.21	156.58	178.95	201.32	246.06	290.79	335.53	402.64
Salesbury	133.04	155.22	177.39	199.57	243.92	288.27	332.61	399.14
Simonstone	125.04	145.88	166.72	187.56	229.24	270.92	312.60	375.12
Slaidburn & Easington	122.72	143.18	163.63	184.09	225.00	265.91	306.81	368.18
Thornley with Wheatley	119.54	139.46	159.38	179.31	219.16	259.00	298.85	358.62
Twiston	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38
Waddington	147.50	172.08	196.66	221.25	270.42	319.58	368.75	442.50
West Bradford	129.18	150.72	172.24	193.78	236.84	279.90	322.96	387.56
Whalley	140.50	163.92	187.33	210.75	257.58	304.41	351.25	421.50
Wilpshire	127.60	148.88	170.14	191.41	233.94	276.48	319.01	382.82
Wiswell	148.32	173.04	197.76	222.48	271.92	321.36	370.80	444.96
Worston	113.79	132.76	151.72	170.69	208.62	246.55	284.48	341.38

being the amounts given by multiplying (as appropriate) the amounts at 5(f) or 5(g) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

6. Note, that for 2024/25 Lancashire County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
1,102.19	1,285.89	1,469.59	1,653.29	2,020.69	2,388.09	2,755.48	3,306.58

7. Note, that for 2024/25 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
175.60	204.87	234.13	263.40	321.93	380.47	439.00	526.80

8. Note, that for 2024/25 Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
56.49	65.90	75.32	84.73	103.56	122.39	141.22	169.46

9. Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 5(h), 6, 7 and 8 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

VALUATION BANDS								
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	1,462.44	1,706.19	1,949.92	2,193.67	2,681.15	3,168.64	3,656.11	4,387.34
Balderstone	1,461.34	1,704.90	1,948.45	2,192.01	2,679.12	3,166.24	3,653.35	4,384.02
Barrow	1,471.37	1,716.60	1,961.83	2,207.06	2,697.52	3,187.98	3,678.43	4,414.12
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	1,453.70	1,695.99	1,938.27	2,180.56	2,665.13	3,149.71	3,634.26	4,361.12
Billington & Langho	1,456.24	1,698.95	1,941.65	2,184.36	2,669.77	3,155.19	3,640.60	4,368.72
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	1,475.17	1,721.04	1,966.89	2,212.76	2,704.48	3,196.22	3,687.93	4,425.52
Bowland Forest (High)	1,467.33	1,711.89	1,956.44	2,201.00	2,690.11	3,179.23	3,668.33	4,402.00
Bowland Forest (Low)	1,459.45	1,702.70	1,945.93	2,189.18	2,675.66	3,162.16	3,648.63	4,378.36
Bowland with Leagram	1,455.39	1,697.96	1,940.52	2,183.09	2,668.22	3,153.36	3,638.48	4,366.18
Chatburn	1,467.82	1,712.47	1,957.10	2,201.74	2,691.01	3,180.30	3,669.56	4,403.48
Chipping	1,463.06	1,706.90	1,950.74	2,194.59	2,682.28	3,169.97	3,657.65	4,389.18
Clayton le Dale	1,453.20	1,695.40	1,937.60	2,179.80	2,664.20	3,148.61	3,633.00	4,359.60
Clitheroe	1,463.70	1,707.65	1,951.60	2,195.55	2,683.45	3,171.36	3,659.25	4,391.10
Dinckley	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Downham	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Dutton	1,454.54	1,696.97	1,939.39	2,181.82	2,666.67	3,151.53	3,636.36	4,363.64
Gisburn	1,467.20	1,711.73	1,956.26	2,200.80	2,689.87	3,178.94	3,668.00	4,401.60
Grindleton	1,465.68	1,709.97	1,954.24	2,198.53	2,687.09	3,175.66	3,664.21	4,397.06
Horton	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Hothersall	1,460.19	1,703.56	1,946.92	2,190.29	2,677.02	3,163.76	3,650.48	4,380.58
Longridge	1,467.59	1,712.19	1,956.79	2,201.39	2,690.59	3,179.79	3,668.98	4,402.78
Mearley	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Mellor	1,466.36	1,710.76	1,955.15	2,199.55	2,688.34	3,177.14	3,665.91	4,399.10
Newsholme	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Newton	1,458.78	1,701.92	1,945.04	2,188.18	2,674.44	3,160.71	3,646.96	4,376.36
Osbaldeston	1,454.42	1,696.82	1,939.22	2,181.63	2,666.44	3,151.25	3,636.05	4,363.26
Paythorne	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Pendleton	1,459.58	1,702.85	1,946.11	2,189.38	2,675.91	3,162.45	3,648.96	4,378.76
Ramsgreave	1,456.91	1,699.73	1,942.55	2,185.37	2,671.01	3,156.65	3,642.28	4,370.74
Read	1,464.30	1,708.36	1,952.40	2,196.46	2,684.56	3,172.67	3,660.76	4,392.92
Ribchester	1,461.72	1,705.35	1,948.96	2,192.59	2,679.83	3,167.08	3,654.31	4,385.18
Rimington & Middop	1,466.12	1,710.48	1,954.83	2,199.19	2,687.90	3,176.62	3,665.31	4,398.38
Sabden	1,468.49	1,713.24	1,957.99	2,202.74	2,692.24	3,181.74	3,671.23	4,405.48

VALUATION BANDS								
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Salesbury	1,467.32	1,711.88	1,956.43	2,200.99	2,690.10	3,179.22	3,668.31	4,401.98
Simonstone	1,459.32	1,702.54	1,945.76	2,188.98	2,675.42	3,161.87	3,648.30	4,377.96
Slaidburn & Easington	1,457.00	1,699.84	1,942.67	2,185.51	2,671.18	3,156.86	3,642.51	4,371.02
Thornley with Wheatley	1,453.82	1,696.12	1,938.42	2,180.73	2,665.34	3,149.95	3,634.55	4,361.46
Twiston	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22
Waddington	1,481.78	1,728.74	1,975.70	2,222.67	2,716.60	3,210.53	3,704.45	4,445.34
West Bradford	1,463.46	1,707.38	1,951.28	2,195.20	2,683.02	3,170.85	3,658.66	4,390.40
Whalley	1,474.78	1,720.58	1,966.37	2,212.17	2,703.76	3,195.36	3,686.95	4,424.34
Wilpshire	1,461.88	1,705.54	1,949.18	2,192.83	2,680.12	3,167.43	3,654.71	4,385.66
Wiswell	1,482.60	1,729.70	1,976.80	2,223.90	2,718.10	3,212.31	3,706.50	4,447.80
Worston	1,448.07	1,689.42	1,930.76	2,172.11	2,654.80	3,137.50	3,620.18	4,344.22

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CHANGES TO COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS 2023/24

The Chief Executive submitted a report revising the Council's current Committee arrangements following a review of the political balance calculation. The proposed changes were listed in the report and the proposed revised Committee Membership was circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

Members expressed their gratitude for their fellow group members and Officers, for their support in the municipal year to date. Members also thanked Councillor Fletcher for his work as the outgoing Leader of the Opposition.

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the changes to the membership of Committees with the Committee Membership now as follows:

COMMUNITY SERVICES (15)

CONSERVATIVE (6)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (0)
Jan Alcock (VC)	Mary Robinson	Karl Barnsley	Ryan Corney	John Atherton	
Stephen Atkinson	Donna O'Rourke	Lee Jameson	Malcolm Peplow	Lee Street	
Stella Brunskill		Kieran Spencer			
Sophie Cowman					

Ricky Newmark (C)					
Gary Scott					

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (15)

CONSERVATIVE (6)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (1)
Tony Austin	Simon O'Rourke	Lee Jameson	Mark French	Jim Rogerson	Ian Brown
Sue Bibby (C)	Gaynor Hibbert	Kieren Spencer	Malcolm Peplow		
Stella Brunskill (VC)		Nick Stubbs			
Louise Edge					
Simon Hore					
Kevin Horkin					

HEALTH AND HOUSING (15)

CONSERVATIVE (6)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Jan Alcock	Donna O'Rourke	Rachael Ray	Ryan Corney	John Atherton	
Stephen Atkinson	Mary Robinson	Aaron Wilkins-Odudu	Malcolm Peplow	Lee Street	
Tony Austin (VC)		Nick Stubbs			
Steve Farmer					
Stuart Hirst (C)					
Charles McFall					

PERSONNEL (9)

CONSERVATIVE (4)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (1)	LABOUR (2)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Sue Bibby	Donna O'Rourke	Karl Barnsley	Stewart Fletcher	David Birtwhistle	
Rosie Elms (C)		Derek Brocklehurst			
Steve Farmer (VC)					
Simon Hore					

LICENSING (15)

CONSERVATIVE (6)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (1)
Rosie Elms	Simon O'Rourke	Kieren Spencer	Mark French	Jim Rogerson	Ian Brown (C)
Stella Brunskill (VC)	Gaynor Hibbert	Michael Graveston	Malcolm Peplow		
Steve Farmer		Derek Brocklehurst			
Ricky Newmark					
Gary Scott					
Robin Walsh					

POLICY AND FINANCE (15)

CONSERVATIVE (7)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Stephen Atkinson (C)	Simon O'Rourke	Aaron Wilkins-Odudu	Stewart Fletcher	David Birtwhistle	
Sue Bibby	Jonathan Hill	Lee Jameson		Jim Rogerson	
Louise Edge		Michael Graveston			
Stuart Hirst					
Simon Hore (VC)					
Kevin Horkin					
Ricky Newmark					

ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (11)

CONSERVATIVE (5)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (1)	LABOUR (2)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Tony Austin	Jonathan Hill	Karl Barnsley	Stewart Fletcher	Lee Street	
Stuart Hirst (VC)		Michael Graveston	Gaye McCrum		
Charles McFall					
Ricky Newmark					
Robin Walsh (C)					

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (15)

CONSERVATIVE (7)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	GREEN & PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (2)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Jan Alcock	Gaynor Hibbert	Rachael Ray	Stewart Fletcher	David Birtwhistle (C)	
Stephen Atkinson (VC)	Jonathan Hill	Michael Graveston	Gaye McCrum		
Sophie Cowman		Aaron Wilkins- Odudu			
Louise Edge					
Rosie Elms					
Stuart Hirst					
Robin Walsh					

PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON (13) CHAIR - Parish Cllr Martin Highton

CONSERVATIVE (5)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT (2)	LABOUR (3)	PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT (0)
Sophie Cowman	Mary Robinson	Karl Barnsley	Mark French	David Birtwhistle	
Kevin Horkin	Simon O'Rourke	Nick Stubbs	Gaye McCrum		
Charles McFall		Derek Brocklehurst			
Gary Scott (VC)					
Robin Walsh					

EMERGENCY (4)

CONSERVATIVE (2)	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL GROUP (1)	INDEPENDENT GROUP	INDEPENDENT
Stephen Atkinson (C)		Lee Jameson	Stewart Fletcher		
Simon Hore (VC)					

The Leader began by expressing his thanks to the Mayor on behalf of all Members for his hospitality at Christmas Council, and noted the moving performance in the Council Chamber by the Choir.

The Leader reported his attendance at the House of Lords on the 9 January 2024 by invitation of Lord Alton. He met with the Minister of State for Rail, alongside MPs Nigel Evans and Andrew Stephenson, to press for the introduction of regular weekday passenger services to and from Hellifield, which would allow Ribble Valley residents to travel to Skipton, Leeds, and Carlisle, with only one change, furthering opportunities for education, employment, and leisure. He was pleased to report that the Dalesman Service would resume in July, August, and September, adding that Lancashire would also benefit from a seven-fold increase in funding of £494 Million for local transport connections. All of the schemes would need to be signed off by Local MPs and he had requested a meeting with Nigel Evans MP and the Leader of Lancashire County Council with a view to pushing for:

- The Hellifield Connection
- Increased services between Clitheroe and Manchester Victoria, to every 30 minutes
- More rural buses at times that people need them, and
- Improved School bus routes to cater for all of the Schools in the Borough

The Leader went onto inform the Mayor that the Council were making changes to the Council Housing Allocation to prioritise homeless families with a local connection, and also offering first-time buyer grant offers of up to £15,000 towards property renovation and energy efficiency improvements. He reported that 149 Affordable Houses had been completed in the year to July 2023 and that a report would be brought to the next Health and Housing Committee to consider what actions could be taken to bring empty properties back into use. He noted that an empty property for Council tax purposes included those empty due to ongoing renovation works, where sales were completing, where the resident had moved to a nursing home, or the property was going through probate. He had requested further work to determine the number of long-term empty homes.

The Leader also reported that car parking at Edisford had been improved by designating the car park as long stay, and the £80,000 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Grant for the spinning room at Roefield would contribute to improving the sustainability of the Leisure Centre. He added that the SPF had also seen investments in;

- Castle Street, working in connection with Lancashire County Council to commence work in the Spring
- Whalley Education Foundation, had been awarded £100,000
- Barrow Village Hall and Community Centre, had been awarded a total of £225,000, and
- The Pump Track in Longridge, which was being procured

The Leader reported that the Changing Places Fund would see the provision of specialist toilets to help disabled visitors in the Castle grounds and Edisford Bridge. He added that the River Ribble at Edisford Bridge may also be designated as a bathing water site, noting that the public consultation was open until 10 March 2024 and, if successful, would be designated from the 15 May to 30 September, bringing enhanced monitoring from the Environment Agency.

The Leader noted that the Ribble Valley was still in the top five healthiest places in England, and was pleased that excellent work was being recognised, including Sport England's TaAF project. He added that the Active Villages theme was of particular importance as the Ribble Valley provided the perfect test bed for a new approach to getting people active in rural settings.

The Leader informed the Mayor that North-West Employers had received the initial 2024-25 pay claim from the trade unions requesting at least £3,000 or 10% per employee, whichever was greater. This would be dealt by the National Joint Council in the normal way for pay bargaining.

The Leader noted that the Council had responded to the Lancashire Combined Authority consultation. The response stated that the Council would like two district Council Representatives with full voting rights on the CCA Board, and that future funding rounds of UKSPF should be allocated to Districts in the same proportions as were currently received.

The Leader felt that during Ribble Valleys Golden Jubilee year, the Council could be proud of what it had delivered over the 50 years, having not only kept more money in resident's pockets, but also delivering better services, and, featuring in the top ten in England when measuring happiness, health, prosperity, and safety. He addressed Cllr Jameson, as the new Leader of the Opposition, to continue the legacy by working together.

The Leader concluded his report by reporting that the Council were now in receipt of the official portrait of His Majesty King Charles III, which would be placed alongside that of the late Queen and officially unveiled at the next Council meeting.

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LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Lee Jamson stated that democracy and governance was at its best when a wide range of views were expressed and represented from a diverse cohort of the public. He noted that working groups played a key role in the sharing of ideas to make Ribble Valley a better place, in what was hopefully an apolitical forum. He asked that, given that the majority of working groups were during the day when a large amount of members on the Council were working, and that according to the LGA over 48% of Councillors nationally were in work or full-time education, if the leader could advise if any steps would be taken to move working group meetings from daytimes to evenings to ensure that members were not taking too much time off work and the role of a Councillor remained accessible to the majority of people? (Source - [Councillors' Census 2022 \(local.gov.uk\)](https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-census-2022))

The Leader thanked Councillor Jameson for his question noting that he understood the difficulty in arranging working groups especially for Councillors that were working, but that it was a matter of striking the right balance between the needs of Councillors and staff. He added that service Committees and Council met in the evening and often staff attending those meetings were working at least a 12-hour day, and that each cycle there were 9 Committee meetings and Council, with the same Officers at many of those Committees. He added that currently there were 11 Working Groups established by Committees, which tended to meet more often than Committees, and again, many of the Working Groups were attended by the same Officers that attended Committee meetings. He felt that having working groups meet in the evening would place an intolerable burden on staff and not one that they could support.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Jameson noted that he fully appreciated Officers worked long hours but that as Councillors ran the Council, could the Council look into a more practical flexible working scheme for Officers.

The Leader responded that this could be explored, however, that efforts were made to hold working groups at the start and end of the day to cater for everyone, and he was concerned about staff working conditions, particularly for senior members of staff who could not recover the hours.

Next, Councillor Jameson asked if the Leader could confirm, and guarantee, the dates that the remedial works on the Castle keep and proposed improvements to Castle Street (which had already been paid for) would be completed?

The Leader responded that Lancashire County Council had recently undertaken the necessary surveys on Castle Street to inform the designs. LCC had confirmed that they were now in a position to progress the scheme layout. This would be shared with RVBC Officers shortly. Whilst works were due to start in Spring, LCC had been made aware of the date of the food festival and had confirmed that no works would take place over that period. They had not yet guaranteed a timeline for the works. This was because matters currently unknown may arise during the works and there may be objections to the Traffic Regulation Orders. The intention was, however, to engage with key stakeholders and the public when the final design had been agreed and a proposed timeframe could be shared. RVBC Officers would be meeting with LCC later that month.

The Leader continued advising that the Castle Keep would be re-opened to the public within the next two weeks, including both the ramparts and the inside of the Keep. To re-open the Keep, it had been necessary to undertake a full photogrammetry survey and carry out some work to prop areas of the Keep that were thought to have a very small chance of coming loose. Further heritage design work was required to establish the longer-term work on the Keep. This would include pointing work but may also require some structural work. Work could not commence until the warmer months due to the mortar that needed to be used. It was predicted the final design solutions would be available within the next two months, allowing mobilisation in early summer. The Leader noted that there was a possibility that the current funding may be insufficient and that a bid to Heritage Lottery would be needed to fund the works, resulting in longer timescales, adding that Members would be updated as soon the final design work came back.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Jameson asked the Leader if he had a plan to address the decline in the high street and assign vacant high street occupancy?

The Leader responded that it had become evident, through assessment of Business Rate payers, that the same business owners retained many of the high street premises, noting that the Council did it's best, however those properties were not owned by the Council.

Finally, Councillor Jameson noted that we were facing a period of financial uncertainty with growing demand for services and only short-term funding settlements. He asked if the Leader had considered the option, granted to us in the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023, of implementing a council tax premium of up to 100% on "Dwellings occupied periodically"/Second homes, especially due to the high percentage of 2nd homes in the Ribble Valley? He added, should those in the extremely fortunate position to be able to choose to own a second home in the middle of a housing crisis not pay a fairer share?

The Leader thanked Councillor Jameson for his question, and wished to make 3 very important points on the issue:

1. Not all furnished properties periodically unoccupied were second homes –
 - They could be properties where a resident had died
 - Where an empty but furnished property was on the market
 - Where furnished rental properties were between tenants, e.g. the Council's own Joiners Arms
2. It would be difficult to determine if the property was unoccupied periodically if residents opted to pay the full Council Tax

3. The Council met the full cost of collection but only retained 8% of the income.

The Leader would ask Officers to prepare a full report on the issue for the Budget Working Group to consider.

Councillor Jameson had no further comments.

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COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Community Committee – 9 January 2024
2. Planning and Development Committee – 11 January 2024
3. Personnel Committee – 17 January 2024
4. Health and Housing Committee – 18 January 2024
5. Policy and Finance Committee – 23 January 2024
6. Economic Development Committee – 25 January 2024
7. Licensing Committee – 30 January 2024
8. Parish Councils Liaison Committee – 1 February 2024
9. Planning and Development Committee – 8 February 2024
10. Special Policy and Finance Committee – 13 February 2024
11. Accounts and Audit Committee – 14 February 2024
12. Licensing Sub-Committee – 23 February 2024

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above committees be received with the exception of Minute numbers 573, 616, and 698.

Minute 573 - Pay Policy Update (Statement) 2024/25

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 with an additional paragraph to reflect the Council's decision at its meeting of 10 October 2023. The additional paragraph being:

“With effect from 1 April 2024, that the Council has adopted the Living Wage Foundation's Real Living Wage as the minimum hourly rate of pay to be paid to all staff aged 18 and over (excluding apprentices).”

Minute 616 - Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

Minute 698 - Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:

1. Approve the proposals for polling districts and places in the Ribble Valley Parliamentary constituency.
2. Approve an amendment of the Officer delegation scheme.

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EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items under this heading.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk,
Rebecca Hodgson rebecca.hodgson@ribblevalley.gov.uk.