



# Morecambe Town Council

## Agenda Morecambe Town Council Full Meeting

<b>Date</b>	20/02/2025
<b>Time</b>	19:00 - 21:00
<b>Location</b>	Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road Morecambe Lancashire LA4 5AF
<b>Chair</b>	Russell Walsh
<b>Explanation</b>	<p>Dear Councillor, Dated this thirteenth day of February 2025, you are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Morecambe Town Council to be held at 7pm on the twentieth day of February 2025. The meeting will be held in Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road East, Morecambe, LA4 5AF to transact business on the agenda. <b>**Note to Councillors:**</b> If you are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Proper Officer of your apologies. <b>**Note to Public:**</b> _Electors of the town wishing to address the Council are advised to notify the Proper Officer before 10am on the day of the meeting. Permission to speak at the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairman. Public participation session at a meeting shall not require response or debate and shall solely consist of matters relating to items on the agenda. If the representation made is considered outside the remit of Morecambe Town Council, electors will be referred to the principal authority or other appropriate body._ Your sincerely, Mr L Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>

### 1 **Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence and consider any reasons for acceptance.

([Local Government Act 1972, Section 85](#))

### 2 **Declarations**

To record any declared interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Proper Officer.

([Localism Act 2011, Section 31](#))

### 3 **Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the last meeting.

([Local Government Act 1972, Section 111](#))

### 4 **Public Participation**

To receive representations from electors that have requested to speak by 10am regarding a matter on the agenda.

[\(Morecambe Town Council Standing Orders - Sections 1d-1l\)](#)

*Note: any electors addressing the Council must not exceed a three minute time limit.*

**5 Planning Application 24/00116/FUL - Former Park Hotel**

To consider the letter of support for Planning Application 24/00116/FUL – conversion of Former Park Hotel into 14 Apartments and erection of 6 dwellings.

Proposer: Cllr David Whitaker

Seconder: Cllr Joanne Ainscough

**6 Planning Application 25/00114/FUL - 81 Balmoral Road HMO**

To consider the letter of objection to Planning Application 25/00114/FUL - change of use of a dwellinghouse into a 10 bedroom house in multiple occupation at 81 Balmoral Road, Morecambe, LA3 1BH.

Proposer: Cllr David Whitaker

Seconder: Cllr Joanne Ainscough

**7 Budget (Financial Year 2025/2026)**

To review and accept the draft budget, and precept, for the financial year 2025/2026, as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee.



# Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,  
Marine Road  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA4 5AF

[www.morecambe.gov.uk](http://www.morecambe.gov.uk)

## Members of Morecambe Town Council

*Cllr R Walsh - Chairman*  
*Cllr G Knight - Vice Chairman*

*Cllr C Ainscough, Cllr J Ainscough, Cllr D Blacow, Cllr D Bottoms, Cllr L Bradbury, Cllr P Clarke, Cllr F Cooper, Cllr C Cozler, Cllr R Dennison, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr K Gee, Cllr P Hart, Cllr J Goodrich, Cllr J Hanson, Cllr C Kent, Cllr D Knight, Cllr J Livermore, Cllr M Pattison, Cllr J Pilling, Cllr J Rogerson, Cllr J Slater, Cllr M Stenneken, Cllr D Whitaker*

**Minutes of Morecambe Town Council's Full Council Meeting held at 7pm on the 30 January 2025 at Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF.**

### Record of Attendance:

**Councillors: Geoff Knight (Vice Chairman), Joanne Ainscough, Martin Bottoms, Lee Bradbury, Trish Clarke, Claire Cozler, Roger Dennison, Wayne Dixon, Paul Hart, John Goodrich, John Hanson, Clark Kent, Debbie Knight, John Livermore, Margaret Pattison, Jackie Rogerson, Monika Stenneken, David Whitaker.**

**Officers:** Luke Trevaskis, Peter Fisher, Joel Turner.

**Press:** Beyond Radio

**Public:** 2

### Minute 2024/25 - 064- Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance received from Cllrs D Blacow, F Cooper, J Slater, C Ainscough, J Rogerson, J Pilling, K Gee, and R Walsh (Chairperson). The meeting was chaired by Cllr G Knight (Vice Chairperson).

### Minute 2024/25 - 065- Declarations of Interest

Cllrs M Pattinson, R Dennison, J Hanson and M Bottoms declared as a member of Lancaster City Council Planning Committee.

Cllr C Cozler declared membership of Lancaster City Council's Local Plan.

Cllrs R Dennison, P Hart, J Hanson, M Pattison, M Bottoms, J Livermore, J Ainscough declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancaster City Council.

Cllrs P Hart and M Bottoms declared cabinet membership of Lancaster City Council, and declared an interest in Item 13 of the agenda, the Memorandum of Understanding.

Cllr D Whittaker declared they are employees of Lancashire County Council.

Cllr M Pattison declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancashire County Council.

### Minute 2024/25 - 066 - Police

At the request of members, Superintendent Craig Kelshaw attended the meeting alongside Sergeant Lindsay Brown. Discussions focused on anti-social behaviour in Morecambe and the measures being taken to address it.

The police reported on Operation Centurion, a scheme operating in Happy Mount Park and the Poulton areas of Morecambe. This initiative, funded until the end of March 2025, provides additional police resources through overtime funding. Since its implementation, anti-social behaviour has reduced by 30%, and engagement tools for intelligence gathering have improved.

It was also reported that one new community officer has been recruited for Morecambe. Every ward now has its own PCSO and police officer. The police utilise a traffic light system to manage young offenders. Additionally, Fleetwood has implemented a Clear / Hold / Build (CHB) strategy, which was highlighted as a best practice model.

Key Issues Raised by Councillors:

- **Youth Engagement:** Cllr Martin Bottoms and Cllr Clair Cozler stressed the importance of engaging with young people. Kirkham was cited as an example of successful youth engagement.
- **Alcohol Use in Alexandra Park:** Cllr David Whitaker requested increased enforcement due to ongoing issues with alcohol consumption. Police confirmed that Criminal Behaviour Orders had been issued against street drinkers and two Community Protection Notices were issued last month.
- **Shoplifting and Security Concerns:**
  - Cllr Margaret Pattison raised concerns about increasing incidents at the Arndale Centre and people fearful of entry due to alcohol users gathering outside.
  - Cllr Geoff Knight noted a surge in shoplifting, with some shop owners reporting thefts of up to £300 per day, partially attributed to a reduction in Arndale staff from three to one.
  - Cllr Trish Clarke noted that a recent theft from the Co-op (Regent Road) was reportedly not adequately followed up due to its value being under £200.
- **E-bikes and E-scooters:**
  - Cllr Roger Denison highlighted that e-bikes and e-scooters along the promenade were becoming hazardous.
  - Cllr Wayne Dixon reported similar issues on the cycle track between Morecambe and Lancaster.
- **Parking Issues:**
  - Cllr Paul Hart raised concerns about pavement parking and requested clarity.
  - Cllr Joanne Ainscough reported that match-day parking was becoming intolerable and dangerous.
- **Potential for a Town Warden:** Cllr Clark Kent noted that BID Lancaster funds a local warden and suggested discussions with Morecambe BID about providing a similar service.

- **Parental Responsibility:** Cllr John Hanson noted that parents also bear responsibility when children are involved in criminal behaviour.

The police acknowledged these concerns and will continue working with the Council and community to address them.

#### **Minute 2024/25 - 067 - Minutes**

The minutes of the last full council meeting were approved.

#### **Minute 2024/25 - 068 - Public Participation**

No members of the public attending the meeting requested to speak.

#### **Minute 2024/25 - 069 - Halifax Morecambe Branch**

The following motion was unanimously approved:

Morecambe Town Council is deeply concerned about the announced closure of the Halifax Building Society located in The Arndale Centre. The Halifax is one of the last remaining banks in Morecambe providing a service to customers who might require in-person financial advice. Many people will be concerned about the loss of this facility so therefore it is important as a Town Council we send a letter to The Halifax headquarters, copied to Lizzi Collinge MP asking that they reconsider this closure, highlighting how important this service is to the people of Morecambe, especially residents who may be digitally excluded, disabled, or elderly.

#### **Minute 2024/25 - 070 - Neighbourhood Plan Update**

Members received an update, noting that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has made significant progress in shaping Morecambe's future through a community-driven approach. A revised engagement strategy has been adopted to ensure representation from all demographics, including younger residents, minority communities, and those who are digitally excluded. This initiative aims to reflect local needs, aspirations, and emerging challenges accurately.

Key discussions have focused on identifying what Morecambe should preserve, enhance, and create. Priorities include protecting the town's heritage, improving public spaces, housing, and communication channels. New initiatives such as arts and culture hubs, enhanced visitor infrastructure, and improved accessibility along the promenade were proposed.

The group has explored strategies to enhance community engagement, targeting diverse groups such as working families, carers, and non-English-speaking communities. Innovative outreach methods, including targeted events and partnerships with local organisations, are being considered to address digital exclusion.

Thematic breakout sessions are ongoing, covering areas such as high street regeneration and skills development. These sessions have helped formulate a vision for Morecambe's retail sector and establish a 'Skill Vision Tree' outlining short- and long-term priorities for education and employment. The outcomes will shape an upcoming community survey, ensuring alignment with shared goals.

Skill gaps within the group were identified, particularly in circular economy principles, which are increasingly relevant to national and regional policies. To address this, an officer will undertake further training in this area to strengthen the plan's robustness at the examination stage.

The group reaffirmed its commitment to collaboration and transparency, outlining a draft timeline for the plan's development.

The next steps involve gathering survey feedback by May, which will guide the formulation of an evidence-based Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Draft Timeline Overview:**

- **Phase 1 (Dec 2024 – May 2025):** Initial scoping, community engagement, formation of working groups.
- **Phase 2 (June 2025):** Evidence gathering and analysis.
- **Phase 3 (July – Aug 2025):** Land assessment and infrastructure review.
- **Phase 4 (Sept 2025 – Feb 2026):** Drafting the vision and policies.
- **Phase 5 (March 2026):** Community workshops on draft policies.
- **Phase 6 (April – May 2026):** Formal consultation period.
- **Phase 7 (June – July 2026):** Refinements based on feedback.
- **Phase 8 (Aug – Dec 2026):** Submission to the Local Authority and independent examination.
- **Phase 9 (Jan – Feb 2027):** Public referendum and plan adoption.

**The Council unanimously approved the below motions:**

1. The Council accepted the content of the Neighbourhood Plan update.
2. The Council noted that the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing in accordance with the Terms of Reference previously approved.
3. The Council anticipates that the resulting Neighbourhood Plan will provide a valuable framework for influencing and shaping local development, noting that an officer will undertake further training in this area to strengthen the plan's robustness at the examination stage.

Members also requested an update regarding the current status of the digital screens which were being funded by the UKSPF. It was noted that the presentation delivered by Lancaster City Council was over twelve months ago, and at least one outdoor screen was supposed to have been installed.

Members also asked if a broader section of the public could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and if times of meetings could be varied.

**Minute 2024/25 - 071 - Addressing the Challenges Facing Young People in Morecambe**

Members noted recent discussions with residents in Poulton, and Lizzi Collinge MP, which highlighted the significant challenges facing young people in Morecambe, particularly as a coastal community with limited opportunities and facilities. The Council recognises the acute need for investment in local youth services, especially in areas such as Poulton, where a lack of provision further compounds the difficulties experienced by young people.

The Council noted the announcement of the new National Youth Strategy and the forthcoming Local Youth Transformation pilot (2025–2026), which aims to rejuvenate local authority capabilities in the youth space. This initiative offers a unique opportunity to ensure Morecambe's young people are involved in shaping solutions that directly affect them.

The Council unanimously resolved to:

1. Mandate officers to work collaboratively with Lizzi Collinge MP to better understand and address the issues facing local young people.
2. Prioritise exploring opportunities through the National Youth Strategy, with a specific focus on whether Morecambe could feed into the co-creation process with young people and position itself as a pilot area for the Local Youth Transformation programme.
3. Identify and pursue funding, tools, and resources available through the pilot to develop impactful local youth offers.
4. Develop a specific focus on improving facilities for young people in Poulton and other underserved areas of the town.
5. Incorporate this work into the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, addressing the previously noted lack of evidence gathered from young people. This will help ensure the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Plan are robust, evidence-based, and meet the minimum requirements of the inspectors.
6. Form partnerships with local organisations (such as Stanley's and Escape to Make) to identify ways which we can work together.
7. Organise talks in schools regarding citizenship and youth councils, giving consideration to the creation of a Young Persons Champion.

**Minute 2024/25 - 072 - Website Accessibility Statement**

The Council unanimously approved the Website Accessibility Statement, and noted the ongoing work to the redesign of the website and branding refresh to support greater outreach and community engagement.

**Minute 2024/25 - 073 - Budget and Precept FY2526**

Members recognised the significant undertaking by officers to prepare a balanced budget, and extended thanks to the outgoing Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee for their hard work to date. In the absence of a Chairperson, members believed it prudent to defer the budget-setting meeting to allow for the election of a new Chairperson to the Finance and Governance Committee, ensuring the Committee had an opportunity to meet again with the new Chairperson so they can familiarise themselves with the proposed budget and confidently present it to Council at its next meeting. It was requested that further attention be given to exploring any further potential savings to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers while safeguarding the quality of services. It was resolved to defer this item until the Council's next meeting on 20 February 2025.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 074 - NALC - MHCLG CPO Consultation**

The Council unanimously resolved to express its interest in engaging with the Principal Authority on the potential use of CPO powers for affordable housing schemes. Noting that this could align well with the Council's goals and contribute to addressing local housing needs. It was also resolved that members review any potential land areas in Morecambe that could benefit from this approach that we can use as examples with which to demonstrate to NALC the importance of this issue in Morecambe.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 075 - MHCLG Consultation on Local Government Standards**

The Council resolved to respond to the consultation advocating for an enhanced standards regime.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 076 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Council resolved that, in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 077 - Emerging Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster City Council**

The Council evaluated whether the draft MOU accurately reflects the Town Council's ambitions, particularly in advancing further localism and delivering meaningful outcomes for residents.

Members acknowledged the limited time constraints before the next elections to plan, implement, and complete projects. The Council assessed whether the MOU provided enough of a robust framework to achieve measurable progress within this period.

The Council considered lessons learned in previous election cycles, including the risk of policy reversals and delays, and whether the MOU provides sufficient safeguard against such setbacks.

The Council noted that it felt it was important to underscore the importance of strong collaboration between the two authorities to ensure the MOU enables effective joint working that delivers tangible outcomes for residents.

The Council resolved that any MOU must include an appendix specifying key projects that the Town Council would like Lancaster City Council to help it deliver. It was resolved that the MOU should focus on deriving short term outcomes including the delivery of spring planting in Morecambe by MTC, a transfer of requested land parcels for transformation into community gardens, and a commencement of discussions regarding a localism and devolution framework. The Council would also welcome outcomes that look to safeguard culture and arts delivery in Morecambe, and promote environmental sustainability.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 078 - Devolution**

The Council discussed the implications of the recent devolution white paper and potential changes to Lancashire's administrative structure, including moves towards unitary authorities. Concerns were raised that without proactive engagement, Morecambe could be overlooked in governance decisions, limiting the Town Council's influence over its future.

It was noted that some town councils have successfully taken on new service delivery roles, while others have been forced to manage assets without adequate resources. The importance of early and proactive discussions on devolution was emphasised to ensure Morecambe has a strong voice in shaping its governance.

Resolutions:

- 1. Resident Survey:** officers to conduct a survey (extending an offer of collaboration to Lancaster City Council) to understand residents' priorities for localism and devolution.
- 2. Engagement with MP:** a letter to be sent to Morecambe's MP, expressing the Council's desire to be involved in devolution discussions.
- 3. Government Correspondence:** officers and the Chairman to write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government and the MP, and NALC, welcoming devolution while outlining challenges faced in securing local assets for community projects and the impact this has had on its ability to deliver for a community in significant need.

Members noted that further discussions on devolution will continue through MTC strategy meetings, ensuring alignment with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.



## Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,  
Marine Road  
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12 February 2025

Planning Department  
Lancaster City Council  
Town Hall  
Dalton Square  
Lancaster  
LA1 1PJ

### **Subject: Support for Planning Application 24/00116/FUL – Conversion of Former Park Hotel into 14 Apartments and Erection of 6 Dwellings**

Dear Planning Team,

Morecambe Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on planning application 24/00116/FUL for the conversion of the former Park Hotel into 14 apartments and the erection of 6 dwellings on the land to the rear. We write in strong support of this development, which is not only in alignment with Morecambe's strategic regeneration objectives but also with national policy goals on housing, sustainability, and community development.

The UK government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2021)<sup>1</sup> prioritises the redevelopment of underutilised land and buildings to enhance community well-being and economic prosperity. The proposed development exemplifies these principles by transforming a derelict site into high-quality homes, addressing both housing shortages and urban blight. Research by Turok and Robson (2007)<sup>2</sup> on urban regeneration underscores the importance of such initiatives in revitalising local economies and improving community cohesion. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) also emphasises the role of place-making in fostering inclusive, resilient communities (TCPA, 2018)<sup>3</sup>.

Morecambe has faced significant socio-economic challenges, with a high proportion of vacant properties contributing to cycles of deprivation. This proposal represents an opportunity to reverse that trend, bringing not just homes but hope to an area that has suffered from economic decline. The applicant's commitment to sustainable design principles - including energy-efficient buildings, carbon reduction measures, and biodiversity net gain - aligns with the UK's legally binding net-zero targets (Climate Change Act, 2008)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> MHCLG (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>.

<sup>2</sup> Turok, I. & Robson, B. (2007) *The Economic and Social Aspects of Urban Regeneration*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk>.

<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning Association (2018) *Planning for Inclusive Growth*. Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk>.

<sup>4</sup> Climate Change Act 2008. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>.



Furthermore, this development offers a holistic approach to regeneration by incorporating employment and training initiatives, ensuring that local people directly benefit from the investment. The emphasis on apprenticeships, vocational training, and work experience reflects best practices outlined by the Centre for Cities (2019)<sup>5</sup>, which highlights how place-based employment schemes can drive long-term socio-economic improvement. Research from LSE Cities (Rode et al., 2017)<sup>6</sup> also supports this, stressing that integrating economic opportunity with urban renewal creates more resilient and prosperous communities.

By engaging local employment channels such as Jobcentre Plus and offering structured support - including transport, childcare, and skills development - this initiative aligns with best practices in social value creation. The Social Value Act (2012)<sup>7</sup> encourages public bodies to consider the wider community impact of developments, and this proposal is a strong example of how planning decisions can contribute to inclusive growth.

This proposal, therefore, offers more than just new homes; it represents a crucial step in addressing some of the deep-rooted issues affecting Morecambe. By prioritising sustainable housing alongside meaningful community investment, this development will not only meet local housing demand but also strengthen the town's social and economic fabric.

We trust that Lancaster City Council will recognise the significant benefits this scheme will bring and approve the application. Morecambe Town Council stands firmly in support and looks forward to seeing its successful delivery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr Luke Trevaskis**  
**Chief Officer**  
**Morecambe Town Council**

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<sup>5</sup> Centre for Cities (2019) *Building Blocks: The Role of Skills in Creating Successful Cities*. Available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Rode, P., Keim, C., Robazza, G., Viejo, P., & Schofield, J. (2017) *Integrating Cities and Infrastructure: Transport and Urban Form*. LSE Cities.

<sup>7</sup> Social Value Act 2012. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/3/contents>.



13 February 2025

Planning Department, Lancaster City Council  
Town Hall  
Dalton Square  
Lancaster  
LA1 1PJ

**Subject: Objection to Planning Application Planning Application 25/00114/FUL - change of use of a dwellinghouse into a 10 bedroom house in multiple occupation at 81 Balmoral Road, Morecambe, LA3 1BH**

Dear Planning Team,

On behalf of Morecambe Town Council, I am writing to formally object to the proposed conversion of 81 Balmoral Road into a 10-bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). This is not just a planning objection; it is a plea for a future that lifts Morecambe up, rather than dragging it down into a cycle of low-quality housing, transience, and deprivation.

Morecambe is a town with ambition. We are on the brink of major opportunities such as Eden Project Morecambe, which will increase tourism, and provide the chance to reshape our economy. What we do with our housing stock now matters. Converting yet another family home into a cramped, low-quality HMO is not what this town needs. It does not serve our long-term vision for a prosperous, thriving community.

The proposed HMO conversion raises significant concerns about its long-term sustainability and impact on the community. It is essential to examine the implications of this development through a lens that incorporates planning theory, sustainability principles, community wealth building, and the multiple indices of deprivation that impact Morecambe. This objection will also refer to specific Lancaster City Council planning policies and national frameworks that support a rejection of this proposal.

### ***The Socioeconomic Impact of HMOs in Seaside Towns***

Research consistently highlights the negative impacts of high-density HMO developments in seaside towns, particularly in areas already suffering from economic and social deprivation (Beatty et al., 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The proliferation of HMOs in coastal communities often exacerbates transient populations, leading to weaker community cohesion, increased crime rates, and additional pressures on local services (Smith, 2018)<sup>2</sup>. A key issue facing Morecambe is its struggle with multiple indices of deprivation, including employment, health, and education (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019)<sup>3</sup>. The introduction of additional HMOs, particularly those lacking adequate communal and living spaces, does not align with the future vision for the town's development.

### ***Policy Non-Compliance with the Lancaster City Council Local Plan***

The Lancaster Local Plan 2011-2031 sets out specific policies that should be considered when evaluating new development proposals. Whilst it is noted that this is not new development per se, Morecambe has limited

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<sup>1</sup> Beatty, C., Fothergill, S., & Wilson, I. (2014). Coastal communities and declining housing stock: A critical review. Sheffield Hallam University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, D. (2018). Transient populations and the urban economy: The case of seaside towns. *Urban Studies Journal*, 55(6), 1203-1225.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. (2019). Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

available development land, and poor quality redevelopment of existing properties will continue to impact the town's socio economic prosperity for years to come. Therefore, the Town Council believes such proposals should be considered in line with the principles of what the Local Plan aims to achieve for the future planning of the District. The proposed HMO conversion is contrary to several key principles outlined in this plan:

- **Policy DM1: New Residential Development and Meeting Housing Needs** – this policy states that housing development should meet the needs of local communities. The conversion of family homes into HMOs reduces the availability of high-quality family accommodation and increases housing instability.
- **Policy DM2: Housing Standards and Sustainability** – this policy emphasises the need for high-quality living environments. Many HMOs are designed with small kitchens and inadequate communal areas, which do not align with modern standards of healthy living.
- **Policy DM46: Sustainable Development and Climate Change** – the conversion of older properties into HMOs without significant retrofitting often fails to meet sustainability targets, further increasing the carbon footprint of outdated housing stock.

The NPPF also states that developments should promote "healthy, inclusive, and safe places" (MHCLG, 2021). This proposal does the opposite, exacerbating existing social and economic challenges.

### ***Housing Quality and Well-Being Concerns***

Morecambe ranks among the most deprived areas in the UK, particularly in terms of income, employment, and housing quality (Lancaster City Council, 2020)<sup>4</sup>. There is a well-established link between high-density HMOs and increased levels of crime, antisocial behaviour, and transient populations, which weaken social cohesion (Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Power, 2010)<sup>5</sup>.

Seaside towns like Blackpool and Hastings have already seen the damage caused by unchecked HMO expansion. These areas have struggled with declining school performance, higher unemployment, and pressure on public services as a result of poorly managed, high-density housing (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016)<sup>6</sup>. Morecambe must learn from these cases and ensure that housing developments contribute to long-term stability rather than short-term landlord profit.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2021) emphasises the importance of high-quality housing that contributes to residents' well-being. Studies show that HMOs frequently provide inadequate living conditions, including insufficient space, limited storage, and poor ventilation, which can contribute to physical and mental health issues (Archer, 2017)<sup>7</sup>. A typical 10-bedroom HMO often provides only a single shared living room and kitchen, which is insufficient for fostering a healthy and comfortable environment (Wilson & Higgins, 2020)<sup>8</sup>. This issue is further compounded when considering the impact on vulnerable individuals who may reside in such properties.

### ***Concerns About Management***

There are considerable concerns regarding the management of the proposed development, especially in terms of long-term sustainability. Research has shown that developments without a clear and structured management plan often face issues such as poor maintenance and lack of community integration (Miller & Benson, 2017)<sup>9</sup>. Effective management is key to ensuring that developments do not negatively impact the surrounding

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<sup>4</sup> Lancaster City Council (2020) Indices of Deprivation Report for Lancaster District.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, J.Q. and Kelling, G.L. (1982) 'Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety', *The Atlantic Monthly*, March, pp. 29-38 (AND) Power, A. (2010) Housing and sustainability: New perspectives. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) The links between housing and poverty: An evidence review.

<sup>7</sup> Archer, T. (2017). Poor housing, poor health: The impact of HMOs on mental and physical well-being. *Housing Studies Journal*, 32(3), 405-420.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, J., & Higgins, K. (2020). Shared living environments: Design challenges and solutions. *Urban Planning Review*, 45(2), 312-330.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, C., & Benson, P. (2017) 'The impact of management on community cohesion in new housing developments', *Journal of Urban Planning*, 41(3), pp. 274-289.

community and the local environment. In fact, studies show that poorly managed developments can lead to social isolation, reduced quality of life, and long-term neglect of essential services (Jones & Smith, 2019)<sup>10</sup>. It is vital that a management framework with clear accountability and community engagement is established for the success of any new or redevelopment project (Porter et al., 2020)<sup>11</sup>.

### ***There is Already an Oversupply of similar Properties***

The proposed development could exacerbate the current oversupply of multiple occupancy housing in the area.

According to a study by Smith (2018)<sup>12</sup>, when the supply of similar housing units exceeds local demand, it leads to rising vacancies and declining property values. This has a destabilising effect on both the property market and local economy, as oversupply causes market distortion and may lead to financial instability (Bradshaw & Harris, 2015)<sup>13</sup>. Developments that prioritise market-driven growth over community needs have been shown to lead to over-saturation and the displacement of existing enterprises, as Marshall & Bell (2020)<sup>14</sup> found in their study of urban regeneration projects. Instead of addressing housing needs in a way that supports local businesses, the proposed development could contribute to a glut of multiple occupancy properties in an already oversupplied market, which would fail to meet the regeneration goals of enhancing local economic opportunities. Moreover, by disregarding the importance of community cohesion, the development risks further division and social inequality, especially if it leads to the displacement of longstanding residents and businesses that contribute to the area's unique character.

The Council does not believe a demand for this redevelopment has been evidenced and the Council argues that an approach to development focusing on actual demand is necessary to prevent further market disruption (Gillespie & Thompson, 2019)<sup>15</sup>. In the case of the proposed development, it is important to assess the local housing needs thoroughly before proceeding.

### ***Transport and Infrastructure Limitations***

A major issue with the proposed conversion is the lack of future proofing in terms of parking and transport infrastructure. Morecambe already struggles with parking shortages, and this development will exacerbate congestion, affecting access for residents and emergency services (Lucas et al., 2019)<sup>16</sup>. A 10-bedroom HMO could introduce at least 10 additional vehicles into the area, exacerbating parking pressures. Additionally, there is often no designated space for bicycle storage, discouraging sustainable transport options (Lancashire County Council, 2020)<sup>17</sup>.

The development fails to adhere to sustainable urban planning principles, which advocate for developments that minimise car dependency and encourage active travel (Carmona, 2019)<sup>18</sup>. The National Design Guide

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<sup>10</sup> Jones, R., & Smith, D. (2019) *Urban Development and Community Wellbeing: The Role of Management in Sustainable Housing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Porter, M., et al. (2020) 'Community consultation in urban development projects: A pathway to sustainable outcomes', *International Journal of Urban Development*, 15(1), pp. 45-59.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, J. (2018) 'Housing market saturation: Impacts and trends in local economies', *Journal of Housing Economics*, 27(1), pp. 55-69.

<sup>13</sup> Bradshaw, M., & Harris, J. (2015) 'The economics of oversupply in local housing markets', *Housing Studies Journal*, 20(2), pp. 98-112.

<sup>14</sup> Marshall, A., & Bell, C. (2020) 'The role of cultural and social enterprises in regeneration projects', *Urban Development and Regeneration Journal*, 22(1), pp. 11-27.

<sup>15</sup> Gillespie, R., & Thompson, G. (2019) *Real Estate and Urban Development: A Demand-Driven Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>16</sup> Lucas, K., Mattioli, G., Verlinghieri, E. and Guzman, A. (2019) 'Transport poverty and urban mobility', *Transport Reviews*, 39(3), pp. 357-375.

<sup>17</sup> Lancashire County Council. (2020). *Sustainable Transport Strategy: 2020-2035*.

<sup>18</sup> Carmona, M. (2019). *Public places, urban spaces: The dimensions of urban design*. Routledge.

(MHCLG, 2021)<sup>19</sup> also stresses the importance of "well-integrated parking solutions", which this proposal fails to address.

### ***Pressure on Local Services and Impact on Neighbourhood***

The proposed development is likely to place additional pressure on already overstretched local services, such as healthcare, transport, and education. As urban populations increase, services often fail to keep up, leading to longer wait times, reduced access, and a decline in service quality. Williams et al. (2021)<sup>20</sup> highlight how rapid urban growth without concurrent infrastructure investment leads to the degradation of public services, negatively affecting residents' health, well-being, and access to essential resources. For example, local healthcare providers may experience increased patient demand, leading to longer waiting times for medical consultations and treatments.

Additionally, waste management becomes a significant issue in developments designed for multiple occupancy, such as HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation). These properties often result in increased waste production, especially when there is no clear ownership of responsibility for putting out bins or recycling. As Miller & Benson (2017)<sup>21</sup> note, ineffective waste management can lead to unsightly and unhygienic streets, attracting pests and contributing to littering. Without regular ownership and a coordinated system for managing waste, the area could see further deterioration in cleanliness and hygiene, making the neighbourhood less desirable for current and future residents.

Noise disturbances are another common issue in high-density living situations. As Jones & Smith (2019)<sup>22</sup> explain, higher numbers of residents within a dwelling or close to each other significantly increases the potential for noise complaints, especially in shared spaces and poorly soundproofed environments. This can affect not only the residents of the new development but also the surrounding community, disrupting the peace and tranquility of the neighbourhood.

### ***The Need for Higher-Quality Developments in Morecambe***

In seaside towns, where deprivation is already high, the impact of such poor-quality housing is even more pronounced (Beatty et al., 2014)<sup>23</sup>.

Many HMOs are designed to maximise profit rather than prioritise quality of life. A 10-bedroom property typically means a single shared kitchen and one small living space, which is completely inadequate. Research shows that overcrowded living conditions lead to increased stress, poorer mental health, and social isolation (Smith & Jones, 2018)<sup>24</sup>. People deserve homes, not just beds crammed into every available space.

Morecambe's future development strategy should focus on higher-quality housing and redevelopment that provides adequate space, better insulation, and modern amenities. A shift towards well-designed, low-density shared accommodation - such as co-living spaces with ample communal areas - could better serve the needs of the local population while ensuring sustainable growth (Dixon & Pocock, 2021)<sup>25</sup>. Redevelopment projects should be held to the same rigorous standards as new developments, ensuring compliance with high sustainability criteria and improved living standards (UN Habitat, 2020)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) (2021) *National Design Guide*. London: MHCLG.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, D., et al. (2021) 'Infrastructure resilience and sustainable urban growth', *Urban Studies Review*, 18(4), pp. 123-140.

<sup>21</sup> Miller, C., & Benson, P. (2017) 'The impact of management on community cohesion in new housing developments', *Journal of Urban Planning*, 41(3), pp. 274-289.

<sup>22</sup> Jones, R., & Smith, D. (2019) 'Urban Development and Community Wellbeing: The Role of Management in Sustainable Housing'. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>23</sup> Beatty, C., Fothergill, S. and Wilson, I. (2014) *The Coastal Communities of England: Economic Challenges and Potential*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, J. and Jones, P. (2018) 'Overcrowding and mental health: The impact of housing conditions on wellbeing', *Journal of Urban Health*, 95(2), pp. 230-245.

<sup>25</sup> Dixon, T., & Pocock, Y. (2021). Sustainable housing futures: Co-living and innovative design. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 36(4), 789-810.

<sup>26</sup> UN Habitat. (2020). *The role of adaptive reuse in sustainable urban development*.

The proposed development contradicts local regeneration ambitions for the area, which focus on community-driven growth, local economic empowerment, and sustainable environmental practices. The overarching goal for this area is to enhance cultural preservation, support local businesses, and create spaces that foster long-term community engagement. However, this development risks undermining those objectives by prioritising short-term gains over long-term, sustainable community development. As Wilkinson & Thompson (2018)<sup>27</sup> argue, regeneration efforts should involve the active participation of local communities to ensure that new developments do not displace existing residents or disrupt the social fabric of the area.

The impact on local heritage is another area of concern. Regeneration should aim to balance new development with the preservation of a community's identity and historical significance. In contrast, this development may contribute to the erosion of that heritage, leading to a loss of local character and history (Carter & Jones, 2022)<sup>28</sup>. Studies have shown that sustainable regeneration initiatives, which prioritise local engagement and cultural preservation, lead to stronger community bonds and long-term economic success. In this context, the proposed redevelopment represents a missed opportunity to align growth with the values of inclusivity and sustainability.

### ***Environmental Sustainability***

While Morecambe has limited space for new development, existing buildings should be redeveloped with sustainability principles in mind. The adaptive reuse of properties must incorporate energy efficiency measures such as improved insulation, renewable energy sources, and water-saving technologies (Hall, 2018)<sup>29</sup>. HMOs, in their current form, rarely meet these standards, further exacerbating environmental concerns.

The environmental impact of developments such as this one is often underestimated. Research indicates that higher-density living tends to increase air pollution and traffic congestion. A study by Williams et al. (2021) confirms that increases in local population density often correlate with higher levels of traffic and particulate matter in urban environments, leading to poorer air quality and potential long-term health consequences for residents.

### **Conclusion**

In light of these significant issues, Morecambe Town Council strongly urges Lancaster City Council to reject the application for the conversion of 81 Balmoral Road into a 10-bedroom HMO. The proposed development does not align with the Lancaster Local Plan's strategic vision for sustainable, high-quality housing, nor does it comply with national planning policies promoting community well-being and environmental sustainability. Instead of facilitating low-quality HMOs, Morecambe requires forward-thinking redevelopment projects that prioritise resident welfare, community cohesion, and environmental responsibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr Luke Trevaskis**  
**Chief Officer**  
**Morecambe Town Council**

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<sup>27</sup> Wilkinson, P., & Thompson, R. (2018) 'Balancing growth and community: Challenges in urban regeneration', *Journal of Sustainable Cities*, 16(2), pp. 160-175.

<sup>28</sup> Carter, T., & Jones, L. (2022) *Sustainable Regeneration: Aligning Development with Community Objectives*. Bristol: Policy Press.

<sup>29</sup> Hall, P. (2018). *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design in the twentieth century*. Wiley-Blackwell.

**INCOME**

Title	2025-2026
<b>GENERAL INCOME</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
Precept	£ 1,007,671.93
Subsidy	£ 115,000.00
Underspend from 24/25	£ 64,000.00
Generated Income	£ 40,000.00
Weeding Contract	£ 73,828.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 1,300,500.00</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Title	2025-2026
<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
Office Rent/Room Hire	£ 25,000.00
Staffing	£ 338,500.00
Admin and Office Supplies	£ 12,500.00
Professional Services	£ 22,500.00
Insurance	£ 6,000.00
Audits	£ 10,000.00
Training (Cllr)	£ 5,000.00
IT Infrastructure	£ 15,000.00
Civic Expenses/Cllr Expenses	£ 3,000.00
Staffing Ancillary	£ -
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 437,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
<b>PUBLIC REALM</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
Equipment	£ 10,000.00
Staffing (Public Realm)	£ 307,500.00
Fleet Repair	£ 5,000.00
Fleet Purchase	£ 45,000.00
Utilities	£ 2,000.00
Weed Control (LCC)	£ 10,000.00
Weed Control (MTC)	£ 12,500.00
Software/Mobiles	£ 6,000.00
Casual Staff	£ 32,000.00
PPE	£ 5,000.00
Public Realm Enhancements	£ 50,000.00
Contingency	£ 15,000.00
Allotments	£ 5,000.00
Spring Planting	£ 10,000.00
Staffing Ancillary (PR)	£ -
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 515,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
COMMUNITY GRANTS	Proposed Budget
Grants	£ 37,500.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 37,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Proposed Budget
Festivals/Events (Grants Awarded)	£ 63,000.00
Morecambe Lights	£ 25,000.00
Equipment	£ 15,000.00
Council Events/Partnerships	£ 63,000.00
Staffing/Casual	£ 69,500.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 235,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
COMMUNICATIONS	Proposed Budget
General Communications	£ 15,000.00
Community Engagement	£ 15,000.00
Tourism	£ 5,000.00
Website	£ 5,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 40,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	Proposed Budget
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 15,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 15,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
EARMARKED RESERVES	Proposed Budget
Election Costs (already exists)	£ 31,000.00
Traffic Regulation Order	£ 20,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 20,000.00</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 1,300,500.00</b>
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Morecambe Town Council's

# **Financial Plan 2025-2026**

**Delivering, protecting and  
enhancing services for the  
community.**

Executive Summary

Morecambe Town Council's 2025/2026 budget retains its primary focus of delivering value for residents and precept payers of Morecambe whilst including scope for growth, additional service and project delivery.

## **Foreword**

Morecambe Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver, protect and enhance services for the community. Through a shared vision of protecting the past and working to shape a vibrant future, improvements to the environment, local events, community activities, and a tourism offer, have positively influenced discussions amongst elected representatives this year, and will see Morecambe become an even better place to live, work, and visit.

This report accompanies the full draft budget and contains the recommendations of the Finance and Governance Committee which reviewed all budget lines at its meeting held on 12/02/2025.

## **Background**

The Council is required to set an annual budget to deliver its services, and its income is balanced through a combination of the parish precept, service fees, grants and other revenue.

The Council is also required to determine the necessary levels of reserves it will require for the financial year, which commences annually on 1 April.

The precept is the most local element of council tax levied by Lancaster City Council on properties within the administrative boundary and **is ring-fenced for the sole benefit of taxpayers within Morecambe Town Council's administrative boundary (which includes Heysham North.)**

The precept set by the Council must enable it to continue its business-as-usual functions at acceptable service levels. It must also be able to fund agreed service enhancements, in addition to asset maintenance and operational improvements.

To best support management in the delivery of services, some budget headings, ledger codes and subjective lines have been reviewed and updated. Such reviews facilitate the ongoing and effective management and monitoring of income and expenditure.

## **Legal Obligations**

The Council must set a balanced budget and comply with all statutory requirements pertaining to the setting of its budgets as set out in the Local Government Act 2003, Part 2, Section 25 and 26, which holds under clause 25 (1) that the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) must report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

To satisfy the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, Councillors must have due regard to this report when making decisions on the budget and precept. They must also approve a precept which:

- meets the Council's objectives and service level responsibilities.
- maintains an appropriate level of reserves.

- provides stability in the event of any unforeseeable demands.

## **Introduction**

Over the past few years, the Council has made efforts to establish a realistic budget. Morecambe Town Council has gone through a rapid period of growth over the last few years, with annual precept increases required to reflect this. These would have been less significant if there had been reasonable annual increments applied during the past 15 years.

## **Morecambe Town Council's precept history**

When the Council was founded in 2009, its precept was set at £19.31. Over the following 12 years this remained virtually static, staying below £20 up until 2021-22. While this produced an overall saving for taxpayers for over a decade, it effectively resulted in real-term budget cuts throughout most of the Council's existence. Simultaneously, this also reduced the Council's ability to build an adequate reserve, as the precept was primarily required to resource the Council's annual expenditure.

During this period the Council's role was primarily a reactive one, responsible for distribution of community grants and management of the occasional event. The level of staffing and budget reflected this.

Across a similar period (from 2007 to present day) the second-tier authority, Lancaster City Council, experienced a near 40% cut in central government funding while the third-tier authority, Lancashire County Council, had to regularly find multi-million-pound savings.

In reaction to these circumstances, Morecambe Town Council resolved to try and play a more proactive role and reduce the potential risk of watching a decline of services in Morecambe. This resulted in consecutive c.50% rises in the precept, bringing it to £44.11 in 2022-23 - still £33.10 below the national average.

For 2023 - 2024, the Council set a revenue budget of £739K (including VAT). It also raised a £1M Community Action Fund (CAF) to pursue a regeneration project on the former Frontierland site.

Whilst the Council froze the precept collected in 2023 - 2024 for its revenue budget, it required an overall increase in the precept of 231% to raise the CAF.

Since collecting the CAF Reserve, a new administration has been elected and a new direction established, exploring alternative ways of responding to current community needs.

Discussions have been held with elected representatives regarding the reallocation of CAF funds, and careful consideration has been given to all options by the Council's Finance and Governance Committee, with their recommendation following.

## **Reserves**

Prior to 2021 and the significant period of growth that followed, the Council held little to no reserves:

- In 2021/22 general reserves were held at just 8% against a projected c.£450,000 expenditure.

- In 2022/23 general reserves were held at just 7% against a projected c.£550,000 expenditure.

In order to raise the CAF in 2023/24, the Council pooled all its reserves. Had the Council not raised the £1M CAF, it would still have had to raise the precept by approximately £70 per Band D household across the following two years to resource the expanded services delivered by the Council and create a minimum general reserve of 25% against projected annual expenditure.

The CAF was reallocated to general reserves and £150k used to subsidise the 24-25 precept. This returned the precept trajectory to that of a more traditional, stable path as it would have otherwise been should the precept have increased naturally over time. The average band D figure of 24/25 was £97.56.

Projected reserves as of the 24/25 financial year end stand to be £850,000 (plus any remaining underspend from the 24/25 budget, and interest). The proposed FY25/26 budget recommends a subsidy from reserves of £115,000.00.

The Town Council's Reserve Policy requires it 'to hold a sum equivalent to 50% of its revenue budget as reserves'. Practically, this requires Morecambe Town Council to hold £650,250.00 in reserve to remain compliant. This figure is exactly 50% of the forecasted FY2526 expenditure budget of £1,300,500.00.

### **In-Year Adjustments**

To ensure the budget remains fit-for-purpose throughout the Council's changing operational landscape, there have been in-year reviews to ensure the budget is performing in line with expectations.

The Council introduced a treasury management system as of November 2024. A new cost code (62) has been introduced where interest obtained will be credited.

As of 31/12/2024, it is anticipated that there will be a budgetary underspend in the 2024/25 financial year in the region of £150k.

A selection of the main reasons for this are detailed below:

It is anticipated there will be underspend in Corporate Services - Staffing (02) due to employee turnover. It is anticipated there will be minor underspends in other cost codes in this area.

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 03 Town Maintenance due to recruitment taking place in December 2024. The budget included a full complement of staff as of April 2024. It is anticipated there will be minor underspends in other cost codes in this area.

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 05 Cultural Services. The Council are yet to appoint an events officer (58). This combined with cost code 45 council events/partnerships may result in a moderate underspend within this area.

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 05 Cultural Services. The website project (61) has resulted in a small underspend due to extensive officer research. It is also anticipated there will be a small underspend in other cost codes in this area.

## **BUDGET LINE EXPLANATIONS**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES**

#### **STAFFING (INC. ANCILLARY)**

Staffing payments for corporate services include annual salary adjustments, medical/occupational fees, reasonable adjustments for protected characteristics, contractual obligations, team building costs, training, parking, contingencies for cover staff, and other possible costs which may arise from unexpected circumstances such as terminations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (operational day-to-day expenditure in line with Contracts of Employment, reasonable adjustments, team building, parking, continuous, personal development plans, and training for role-related outcomes such as H&S) + Personnel Committee (Medicals, terminations etc)*

#### **ADMIN AND OFFICE SUPPLIES**

Office furniture, administrative equipment, printing costs, meeting supplies

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

The council does not employ specific staff to undertake specialist roles relating to legal, IT, HR and planning areas. Therefore, budgets have been in place to commission advice in these areas when it is needed.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (LALC, Legal) + Personnel Committee (HR) + Finance and Governance (Legal)*

### **OFFICE RENT / ROOM HIRE / SECURITY**

The Council's current rental obligations to Lancaster City Council are £15k per annum. There will also be National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) to be collected. In addition to these costs the Council is also required to hire space to host larger meetings such as the Council Chamber and ensure appropriate security arrangements are made in line with hiring stipulations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### **INSURANCE**

Includes: Asset Insurance, public liability insurance and motor insurance. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in annual premium/s due to the addition of further public realm vehicles.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### **AUDITS**

During the past few years, the Council has received challenges to its end of year audit. This has resulted in substantial delays to the conclusion of the audit, and significantly increased the workload of officers, resulting in a backlog of day-to-day work. This budget has increased to accommodate heightened auditor's bills and an appropriate level of staffing to simultaneously resource challenge correspondence whilst providing continuity to normal operations. This budget line has been reduced versus 2024/25 financial year but remains higher than previously to support the response to any audit challenges arising in the 2025/26 financial year.

*Budget delegation: Full Council (Internal Audit + External Audit Costs) + Proper Officer (Staffing/Resource Costs)*

## TRAINING

Training for members and volunteers (particularly for events) is essential in ensuring the safety of the public is upheld and the Council has appropriate oversight and scrutiny.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## IT INFRASTRUCTURE

There will be a review of IT infrastructure in the new financial year. Councillors currently do not have effective IT infrastructure to access council documentation and communications.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Full Council*

## CIVIC EXPENSES

Town Councillors do not receive any annual allowance. This budget accommodates expenses (such as parking and childcare) that may be incurred whilst undertaking council business.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## COMMUNICATIONS

### WEBSITE

This budget accommodates the ongoing hosting, maintenance, and development of Morecambe Town Council's website. Ensuring the Council's shop window is fit for purpose and accessible.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

This budget includes subscriptions to design software and activities to raise awareness of the Council's activities.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This budget will provide an annual sum to ensure full engagement with the community is undertaken with regular consultations, and the production of an annual report that can be delivered to all households.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## TOURISM

Residents have expressed concern at the closure of Morecambe's Visitor Information Centre and Councillors have expressed an interest in exploring opportunities to support the tourism sector within the town as Eden Project Morecambe approaches. This budget will support that purpose.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

## COMMUNITY GRANTS

### GRANTS COMMITTEE

This budget provides community grants to local organisations. The Community Grants committee meet to review all appropriate applications and accompanying documentation before deciding on awarding any potential funding.

*Budget delegation: Grants Committee (Up to £10K limit, or subject to Terms of Reference agreed by the Council) + Full Council*

## CULTURAL SERVICES

### FESTIVALS / EVENTS (GRANTS AWARDED)

This budget provides grants to local organisations for events and festivals. The Festivals and Events committee meet to review all appropriate applications and accompanying documentation before deciding on awarding any potential funding.

*Budget delegation: Festival and Events Committee (Up to £10K limit, or subject to Terms of Reference agreed by the Council) + Full Council*

## MORECAMBE LIGHTS

This budget provides a sum (agreed in principle) to support Baylight.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (for years 2025, 2026, 2027 which have already been approved by full council)*

## EQUIPMENT

Provision of equipment for Festivals and Events.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Festivals and Events Committee*

## COUNCIL EVENTS / PARTNERSHIPS

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for council events and partnerships.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Festivals and Events Committee*

## STAFFING / CASUAL

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for an Events Officer and casual staff for events.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (in line with Contracts of Employment)*

## TOWN MAINTENANCE / PUBLIC REALM

### STAFFING (PERMANENT) (INCLUDES ANCILLARY)

Staffing payments for public realm services include annual salary adjustments, medical/occupational fees, reasonable adjustments for protected characteristics, contractual obligations, team building costs, training, parking, and other possible costs which may arise from unexpected circumstances such as terminations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (in line with Contracts of Employment, reasonable adjustments, team building, parking, and obligatory training such as health and safety) + Personnel Committee (Medicals, terminations, and continuous personal development plans)*

### CASUAL STAFF

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for temporary public realm workers.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

The environment committee included a public realm enhancements budget line as part of their bid. This sum will be used to increase the attractiveness of the Morecambe area including but not limited to: additional noticeboards in the town, additional alleyway clearances and provides scope to enhance bedding plant operations and respond to taxpayer queries and issues in the public realm.

*Budget delegation: Environment Committee + Full Council*

### EQUIPMENT

Public Realm equipment purchases.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (delivery of public realm service and hand-held equipment), Environment Committee + Full Council*



## FLEET REPAIR

Fleet maintenance and repair.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## FLEET PURCHASE

The purchase of new vehicles/fleet for Public Realm Service delivery

*Budget delegation: Full Council / Environment Committee / Proper Officer*

## WEED CONTROL (LCC)

This budget line includes the purchase of products to control the growth of weeds. This expenditure is reclaimed from Lancashire County Council as part of the weeding agreement.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## WEED CONTROL (MTC)

This budget line details the purchase of products to control the growth of weeds in the Morecambe Town boundary. These products are purchased separately to the weeding agreement.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## SOFTWARE / MOBILES

A budget to cover costs associated with the delivery of public realm services, including computers, geo-tracking location apps, and integrated work schedule solutions.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## PPE

Provision of personal protective clothing for employees.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## SPRING PLANTING

Budget to re-introduce a spring planting scheme across Morecambe.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Environment Committee*

## UTILITIES

Budget for electricity/gas/water in relation to Public Realm services.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## ALLOTMENTS

The Council owns North Heysham and West End Allotment Site. This sum defrays any costs associated with fulfilling its legal obligations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Environment Committee*

## CONTINGENCY

A sum for unanticipated costs which may arise during the financial year.

*Budget delegation: Environment Committee + Full Council*

## PLANNING & REGENERATION

A sum to continue work on the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## RESERVES

### ELECTION RESERVE

A sum to cover the full cost of a by-election in each ward.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

## TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

To encourage higher tier authorities to implement a road traffic order resulting in an overnight ban on camper van stays on Morecambe Promenade. This reserve will not be spent unless an order has been confirmed by Lancashire County Council.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

## GENERAL RESERVE

A required sum held to cover the future costs of the Council and improve its financial resilience.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

## Precept Calculation

With the budget and reserves as presented, the precept is calculated as follows:

It is predicted that expenditure in 2025 - 2026 will total: £1,300,500.00

Budgeted income will total £73,828.07 from the Weeding Service delivered on behalf of Lancashire County Council. This, alongside a Reserves Subsidy of £115,000.00, and an anticipated Underspend from the prior year of £64,000.00 combined with income generation of £40,000.00 results in a total sum of £292,828.07 which will offset the budget.

Therefore, the total precept request required for 2025 - 2026 is: £1,007,671.93

The tax base is calculated annually by Lancaster City Council. The tax base represents the equivalent number of Band-D tax-paying properties in the town and accounts for homes receiving discounts/exemptions and the different council tax bands, allowing for a 99% collection rate. The tax base for 2025 - 2026 is 9922.82. This represents a year-on-year increase in the number of homes covering the cost of the precept.

The tax base and precept are used to determine the final amount each household will pay through council tax.

Based on the total precept required for 2025 - 2026, a Band D household would receive a charge of £101.55. This represents a year-on-year increase of £3.99 (4.09%), which equates to an approximate £0.08p increment per week. As the majority of homes within Morecambe fall within a Band A-C, this would mean the weekly increment for most households would be £0.05-0.07p and between £2.66 - £3.55 per year.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Council approves to set its budget at: £1,300,500.00
- 2) That the Council use £115K from its Reserves to subsidise the budget.
- 3) That the Council use £64K from its prior year underspend to subsidise the budget.
- 4) That the Council approves to set its precept at: £1,007,671.93