

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 22 October 2025 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Begg, Bevan, Carlin, Connolly, Dennett, Davidson, Dourley, Fry, Garner, Gilligan, Harris, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, McDermott, McDonough, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, L. Nolan, P. Nolan, Philbin, Polhill, Rowe, Ryan, Stockton, Stretch, Skinner, Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Woolfall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bramwell, Goodall, C. Plumpton Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh and Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, Z. Fearon, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson and R. Rout

Also in attendance: One member of the press and L. Luddington - Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Action

COU30 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 9 July 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

COU31 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that:

- alongside neighbouring Civic Heads, she had been invited to visit a ship operated by the Peruvian Navy during their visit to Liverpool and had received a gift for the Mayor's parlour; and
- tickets were on sale for the Mayor's Charity Christmas Party at the DCBL Stadium on 12 December.

COU32 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader made the following announcements:

- the appointment process for the role of Chief Executive had begun and an invitation had been sent to all Councillors to meet the candidates at the DCBL on 23 October 2025;
- the Council had received Government grant funding of £10m for Hough Green Ward and £1.5m for Widnes Town Centre improvements. On behalf of the Council, he thanked Derek Twigg MP for his support in securing this Government funding;
- £26m government funding had also been secured for Town Deal Runcorn and work was ongoing to agree how this could be allocated;
- a consultation exercise had begun on the revised Housing Strategy; and
- he congratulated Widnes Vikings Women Rugby League team who had been crowned League One Champions.

COU33 URGENT DECISIONS

Council considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive, on the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Council note the report.

COU34 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 10 July and 11 September 2025 .

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU35 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 9 July 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU36 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

COU37 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Council considered a copy of the External Auditor's Report 2024/25 which was presented by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

A number of Key Recommendations and Improvement Recommendations were shown within the report along with management's responses to those recommendations. In addition, three Statutory Recommendations had been made which the Council was required to consider, confirm whether the recommendations were accepted and if so, how they would be addressed. The first two Statutory Recommendations continued from the 2023/24 report.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Dennett thanked Ms Luddington for the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25 shown in the Appendix 2 be noted;
- 2) the three Statutory Recommendations highlighted within the Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25 be noted; and
- 3) the Council's responses to the Statutory Recommendations as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved.

Director of Finance

COU38 25/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JULY 2025 (MINUTE EXB 32 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Director, Finance, on the revised Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to ensure the Council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget;
- 3) the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility; and
- 4) Council approve the revisions to the capital

Director of Finance

programme set-out in paragraph 3.24 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

COU39 DCBL STADIUM - NEW PAVA SYSTEM AND STRUCTURAL STEEL MAINTENANCE WORKS AND PITCH REPLACEMENT (MINUTE EXB 40 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to proceed with necessary works at the DBCL Stadium.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Capital works identified in the report in sections 3.3 to 3.6 be approved;
- 2) consideration be given to the options outlined in paragraph 5.4 below regarding how the annual capital financing costs might be funded;
- 3) approval be given to add works to the capital programme and include a financial contribution of £1.325m, subject to further work to establish detailed costs, and to proceed with an option to include the implementation of a PAVA system and undertake steel repairs to four stands only. This is to ensure the ongoing safety of the public when using the premises. A decision on options relating to the pitch to be deferred; and
- 4) approval of the detailed costs and the option to be undertaken, be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

COU40 PUBLIC SURVEILLANCE INFRASTRUCTURE (MINUTE EXB27 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Director Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval for capital investment to upgrade the Council's CCTV and public surveillance infrastructure.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council approve the inclusion in the Capital Programme, of a scheme of works and £500k investment to address CCTV infrastructure, software

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

and hardware as outlined in the body of the report;
and

- 2) authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services to prepare tender documents to procure this work.

COU41 LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Council was asked to consider the attached report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, on the Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy attached to this report to come into effect immediately following the expiry of the current policy on 6 January 2026; and
- 2) directs that the Director – Legal and Democratic Services publishes the Statement of Licensing Policy in accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003.

Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

COU42 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

This item was deferred.

COU43 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Council considered the reports of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 9 July 2025:-

- Children. Young People and Families;
- Local Economy;
- Health and Social Care;
- Housing and Safer;
- Environment and Regeneration;
- Corporate and Inclusion; and
- Audit and Governance.

COU44 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 9 July 2025:-

- Development Management;
- Regulatory;
- Regulatory Sub Committee
- Taxi Licensing Sub Committee; and
- Appointments

Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.