

## COUNCIL

*At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 3 December 2025 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Garner, A. Lowe, McDonough, N. Plumpton Walsh, Stockton, Thornton and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson and R. Rout

Also in attendance: Three members of the public

*Action*

### COU45 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22 October 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

### COU46 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that Runcorn Town Hall Open Day would be held on 6 December. All were welcome to attend.

### COU47 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader made the following announcements:

- He welcomed the good news regarding the recommendation from Appointments Committee for Andrew Donaldson to be appointed to the role of Chief Executive;
- Children's Services improvement journey continued and Ofsted had noted significant improvements had been achieved;
- The Council had received grant funds of:

- £1.5m from the Government – Pride in Place Fund; and
- £2,170,118m from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority– Connect to Work;
- He wished everyone a happy Christmas and thanked everyone for their contributions in the past year.

#### COU48 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.

#### COU49 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 23 October and 13 November 2025 .

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

#### COU50 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 8 October 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

#### COU51 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

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

#### COU52 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Council were asked to consider the recommendation of the Appointments Committee for the appointment to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

RESOLVED: That Council the recommendation of the Appointments Committee be approved and Mr. Andrew Donaldson be appointed as Chief Executive with effect from a date to be confirmed.

#### COU53 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

(EXB55 REFERS)

Council considered a report that sought approval to delegate Stage 1 consideration of substantiation variation to health services, where necessary, when Joint Health Scrutiny (JHS) arrangements may apply.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) approves the proposal for Stage 1 delegation as outlined.

COU54 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2026/27  
(EXB61 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Director of Finance, on the determination of the Council Tax Base for 2026/27.

Councillor Davidson expressed concern at the current Council Budget outlook position which was estimated to be £4.6m over budget. In response Councillor Dennet advised that the predicted overspend had reduced and measure continued to be taken to achieve a balanced budget. A Government Finance Policy Statement that aimed to reform local government finances was expected soon, meanwhile Council finances remained under severe pressure.

The recommendation was unanimously approved by Council as detailed below.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) set the 2026/27 Council Tax Base at 37,115 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	675
Halebank	540
Daresbury	424
Moore	338

Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,739

COU55 2025/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 30  
SEPTEMBER 2025 (EXB62 REFERS)

Council was asked to approve the Capital Programme as outlined in the attached report.

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) this 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;
- 4) approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.25 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

COU56 APPROVAL OF THE BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING  
STRATEGY - KEY DECISION (EXB66 REFERS)

Council was requested to approve the Boroughwide Housing Strategy. A copy of the Strategy document was attached to the report.

Councillor Wainwright queried if the Housing Strategy document had been considered by the Council scrutiny committee and the cost of the housing survey. Councillor Harris agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Wainwright.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) note the progress on the production and consultation of the draft Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031 (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B);

- 2) provides delegated approval to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability to agree any final revisions to the draft Housing Strategy; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised Housing Strategy.

#### COU57 ABSENCE OF A MEMBER

Under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, permission is sought for Councillor McDonough to be granted a period of absence from attending Council meetings for a period of 6 months, concluding on 3 June 2026, due to personal reasons.

RESOLVED: That approval be given for the Member absence as outlined above.

#### COU58 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 22 October 2025:-

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

Councillor Wainwright asked if market traders could be consulted on the Market Business Plan (Corporate and Inclusion Minute CS23 refers)

#### COU59 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 22 October 2025:-

- Regulatory; and
- Appointments

#### COU60 APPOINTMENTS TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD, OUTSIDE BODIES AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

Council was requested to agree the following appointments.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following appointments detailed below:

- Audit and Governance Board – Councillor Hughes
- Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board – Councillor Wallace
- Scrutiny Co-Ordinator - Councillor McDermott

Outside Bodies:

National Association British Market Authorities - Councillor Gilligan

Manchester Port Health Authority – Councillor Gilligan

Catalyst Museum – Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh

Sankey Canal Restoration Society (SCARS) – Vacant

On behalf of the Council the Leader thanked Sue Wallace Bonner for her work and years of support and he wished her a happy and healthy retirement.

*Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.*