



Lancashire Association of Local Councils

Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils

T: 01772 750900 E: office@lalc.org.uk

Minutes of the Finance and Management Committee meeting, held virtually at 5:00pm on 13th May 2026.

Members present:

Cllr Pat Hastings (Chair)
Cllr Keith Martin
Cllr Alan Neal
Cllr Phil Orme
Cllr Greera Stevenson

Cllr Gordon Smith
Cllr Jacqueline Hampson

Officers present:

Jessica Dibble, LALC Secretary

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Cllr. Pat. Hastings, called the meeting to order at 17:00.

Apologies were recorded for;

Debra Platt – Chief Officer

Darren Cranshaw

Alan Yates

Mark Jenkinson

2. To approve the minutes of the Finance and Committee meeting held 18th February 2026

The minutes of the Finance & Management Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026 were considered.

A matter was raised regarding the previous discussion on the voting rights/role of the President and Vice-President on the Finance & Management Committee. It was noted that concern had been expressed that the matter may not have been sufficiently clear on the previous agenda and that any formal decision regarding committee membership or voting arrangements should be considered by the Executive Committee.

It was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration.

Proposed: Cllr. Gordon Smith

Seconded: Cllr. Keith Martin

Action: Add the role/voting rights of the President and Vice-President on the Finance & Management Committee to the Executive Committee agenda.

3. Matters of Update

There were no additional matters of update not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

It was noted that matters relating to the Treasurer and CRM system would be considered under later agenda items.

4. Officer updates to be received

4.1 Finance updates –Year End 31 March 2026

The Committee received the finance update reports, including the bank reconciliation, budget statement and appendices circulated for the period ending 31st March 2026.

It was noted that the opening position at 1 April 2026 was £104,271.76. Members discussed the projected income and expenditure for the year and the budgeted deficit position.

Concern was expressed that the Association could not continue to operate with recurring deficits over the longer term. Members requested that the projected deficit should be clearly framed as investment in the Association's future capacity, services, membership support and income generation, rather than as a sustainable ongoing operating position.

The Committee discussed the need to demonstrate how investment during the year would support progress towards a balanced budget in future years. Areas identified included:

- increasing membership income;
- increasing training income;
- attracting new member councils;
- reviewing the membership offer;
- developing support linked to local government reorganisation;
- ensuring project expenditure delivers measurable outcomes.

It was noted that project budgets had been agreed to improve service provision and support future income generation. Members emphasised the need for clear monitoring of project spend and outcomes.

The secretary reported that training income was already showing positive improvement in the current financial year. It was noted that training income for 2025/26 had been £2,218, while income in the first two months of the new financial year was already £778.

Staffing was discussed briefly in the context of budget and service delivery. It was noted that a staffing consultation process was underway and that proposals would be brought forward to the Executive Committee once the consultation process had concluded. Members agreed that detailed staffing discussions should not take place at this meeting while the consultation process was ongoing.

4.2 Finance Updates April 2026

The Committee received the April 2026 finance update, including the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring statement.

It was noted that the membership invoices had been issued and that further subscription income had been received since the report date. The secretary advised that the figures would look healthier if re-run due to additional income received after the report had been prepared.

The Committee considered the income and expenditure monitoring statement. Members noted the importance of continuing to monitor variances and ensure that the Executive Committee receives clear financial information.

The Committee discussed training pricing and subsidies. It was noted that the Association should review whether charges for some training courses, particularly for non-members, were set at an appropriate level. Members commented that the differential between member and non-member rates may need to be greater in order to provide a clearer membership benefit.

There was also discussion about the importance of supporting training that builds capacity in the sector, including internal audit training and CiLCA-related development. Members recognised that some subsidised training may be justified where it supports sector resilience and professionalism.

The Committee noted the bank reconciliation and monitoring report.

Action: Review training pricing, including member/non-member rates and the level of subsidy provided for specific courses.

4.3 Area Support Officer Update Report

The Committee received the Area Support Officer update report.

Members discussed the format of the report and asked that future reports provide clearer information on:

- the key tasks allocated for the reporting period;
- progress against those tasks;
- completed actions;
- areas requiring escalation or additional support;
- any issues requiring member or officer input.

It was noted that the report had already been amended to include accomplishments since the previous report, including updates to the panel of speakers, the area committee webpage and reminders to area secretaries regarding agendas and minutes.

Members considered that clearer task-based reporting would assist the Committee in understanding workload, progress and any barriers to delivery.

Action: Chief Officer to discuss the suggested reporting format with the Area Support Officer and confirm tasks.

5. Treasurer Recruitment Update

The Committee received an update on Treasurer recruitment.

It was reported that no applications had been received despite the advert being circulated. Members discussed whether the wording of the advert could give the impression that the Association is seeking a fully qualified accountant, rather than someone able to provide strategic financial oversight.

Members agreed that the advert should be reviewed and potentially reworded to better describe the nature of the role.

The Committee discussed whether the Finance & Management Committee could continue to provide oversight in the interim. It was noted that this should not place additional unreasonable duties on staff and that staff views should be considered.

A suggestion was made that consideration could be given to approaching an experienced sector finance adviser, potentially on an interim basis, to provide oversight support while recruitment continues.

Resolution: The Treasurer advert should be reviewed and reworded.

Action: Chair to discuss with Debra and Jessica whether interim external support may be appropriate.

6. Update on CRM

Members noted the CRM report.

It was noted that discussions had taken place with two providers. One system appeared technically strong but potentially too complex for the Association's needs, while another was less complex but may not provide all required functionality. Further work was ongoing to identify a suitable option that balanced functionality, usability and cost.

Members discussed the importance of a CRM system supporting:

- membership management;
- training administration;
- targeted communications;
- event and course bookings;
- newsletter formatting and branding;
- data analysis;
- engagement tracking, such as reporting on email open rates and training uptake.

The secretary explained that one of the key drivers was the need for more structured and consistent communications, including branded newsletters and better analysis of member engagement. It was noted that improved analytics would help the Association understand which communications and training promotions are effective.

Members discussed GDPR and data hosting. Members asked that the location of data hosting and GDPR compliance be checked as part of the procurement/selection process.

Action: Jessica Dibble to continue CRM research and report back with further options.

Action: CRM comparison criteria to include branding, analytics/reporting, usability, cost and GDPR/data hosting considerations.

7. Agree Items for the Next Finance & Management Committee Meeting / Executive Committee Agenda

The Committee discussed items to be referred to the Executive Committee.

The following items were identified:

1. Role and voting rights of the President and Vice-President on the Finance & Management Committee.
2. Whether the President, Vice-President and Chair should be provided with LALC email addresses.
3. Staffing review update/proposals, subject to completion of the staff consultation process.
4. Treasurer recruitment and potential interim finance oversight support.
5. CRM system update.
6. Update on the transmission project, including correspondence from three authorities to the Prime Minister and the expected determination decision..

8. Future Meetings

The Committee noted the following future meeting dates:

Finance & Management Committee

Wednesday 19 August 2026 at 5.00pm

Wednesday 25 November 2026 at 5.00pm

LALC Executive Committee

Saturday 13 June 2026 at 10.00am

Saturday 5 September 2026 at 10.00am

Saturday 14 November 2026 – AGM and LCC Conference

Saturday 12 December 2026 at 10.00am

Members discussed the format of the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for 13 June 2026. It was noted that requests had been made for the meeting to be held face-to-face. Members agreed that they were happy for arrangement to be a face-to-face meeting, provided that the venue was accessible by public transport and plenty of notice would be given.

Potential venues discussed included County Hall, the Marriott and the Gujarat Hindu Society Centre in Preston. It was noted that the Gujarat Hindu Society Centre was accessible from the railway station and had parking available.

Resolution: The 13 June 2026 Executive Committee meeting should be arranged as a face-to-face meeting if a suitable venue can be secured.

Action: Officers to seek to confirm a suitable venue as soon as possible and notify members to allow travel arrangements to be made.

Minutes drafted by: Jessica Dibble
LALC Secretary
14/05/2026