



Lancashire Association of Local Councils

LALC

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Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils

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Minutes of the Finance and Management Committee meeting, held virtually at 5:00pm on 18th February 2026.

Members present:

Cllr Pat Hastings (Chair)

Cllr Keith Martin

Cllr Alan Neal

Cllr Phil Orme

Cllr Iain Hamilton

Cllr Gordon Smith

Cllr Darren Cranshaw

Cllr Jacqueline Hampson

Officers present:

Jessica Dibble, LALC Secretary

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Cllr. Pat. Hastings, called the meeting to order at 17:01.

Apologies were recorded for Debra Platt – Chief Officer .

2. To approve the minutes of the Finance and Committee meeting held 3rd December 2025

The minutes of the Finance and Management Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2025 were reviewed at accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr. Phil Orme

Seconded: Cllr. Keith Martin

3. Matters of Update

The Secretary reported that draft Terms of Reference for the working groups had been prepared and circulated. However, there had been limited response, with approximately five members coming forward to date. Committee agreed that the drafts should be circulated again and that a reminder be issued to encourage further participation.

4. Officer updates to be received

4.1 Finance updates – Bank rec and budget statement circulated

The committee reviewed the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring statements and noted that the overall financial position appeared healthy.

Questions were raised regarding the presentation of the bank reconciliation. In particular, it was queried whether the balance brought forward should reflect the previous month rather than April, and why the closing balance from one month

did not appear to carry forward into the next month's opening balance. Members also noted that certain figures within the budget monitoring statement did not appear to reconcile clearly with the stated variances and projected year-end totals.

It was agreed that clarification was required and that the format of the financial reports should be reviewed to ensure they are straightforward and easily understood by members. The Chair confirmed these points would be discussed with Debra on her return and clarified prior to submission to the Executive Committee.

4.2 Area Support Officer Update - Reports previously circulated

The Area Support Officer report was received and noted. Members expressed concern that successive monthly reports appeared very similar and did not clearly demonstrate the activity undertaken or value added during the reporting period. It was also noted that some areas had experienced little or no direct contact. Clarification was provided that the Area Support Officer normally works through area secretaries and attends meetings or provides speakers when requested.

Members agreed that the role and offer of support should be clarified to the wider membership and that future reports should better evidence specific actions undertaken during the period. The Chair agreed to discuss these points with the Area Support Officer ahead of the Executive meeting, including how areas can request support and how reporting could be improved.

5. Treasurer Role

The committee discussed that the Treasurer did not necessarily need to be a councillor or Executive member, but should be independent, experienced and free from conflicts of interest.

The committee discussed attaching an honorarium to the role, noting that payments elsewhere varied widely. Following discussion, members supported recommending that the role be advertised on a paid basis, with provision for additional time during onboarding. It was proposed that the first year be budgeted up to £3,000, with an expected ongoing cost nearer £2,000 per annum once established, subject to Executive approval.

The Secretary will widen recruitment and advertising, including suitable non-councillor candidates with relevant financial experience. The Chair will circulate the updated job description to members, so members can also put forward potential candidates through their networks.

6. To note the CRM System Report and Discuss Next Steps

The committee considered the report regarding a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The need for a centralised data system was outlined to reduce reliance on multiple spreadsheets, enable consistent newsletters and targeted communications, and support integration with the website. Potential systems were mentioned, including Zoho and HubSpot.

It was noted that initially only a limited number of internal officer users would require access, although this may expand in future depending on website administration needs. Members supported the principle of pursuing a CRM system, subject to costings and comparison of options. The Secretary will obtain two to three quotations and arrange demonstrations where required. Cllr Hampson suggested that a short requirements specification, including website integration and communication functionality, would be beneficial to assist with consistent comparison of providers.

7. Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition - Sponsorship agreement and update.

Cllr Phil Orme reported that the Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition would not run in 2026 and that entrants had been notified. Members discussed a discrepancy regarding the sponsorship arrangement, following correspondence requesting an invoice for plaques rather than payment of a £2,000 sponsorship sum. The Secretary confirmed that the minutes of the 1 October meeting recorded agreement to provide £2,000 sponsorship. It was noted that this was an agreement made whilst the chief officer was away, hence the discrepancy.

In light of the above, committee e agreed that the previously agreed sponsorship payment should be honoured for the current financial year and that the competition should be removed from the 2026/27 budget. Any future support would be considered afresh.

Committee also discussed the potential opportunity for LALC to consider hosting the competition in future as a project. It was agreed that this would require consideration and agreement in principle by the Executive before Finance & Management could review any financial implications. It was agreed that Cllr Phil Orme will provide a short paper for Executive outlining the competition, implications and possible options for LALC involvement.

8. Discuss and agree the Presidents role on the Committee.

The committee discussed potential conflicts of interest and voting rights relating to the President and Vice President roles. Members agreed that both the President and Vice President would attend committee meetings as advisors and observers and would not hold voting rights. Voting representation should instead be provided by area committee delegates.

The Secretary will minute and apply this arrangement and request relevant areas to nominate voting delegates to join the Finance and Management Committee.

9. Agree items for the next Finance and Management Committee meeting

Committee discussed the need for this item on the agenda. It was noted that this would be for items that would remain with the F&M before proposals are submitted to the Executive Committee.

10. Items for Executive Committee meeting 28th February 2026

The committee then discussed items to be taken forward to the Executive Committee on 28th February 2026.

This included, clarification of the financial reporting, the proposal to recruit a Treasurer and associated honorarium budget, implementation of a CRM system in principle subject to quotations, and the Best Kept Village update, including clarification of sponsorship arrangements and any proposal for future hosting.

Members also agreed that the Executive should formally confirm the President and Vice President advisory (non-voting) status and ensure that appropriate area representatives are appointed to the Finance and Management Committee.

The Local Government Reorganisation consultation was discussed, and it was agreed that LALC's response should remain impartial and focus on broad principles affecting parish and town councils, while encouraging individual areas and parishes to submit their own responses.

Concern was expressed regarding increasing reports of bullying and inappropriate language within the sector, and members agreed this should be considered by the Executive in terms of possible support, training or guidance.

Ongoing governance matters, including the constitutional review and LALCs status would also need to be discussed.

Members further agreed that the working group Terms of Reference should be re-circulated to encourage members to join the groups.

11. Future meetings listed below for your diary

Finance & Management Committee Wednesdays at 5pm. (Virtual)	LALC Executive Committee Saturday at 10am Virtual unless indicated
Wednesday 13th May 2026	Saturday 28th February 2026
Wednesday 19th August 2026	Saturday 6th June 2026
Wednesday 25th November 2026	Saturday 13th June 2026 – LALC Spring Conference (face to face).
	Saturday 5th September 2026
	Saturday 7th November 2026 – AGM & LCC Conference

	Saturday 12th December 2026

Minutes drafted by: Jessica Dibble
LALC Secretary
19/02/2026