ACTIVE LANCASHIRE LIMITED ("the Company")

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS / TRUSTEES

Held in person in the Lecture Room, Lancashire Archives, Lancashire Record Office, Bow Ln, Preston PR1 2RE on 16th April 2026, 1.00pm-4.00pm.

Present:

Brian Cookson OBE	Chair, Active Lancashire	BC
Nigel Murray	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	NM
Dannielle Roberts	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	DRo
Georgina Roby	LCC County Council Member	GR
Dr Amanda Thornton	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	AT
Donna Rawding	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	DRa
Joanna Robinson	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	JR
Bryan Jones	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	BJ

In attendance:

Adrian Leather	Chief Executive, Active Lancashire	AL
Stuart Oliver	Director of Finance, Active Lancashire	SO
Simon Burnett	FMG Consulting	SB
Michael Manley	GLL Preston	MM

Apologies:

Zee Jogi	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	ZJ
Kathryn Moffitt	Independent Board Member/ Trustee	KM
Alex Downard	LCC County Council Member	AD

1 Chair Welcome and outline of the session

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees and guests. He outlined the two-part structure: Part One would feature partnership presentations for noting, and Part Two would form the formal Board meeting from 2.00pm. Apologies were noted from Kathryn Moffitt, Alex Downard and Zee Jogi.

2 Place Partnership Input

<u>Active Wellbeing Case Study – Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Allied Health Professionals and Preston GLL West View Leisure Centre</u>

Michael Manley (GLL Preston) presented a case study on the emerging Active Wellbeing model being co-developed at West View Leisure Centre in Preston, in partnership with Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Allied Health Professionals (AHPs).

The presentation outlined how hospital-based AHP teams are beginning to operate from leisure centre facilities to provide preventative, rehabilitation and step-down community pathways. Key benefits highlighted included improved accessibility for patients, reduced pressure on acute settings, and an ability to support longer-term behaviour change by embedding health services within a community physical activity environment.

Board members welcomed the presentation and discussed:

- The transformational potential of co-locating health and leisure services to support population-level wellbeing outcomes.
- The importance of strong relationship management with NHS trusts, GPs and commissioners to sustain pathways.
- The opportunity to use this model as a template for replication across other leisure sites in Lancashire.
- Alignment with Active Lancashire's Active Wellbeing system leadership work and emerging discussions with the ICB and Provider Collaborative Board.

The Board reflected on the potential of the Active Wellbeing workstream to inform and focus the future development of Active Lancashire's priorities. Nigel Murray asked the Board to note that to realise the full potential of this work, existing priorities and use of resources would need realignment. The Board agreed to reflect on this opportunity as part of the Board away day. The Chair thanked Michael Manley for the informative presentation. The Board noted the case study.

Sport England Uniting the Movement – Strategic Priorities Refresh

Adrian Leather briefly shared the headlines of the latest Sport England emerging strategic priorities refresh within the Uniting the Movement framework.

Key themes highlighted in the emerging refresh included:

- Increased focus on supporting ageing-built infrastructure, particularly Local Authority leisure estates.
- Greater use of data and business intelligence to drive decision-making and investment.
- Workforce skills development and inclusivity.
- Children and young people, and older people with long-term conditions.
- Tackling inequalities and managing Long Term Health Conditions (LTCs).

It was noted that Sport England intends to conduct a comprehensive review of system leadership partners, including Active Partnerships, between March and September 2026. This will inform revised organisational agreements for core funding covering 2027 to 2031. The presenters confirmed Sport England's continued commitment to place-based working and Active Partnerships.

Board members noted the implications for Active Lancashire's planning, noting the strong alignment between the emerging Sport England priorities and Active Lancashire's existing programme portfolio and strategy.

Part Two: Formal Board

3 Apologies for absence

The Chair formally recorded apologies from Alex Downard, Zee Jogi, Kathryn Moffitt. The Chair highlighted the sensitive nature of some of the day's discussions and the importance of members acting in the best interests of the organisation. Georgina Roby declared an interest in respect of the Lancashire County Council Decoupling item (Item 5.2) by virtue of her role as an LCC County Council Member.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

4.1 Minutes of the last Board meeting held on 29th January 2026

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 29 January 2026 were presented. Subject to a minor amendment to clarify a reference in paragraph 6 regarding recruitment timeline, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

4.2 Minutes of the Audit & Finance Committee – 21st January 2026 and 23rd March 2026

The minutes of both Audit and Finance Committee meetings were presented. Stuart Oliver confirmed both were an accurate record. The minutes were noted by the Board

4.3 Minutes of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee – 3rd March 2026

The minutes of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee of 3 March 2026 were presented. No amendments were required. The minutes were noted by the Board.

4.4 Action list & Matters arising

The Board reviewed the action list. The majority of actions arising from previous meetings were confirmed as complete. The following items were noted as tabled for the current meeting:

- CEO report LCCA / LGR comparative options paper – addressed under Item 5 and Item 8 today.
- Richard Brown to report back – invitation provided; Richard Brown was unable to attend this April meeting and therefore this item will be rescheduled.
- LGR and physical activity advocacy – Update and engage session proposed for the Board development session on 14 May.
- Strategic review of organisational priorities – proposed for the Board development session on 14 May.

No other matters arising were raised.

5 CEO report

Adrian Leather presented the CEO Report, which covered four key strategic areas for Board consideration: Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) consultation; Lancashire County Council decoupling; Active Wellbeing pathways and Hub leadership; and Pride in Place.

5.1 LGR Consultation and Positioning

Following a competitive tender process attracting six high-quality bids, FMG Consulting has been appointed as Active Lancashire's LGR and Devolution consultation lead partner. A dedicated steering group has been established, drawing together Local Authority CEOs, leisure operator CEOs, Sport England, the Active Partnerships national team and Active Lancashire leads. Active Lancashire's proactive approach to this work has been recognised as a model of good practice across the Active Partnerships network.

The Board was invited to join the steering group and engage with the consultation process. Simon Burnett provided a summary of the planned timeline, linked to Government announcements on LGR footprint expected in June/July, ahead of public consultations in Autumn 2026 and the emergence of new authority structures from April 2027. The Board noted this update and approved continued engagement with the process.

5.2 Lancashire County Council Decoupling

Adrian Leather reported that Lancashire County Council (LCC) had indicated a desire to decouple from its existing company ownership arrangement with Active Lancashire, with an indicative timeline of June/July 2026 aligned to the Government's LGR announcements. Active Lancashire has been advised that LCC has reviewed its external company ownership interests as part of its wider organisational planning.

Adrian presented four options for the Board's consideration:

- Option 1: Establish a new successor organisation, transferring contracts only.
- Option 2: Establish a new successor organisation, transferring both contracts and staff.
- Option 3: Transfer ownership to a new host body (e.g. an FE/HE institution or alternative charity).
- Option 4: Amend Active Lancashire's Articles to transition to a fully independent charity, with Trustees becoming Members.

The Board discussed the four options at length. Members recognised the complexity of the situation and the importance of balancing any structural change against the ongoing LGR consultation process, ensuring Active Lancashire remains well positioned to influence the role of physical activity within emerging authority structures.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that Options 1 and 2 were not appropriate given the timescales involved. The Board agreed to keep Option 3 under consideration for preliminary conversations, while proceeding with the development of Option 4 as the primary working option.

The Board agreed that Adrian Leather should write formally to LCC requesting a formal update on the decoupling request and proposed timescales. The Board noted that the request relates to ownership structure and sought clarity on whether any related matters, including pension arrangements, are linked. The Board agreed that independent legal advice should be sought to provide appropriate governance assurance throughout any transition process. Stuart Oliver will liaise with Board Members of the Pension working group to establish what legal assurances would be required in relation to any changes in Company Member responsibilities and associated transfers to existing Trustees.

A Board briefing session is to be scheduled on receipt of further information from LCC, ahead of the July Board meeting.

Action: Adrian Leather to seek appropriate independent legal advice to support the development of Option 4, write to LCC for a formal update on timescales and any related matters, and report back to the Board – with a briefing session to be arranged before the July Board meeting.

5.3 Active Wellbeing Pathways and Hub Leadership

Adrian reported strong progress in developing Active Wellbeing as a system-level programme in collaboration with the ICB, Local Authority leisure operators, LCC Public Health and Adult Social Care, and the four Hospital Trusts. Following presentations to both the ICB and Provider Collaborative Board, Active Lancashire has been invited to submit a costed proposal to scale up the Active Wellbeing model to provide outpatient provision across the Lancashire and South Cumbria footprint. Initial pathways are being developed for functional fitness, falls prevention and weight management, with a local test-and-learn planned for Central Lancashire before county-wide rollout. The first cohort of a joint NHS / LCC Adult Social Care / Leisure Provider system leaders programme is commencing.

The Board welcomed this significant development and noted the update.

5.4 Pride in Place

Adrian updated the Board on Active Lancashire's engagement with the Government's Pride in Place programme, which is directing investment into seven Lancashire locations: Morecambe, Darwen, Burnley, Nelson, Skelmersdale, Accrington and Rawtenstall. Active Lancashire is engaging with each of the Pride in Place boards to promote investment in community spaces, sports facilities and public areas. Early success has been achieved in Rossendale where funding has been allocated to sport facility upgrades and community cycling improvements.

The Board noted the CEO Report and approved the four areas identified in the CEO report for continued development.

6 Operational Progress Update

Paul Blythin presented the Q4 Operational Progress Update on behalf of the Operations Team.

Key updates included:

Communities:

- The new CGL Active Recovery contract is progressing well, with three project area leads and four of six Recovery Mentor posts now recruited. The full rebrand from CSI to Active Recovery has been well received.
- Rossendale Works has secured ongoing Pride in Place funding, sustaining the team for the next three years.

- Pendle YES Hub has secured £90k from DWP and a further £42.5k from the Pendle Pride in Place Programme, providing support for a further twelve months.
- WorkWell has an initial six-month extension in place until the end of September 2026. Discussions regarding a longer-term position are ongoing, though current indications suggest reduced DWP funding may be available beyond October 2026.
- A proposal has been submitted to the MHCLG Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund worth £420k over three years, in partnership with Preston City Council and Rossendale BC.
- Preston UKSPF has a potential reprieve using the Crisis Resilience Fund through Preston City Council, likely from July 2026.

Environment:

- The Active Environments Multi-Sport Strategic Fund has been awarded £150k over two years to support Football Foundation funded facilities across Place Partnership and Place Universal Offer areas.
- The Westminster Fund Outdoor Activities grant of £15k per year for two years has been secured, supporting young people in the Lancaster, Morecambe and Trough of Bowland area.

Health and Skills:

- The first session of the NHS NW Leadership Academy's Leading for System Change programme is taking place today (22 April), with approximately 40 leaders from leisure, primary care, secondary care and social care. Going forward this group will be known as Active Wellbeing rather than Pivot to Wellbeing.
- A two-phase Workplace Health Champion Programme has been developed in partnership with Westmorland and Furness Council, with phase one delivering in 2025/26 and phase two extending to 20 businesses in Barrow in 2026/27.

Children and Young People:

- School Games Organiser funding has been extended to March 2027. Further information regarding the proposed Schools Sports Networks is still awaited.

Place Leadership:

- Active Lancashire continues to provide seconded staff support to the three Sport England funded Place Partnerships in Lancashire (Together an Active Future, Preston, and Move Together Blackpool).
- Progress is being made across all three Place Universal Offer areas (Fleetwood, Morecambe and Skelmersdale) including system leadership training and links to Pride in Place.

Paul noted the following recruitment activity:

- A Senior Project Support Officer starts on 13 April, ensuring a two-week handover.
- A new Evaluation and Learning Officer has started.
- Recruitment is underway for a Place Manager (Place Universal Offer and Multi-Sport Fund).
- Two further 10-hour Recovery Support Roles (North) are being recruited under the CGL contract.

The Board noted the update.

7 **Finance and Risk Update including 2026–27 Budget Approval**

Stuart Oliver presented the Finance and Risk Update Report and the 2026/27 Budget, seeking Board ratification of a number of decisions previously approved by the Audit and Finance Committee.

Risk Register:
The Board reviewed the updated Risk Register. One new risk had been added: Risk R24b – Local Authority Contributions, reflecting the risk that financial pressures and LGR uncertainty may impact the level of core contributions received from Local Authority partners. The risk score is 9 against an appetite of 16. The Board ratified the Audit and Finance Committee's approval of the Risk Register update.

Financial Controls Manual:
The Board ratified the A&F Committee's approval of updates to the Financial Controls Manual, including personnel amendments, removal of European funding references, and updated Committee Terms of Reference. The Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy was also ratified without amendment.

External Audit Plan:
The Board ratified the External Audit Plan from BK Plus Accountants. The on-site audit visit is scheduled for the week commencing 25 May 2026, with materiality set at £1,000. The audit partner will attend a subsequent Committee meeting to present findings prior to Board approval.

Finance Skills Review:
The Board noted the annual Finance Skills Review. No significant gaps were identified in the finance team's coverage of essential skills. Board skills survey results from November 2025 showed improvement across all areas. Potential future development needs in consolidated accounts and corporation tax were noted.

2025/26 Financial Year Update:
Stuart reported an encouraging financial position for 2025/26 (11 months to February 2026). External income stood at £2.76m (95% of budget), with staff costs 5.8% under budget. The unrestricted surplus is on target and total reserves of £1.18m are ahead of budget. The pension scheme shows a surplus of £1.59m (up from £605k in the prior year). Full-year income is forecast at £2.87m with a modest surplus of approximately £6.5k, a significant improvement on the prior-year deficit of £107k. The Board noted the financial update.

2026/27 Budget:

Stuart presented the draft budget for 2026/27, which had been approved by the Audit and Finance Committee and recommended to the Board. Key features included:

- Total budgeted income of £3,014,309 – a 5% increase on the 2025/26 forecast.
- Over 91% of income is confirmed or at very high confidence at the start of the year – the strongest position in recent organisational history.
- Sport England remains the largest funder at 47% of total income, reflecting the Universal Offer and Preston Place Partnership.

- Staffing to grow to approximately 42 posts, largely driven by the expanded CGL Active Recovery contract (7 new funded posts) and a new Place Manager post.
- Total staff budget of £1.816m (10.98% increase), incorporating a 3.5% NJC pay award assumption and a £12k contingency.
- Core overheads budgeted at £128k; five-year forecast incorporates 2.5% income growth per year from Year 2.
- Surplus of £14,802 forecast.

Members congratulated the team on the strength of the confirmed income position.

The Board ratified the Audit and Finance Committee's approval of the 2026/27 Budget.

8 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Consultation Process

Simon Burnett (FMG Consulting) and Adrian Leather presented the LGR Consultation Project and Consultation Plan for Board approval.

The purpose of the consultation is to work with system leaders and partners across Lancashire to understand how Movement, sport and physical activity can be positioned within the new LGR and Devolution landscape as a contributor to prevention and population health, reducing inequalities, economic productivity and skills, place-making and community resilience, public service reform, and culture and quality of life. The overarching objective is to embed Movement into the post-LGR policy landscape as a strategic enabler, rather than as a standalone leisure or health issue.

Simon outlined the project timeline and phased programme of engagement planned with council leaders, chief executives, leisure operators, NHS partners, voluntary sector organisations, and Sport England. The Board discussed the importance of Active Lancashire maintaining a proactive, system-wide voice throughout the consultation period, and the need to ensure the consultation outputs can be clearly translated into advocacy materials for new authority structures.

The Board approved the LGR Consultation Project and Consultation Plan.

Action: Simon Burnett / Adrian Leather to progress the consultation plan in line with the approved timeline and report updates to the Board at each meeting.

9 Board Reflection / Any other business

The Chair invited Board members to reflect on the meeting. Members noted the breadth and significance of the agenda, in particular the LCC decoupling position, and underlined the importance of proactive and clear communications with staff and stakeholders throughout the process.

Under Any Other Business, the following was noted:

- Board Development Day: Confirmed for 29 May 2026. The agenda will include work to develop the LGR narrative, strategic review of organisational priorities and capacity.

- The Board were asked to note the provision of Board level safeguarding training on the morning before the July Board.
- Board Member Recruitment: The recruitment process is ongoing with interviews planned for early May. Adrian Leather agreed to circulate the availability poll for the interview panel.
- Tour de France 2027 Grand Depart: Members noted that a more substantive agenda item will be scheduled to explore strategic, legacy, and funding opportunities ahead of the 2027 event.

The Chair thanked all attendees, presenters and officers for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Actions for the next meeting

Seek independent legal advice to support Option 4 (transition to fully independent charity); write to LCC for a formal update on timescales and any related matters; arrange a Board briefing session ahead of the July Board meeting – on LCC decoupling.- *Adrian L*

Progress LGR Consultation Plan and provide updates to the Board at each meeting.- *Adrian L/ Stuart* B

Circulate availability poll for Board member interview panel (early May).- *Adrian L*

Date of next meeting
The next Board meeting will take place on Thursday 16th July 2026, 13:00-16:00 in the Arthur Suite, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XB

Signed by the Chair of the Board:

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