

Executive Cabinet

Thursday, 13th July 2023, 6.30 pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley, and [YouTube](#)

Agenda

Apologies for absence

1 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 15 June 2023 of Executive Cabinet**

(Pages 5 - 8)

2 **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.

If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

3 **Public Questions**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask a question(s) on an item(s) on the agenda will have three minutes to put their question(s) to the respective Executive Member(s). Each member of the public will be allowed to ask one short supplementary question.

Items of Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources) (Introduced by Councillor Peter Wilson)

4 **Key Partnerships Update**

(Pages 9 - 16)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Change and Delivery.

5 **Content Management System**

(Pages 17 - 22)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Customer and Digital.

6 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To consider the exclusion of the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

By Virtue of Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business

Meeting contact Nina Neisser-Burke on 01257 515140 or email nina.neisser-burke@chorley.gov.uk

affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Condition:

Information is not exempt if it is required to be registered under-

The Companies Act 1985

The Friendly Societies Act 1974

The Friendly Societies Act 1992

The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978

The Building Societies Act 1986 (recorded in the public file of any building society, within the meaning of the Act)

The Charities Act 1993

Information is exempt to the extent that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Information is not exempt if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992(a).

Items of Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources) (Introduced by Councillor Peter Wilson)

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|----|---|-----------------|
| 7 | Key Partnerships Update (confidential appendices to item 4) | (Pages 23 - 30) |
| | To receive and consider the report of the Director of Change and Delivery. | |
| 8 | Content Management System (confidential appendices to item 5) | (Pages 31 - 38) |
| | To receive and consider the report of the Director of Customer and Digital. | |
| 9 | Property and Assets Management System - Contract Award | (Pages 39 - 46) |
| | To receive and consider the report of the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Digital. | |
| 10 | Grant of a Lease - Units 1 and 2 Flat Iron Parade, Market Walk | (Pages 47 - 56) |
| | To receive and consider the report of the Chief Executive. | |
| 11 | Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair | |

Chris Sinnott
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Executive Cabinet Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Howarth, Alistair Morwood, Margaret France and Adrian Lowe.

If you need this information in a different format, such as larger print or translation, please get in touch on 515151 or chorley.gov.uk

[To view the procedure for public questions/ speaking click here and scroll to page 119](#)

[To view the procedure for "call-in" of Executive Decisions click here](#)



Minutes of	Executive Cabinet
Meeting date	Thursday, 15 June 2023
Members present:	Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Terry Howarth, Alistair Morwood and Adrian Lowe
Officers:	Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Director (Governance)), Louise Mattinson (Director (Finance)), Howard Anthony (Performance and Partnerships Team Leader), Jo Motteram (Senior Communications Officer) and Nina Neisser-Burke (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Apologies:	Councillors Beverley Murray and Margaret France
Other Members:	Councillors Julia Berry, Mark Clifford, Alan Cullens, Danny Gee, Tommy Gray, Alex Hilton, Hasina Khan, Samantha Martin, June Molyneaux, Jean Sherwood and Craige Southern

23.EC.81 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 30 March 2023 of Executive Cabinet**

Decision: That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 30 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

23.EC.82 **Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of any interests.

23.EC.83 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

23.EC.84 **Revenue Budget Outturn 2022/23**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which sets out the revenue and reserves provisional outturn for 2022/23 for the Council, based on the position as at 31 March 2023.

In summary, the provisional outturn would have been an underspend of £0.728m however as previously reported, the £0.597m unfunded cost pressure in respect of the 22/23 pay award, i.e. the cost over and above the 2% budgeted pay award, has resulted in a provisional underspend of £0.131m. The Council's Medium-Term

Financial Strategy recommends that General Reserves are maintained at a minimum of £4.0m to mitigate against any unforeseen financial risks that may present in the future. Based on the above and the amalgamation of reserves, the level of general fund balance is £4.271m at 31st March 2023.

Members discussed staffing costs and were provided with an update on current vacancies and the impact of not filling those vacancies. It was recognised that the staffing overspend was based on the above anticipated pay increase and a national shortage in certain professions which has led to the increased appointment of agency staff over the last year. Members noted the increased cost of agency staff but also recognised the need for this, particularly in regards to ensuring the progression of the Local Plan. Although the use of agency staff was likely to continue the council was moving in the right direction and would continue to try and recruit but also consider other options if required.

Decision:

- 1. To note the 2022/23 provisional outturn for revenue and the level of reserves, based on the position as at 31 March 2023.**
- 2. To note the virements made to and from the revenue budget during the period, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.**

Reasons for recommendations:

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Other options considered and rejected:

None.

23.EC.85 Capital and Balance Sheet Outturn 2022-23

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which outlines the financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme at 31 March 2023, highlighting key issues and explaining key variances, and to provide an overview of various elements of the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023.

The capital budget for 2022/23 was set at £24.2m at Council in February 2022. This was increased following approval of the 2021/22 outturn to £32.2m, then further amended in subsequent quarterly Capital Monitoring Reports through to Quarter 3 at 31 December 2022 to £15.8m. Following the changes detailed in this report, the total programme for 22/23 now stands at £13.5m. Members noted that the total cost of the Council's capital investment programme for 2022/23 has decreased since the Quarter 3 report approved by Executive Cabinet, from £15.8m to £13.5m as at 31 March 2023.

Members requested an update on progress at Brinscall Baths, including when it was likely to be fully open and the potential impact on the capital programme. Members were advised that the required structural improvement works were not as significant as initially anticipated following a further assessment on the structure of the pool. It was therefore being proposed that some of the surplus budget be used to improve the user experience at the site. Following commissioning of the work and going out to tender it was hoped that the works will be completed later this year.

Decision:

1. To approve the revised capital programme as attached at Appendix A, which includes approved amendments to the programme, as detailed in point 12 to 14 of this report, since the last Capital Monitoring report was approved by Cabinet in February 2023.
2. To note the variations to the programme (which are detailed by scheme at Appendix B and referenced within the body of the report);
3. To note the position in the Balance Sheet monitoring section of the report, in respect of cash, investment and loan balances and debtors, at 31 March 2023.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure the Council's Capital Programme is monitored effectively.

Other options considered and rejected

None.

23.EC.86 Quarter Four Performance Report 2022/23

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Change and Delivery which sets out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy during the fourth quarter of 2022/23, covering 1st January 2023 to 31 March 2023.

The overall performance of the Corporate Strategy projects is good with 11% (2) classified as complete and 84% (16) of projects rated green, meaning they are progressing according to schedule. One project (5%) has been rated amber, which provides an early warning sign of potential delays. An action plan for this project is contained within this report. Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures continues to be closely monitored with four (67%) performing on or above target, one (17%) is performing below target but within the 5% threshold, and one (17%) is performing below target and outside of threshold.

Members discussed the five key projects in relation to the green and sustainable borough corporate priority and the progress in the council's commitment to Chorley becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure the effective performance monitoring of the Corporate Strategy and safeguard its delivery across 2022/23.

Other options considered and rejected

No other options have been considered or rejected. This is because the report does not present any items for decision.

Chair

Date

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	Thursday, 13 July 2023

Key Partnerships Update

Is this report confidential?	Partly Appendix 1 and 2 (included in part 2 of this agenda) is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.
Is this decision key?	No

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the performance of the council's key partnership arrangements.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure effective monitoring of the council's key contracts and partnerships.

Other options considered and rejected

4. No other options have been considered as this report is for information only.

Executive summary

5. The key partnerships performance report is produced in accordance with the requirements of the council's key contracts and partnerships framework. It informs members of:
 - i. The performance of the council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year;
 - ii. Any emerging issues
 - iii. An assessment of the key partner's financial strength and stability.

- Overall, the performance of all key partnerships is strong, and the financial assessment of the partnerships are positive with the financial standing of all key partnerships monitored in Appendix A.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

- Key partnerships are those partnerships that are especially significant due to their financial value, scale of resources involved, the length of contract term or whether they deliver a core service.
- To ensure that they are closely monitored, the Council’s framework for partnership working sets out a range of controls and measures. These safeguard the success of partnerships and ensure that they are meeting their main objectives. This report forms part of the monitoring arrangements, with reports to be presented to Cabinet annually in July.

Key Partnerships’ Performance

- This section of the report provides a summary of each of the Key Contracts and Partnerships. Appendix 1 includes any confidential updates and appendix 2 includes full contact details including value, monitoring arrangements and financial assessment.

Shared Services	
Purpose	Shared Services is the partnership between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council, two sovereign councils working together with shared functions to deliver excellent and efficient council services.
Objectives 2022/23	Objectives set out for 2022/23 included embedding the Phase 2 Services (ICT and Customer Services & Revenues and Benefits), and to work with Members to identify future opportunities for Shared Services.
Progress and benefits realised	Future opportunities for shared services have been progressed with phase 3 of shared services (Property and Development) being implemented on the 1 February, delivering improved resilience to these service areas. Work has also continued to embed Phase 2 of shared services including the recruitment to vacant posts within the service which will improve capacity in addition to the design and delivery of a training and development programme for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits which will improve skills and knowledge.
Risks	No new risks or issues have been identified in this update, although work continues to monitor staff morale through the council’s pulse surveys and People Strategy programme, alongside ensuring full engagement during any shared service review process.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to continue exploring opportunities for sharing and to continue to embed the phase 2 and 3 services.

Blackpool Council	
Purpose	Blackpool Council provides the payroll and expenses service for all employees and elected members.
Objectives 2022/23	The key objectives for this contract in 2022/23 included the implementation of the new time management system (HFX) across all sites and to explore phase 2 modules for the HR Hub system including recruitment, onboarding and back office systems.
Progress and benefits realised	HFX has now been implemented across all sites aside from South Ribble Leisure which will be in progress shortly. This means the same system is now used across Chorley and South Ribble meaning managers only need to use one system to manage staff leave, clockings and sickness, ensuring consistency in the recording of payments and quicker and efficient processes. The further development of the HR Hub has now also been scoped out into four main workstreams including personal files, DBS recording and reporting, driver information and manager dashboards. This will help to automate processes in these areas, enable manager self-service and provide more information to managers and the organisations.
Risks	Capacity was identified as an issue to deliver the phase 2 work, however specified resources have been allocated including recruitment to a Senior HR Consultant role.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to develop the functionality of the HR Hub to ensure that we are making best use of the system, develop manager understanding of responsibilities within the system and remove barriers to self-service.

Select Move	
Purpose	Select Move provides a choice-based lettings allocation scheme, operating across Chorley, South Ribble and Preston. Part of this partnership is commissioning Civica as the software provider for the housing register and homeless database.
Objectives 2022/23	Objectives for 2022/23 including implementing system improvements to the Civica system and agreeing and updating the new allocations policy.
Progress and benefits realised	<p>The system improvements have now been implemented, enabling customers to use mobile devices to access the Select Move website and offering greater transparency within the system through a function that allows users to access waiting lists for houses. There is now also additional filtering functionality which enables more specific search criteria to be applied by customers, facilitating more effective searches for customers.</p> <p>The new allocations policy is currently out for consultation which is due to finish in July 2023. After the end of the consultation, the policy will be presented to each council for adoption. The consultation for the policy has been delayed slightly due to a delay in approval by Preston Council.</p>
Risks	<p>An ongoing issue the partnership is experiencing is insufficient housing numbers to meet demand and this is expected to increase further in the coming months due to upcoming changes in the private rented sector, with more landlords looking to sell their properties due to increasing mortgage costs and new regulations.</p> <p>The new allocations policy is expected to help mitigate some of these issues by improving the management of waiting lists for local people. This is alongside ongoing activity to encourage landlords</p>

	and social housing providers to join Select Move, including lower rates for public sector landlords with smaller property numbers.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to finish the consultation on the allocations policy and adopt the new policy, communicating the changes to allocations and eligibility clearly to customers and partners to ensure understanding and adherence.

IDOX	
Purpose	IDOX provides the case management software for planning, land charges, environment and licensing (regulatory services).
Objectives 2022/23	Previous objectives for the contract were to move to a shared contract and align modules and functionality across Chorley and South Ribble.
Progress and benefits realised	A new shared contract is now in place with the alignment of modules scheduled. This will provide an opportunity to review processes to ensure they are as efficient as possible, enable consistent work practices across the organisations, whilst also simplifying the ongoing maintenance of the systems for the shared ICT team allowing time for more complex work.
Risks	A previous issue had been identified in relation to specialist knowledge at the councils to deliver the alignment progress. This has now being progressed with support from IDOX whilst staff are trained on the system. Recent recruitment to the ICT team has also provided additional capacity to support business systems.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to implement the shared workflows for the platform to enable automation and align functionality across the councils.

Capita	
Purpose	Capita provides the Revenues and Benefits Software and a remote support service.
Objectives 2022/23	Previous objectives were to move to a new cloud-based system that would be shared across Chorley and South Ribble Councils, and to continue to align modules across the councils where appropriate.
Progress and benefits realised	<p>The move across to the cloud systems took place in October 2022. The cloud-based system has delivered cost benefits as servers are no longer on-site resulting in reduced running costs, and improved business continuity in the event of network issues at either local authority meaning much less system downtime. In addition, the ICT team no longer have to upkeep physical servers which enables the team more time for more complex work and significantly improves data security.</p> <p>The new system means that staff working within the shared Revenues and Benefits will be able to access Capita through one single system. The alignment of software modules across the councils is ongoing, with modules implemented at South Ribble including automating Housing Benefit Claims, Universal Credit Claim, Council Tax Valuation and Housing Benefit online review. The new processes offer increased automation and more efficient processes, which allow officers to focus more of their time on complex cases and processes whilst offering quicker resolutions for customers.</p>
Risks	No new risks or issues have been identified as part of this update.
Objectives 2023/24	The objectives for 2023/24 are to implement new modules for

	council tax move automation, council tax refund automation, council tax direct debit automation and exemptions automation. A further objective is to move to a shared services desktop with a single log in for both council databases.
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Local Plan	
Purpose	The Local Plan partnership between Chorley Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Preston City Council aims to develop and deliver the Local Plan for 2024.
Objectives 2022/23	Key objectives included developing and delivering the Part One draft preferred options document for public consultation.
Progress and benefits realised	The public consultation on the preferred options for the Local Plan was completed from December to mid-February with analysis of the results currently taking place within teams. Consultants will then produce a formal outcome report on the consultation. The next milestone is for the draft plan to be developed in line with the results of the consultation, with an aim to be complete for publication within Q2 2023/24.
Risks	There are currently resourcing issues that may impact on the deadline for the draft Local Plan. The team have developed short- and longer-term options to address this. In the short term, to go out to recruitment for the vacant posts working with recruitment to ensure we are advertising in the right places and these are attract roles for a hard to recruit area. The team are identifying options for consultants to complete certain packages of the remaining work if recruitment is unsuccessful.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 include the analysis of consultation responses, securing budget approval to procure all remaining required evidence for the Local Plan, completing the Part Two Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan,) and to recruit to or secure capacity within the team.

Duxbury Golf Course	
Purpose	Parkwood Leisure Ltd. manage the Duxbury Park Golf Course which is owned by Chorley Council.
Objectives 2022/23	The objective for the contract over 2022/23 was to continue embedding the partnership and maintain strong relations between the Council and Parkwood Leisure Ltd.
Progress and benefits realised	Partnership meetings are ongoing between the Council and Parkwood Leisure, with quarterly meetings taking place as per the contract to monitor financial performance. Regular communication has allowed for new opportunities to be brought forward including a joint project with Golf in Society (a charity specialising in designing and delivering golf sessions for people living with chronic illnesses to introduce dementia friendly golf sessions. Progress is also being made in costing and agreeing a series of aesthetic improvements to be made to the site to be paid for by Parkwood Leisure.
Risks	No issues or risks have been identified during this update, and the partnership has seen benefits over the last year including better take up of the foods and beverage offer, and increasing the range of activities such as the dementia friendly golf sessions.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 will include completing the aesthetic improvements to the site.

Chorley Leisure

Purpose	Chorley Leisure Ltd. is a wholly owned leisure company that provides leisure facilities to residents while ensuring value for money.
Objectives 2022/23	Objectives for 2022/23 included to review the investments into infrastructure at the leisure centre, to improve outdated centres and offer improved facilities to local residents.
Progress and benefits realised	The review has now been revised and is expected to be completed within the 2023/24 financial year.
Risks	Key issues for the leisure company include increasing operating costs (due to rising energy and staffing costs,) coupled with changes to consumer habits as a result of the cost of living crisis. A finance request was approved by the Council in November to provide additional funding to help mitigate this issue, with the general financial risks in line with the wider leisure sector. Capacity and recruitment also remains a challenge for the leisure centres, with internal training opportunities being progressed with the aim of developing job progression for hard to recruit to roles. The Leisure Company currently has a 1 year business plan in place for 2023/24 covering areas including growth of membership base, community programmes, recruitment and staff development and capital investment. Moving forwards, the Company will produce a 5 year rolling business development strategy to ensure that the company operates in line with the council's corporate strategy.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to continue to review into capital investments and to recruit to and fill vacancies in swimming teacher roles.

NEC	
Purpose	There are two contracts with NEC, previously called Northgate, included within the key contracts and partnerships framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provision of Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) software, which is a desktop software package providing document management solutions and ii. Provision of Docs Online, a contract for remote scanning of correspondence and information.
Objectives 2022/23	The previous objective for the EDMS was to migrate to the new cloud based system to allow for all data to be sorted online, allowing for improved business continuity in the case of on-site outages. The previous objective for Docs Online was to continue the back-scanning of existing documents and images and to continue using the service for incoming correspondence.
Progress and benefits realised	The move to the cloud based EDMS system is ongoing and due to launch in September 2023. The EDMS contract includes a single database which is split by each authority, allowing staff to work across both councils whilst still separating out data for each council. Some of the benefits of the contract include all updates being managed by NEC which reduces the risk of council downtime, with no need to maintain any on site legacy hardware. The Docs Online contract reduces reliance on paper and provides increased security and capacity compared to storing copies of correspondence for manual indexing by staff. Docs Online also

	improves business continuity and efficiency as documents and correspondence are available digitally rather than just in paper form.
Risks	No new risks or issues have been identified as part of this update.
Objectives 2023/24	Objectives for 2023/24 are to complete the migration to the new EDMS cloud system and to continue using the Docs Online service to reduce reliance on paper and maintain digital security.

New contracts for 2023/24

- 11. The following contracts have been included in the reporting for the Key Contracts and Partnerships framework for the first time in 2023/24. Objectives have been set for 2023/25 and an update on progress will be brought against these in July 2024.

Enghouse

- 12. Enghouse provides the telephony functionality for Chorley and South Ribble councils alongside a omnichannel contact centre. The system has been rolled out across both councils over the last year for telephony, with objectives for 2023/24 to roll out to the leisure centres, implement additional digital channels such as email and webchat and introduce automated live reporting.
- 13. Following its rollout to the council’s contact centres, the contract has been identified for inclusion in the framework due to its key role in providing council services and enabling customer contact.
- 14. This new system will help to support the digital strategy by making it easier for customers to contact the council through a range of channels. The system integrates with existing council software such as Microsoft Teams which is used by officers and members for voice calls and will introduce new contact channels such as web chat.

Climate change and air quality

- 15. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

- 16. The work noted in this report does not pose any equality and diversity implications.

Risk

- 17. Key risks and issues related to each Contract or Partnership are outlined within the narrative of the report. The Key Contract and Partnerships Framework provides a mechanism for mitigating the risk of service delivery through the council’s strategic partnerships by ensuing regular monitoring and management.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 18. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Routine budget monitoring includes monitoring of contract costs and these are reported as part of the overall financial position of the council

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

19. The report is for information and noting. There are no direct legal implications arising. There are no concerns with the report from a Monitoring Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1- Part 2 updates

Appendix 2- Full contract details

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Caroline Winstanley (Transformation Coordinator)	caroline.winstanley@chorley.gov.uk		09.06.23

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Customer and Digital) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	Thursday, 13 th July, 2023

Content Management System

Is this report confidential?	Partly (Appendix 1, 2 and 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
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Is this decision key?	Yes
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

- To agree the future for Chorley Council’s Content Management System (CMS).

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

- Executive Cabinet to agree:
 - A direct award to GOSS through a compliant procurement framework, only if favourable commercial terms can be agreed including transparency on future costs for a period of up to 5 years from July 2024, for a joint GOSS iCM platform with South Ribble Council.
 - In the absence of the above i.e., not obtaining favourable commercial terms directly with GOSS, the council will undertake a full market procurement exercise which will include open-source software currently being explored.
 - To approve the delegation of the outcome and final sign off for either recommendation (a) or (b) to the Leader of the Council and Executive Member (Resources).

Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure that the council maintains and develops its online presence and delivery of online services to residents.

Other options considered and rejected

- Other options to be considered are detailed within the report.

Corporate priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

- 6. GOSS is the CMS system that is used to manage and modify content on several council owned websites. It is a low code solution that reduces the requirement for technical knowledge to make changes to the website content.
- 7. The following council owned websites are currently managed using GOSS:
 - a. Chorley Council website – chorley.gov.uk
 - b. Chorley Extra Care – chorleyextracare.com, tatton-gardens.com, primrose-gardens.com
 - c. Astley Park – astleypark.co.uk – Currently in build to allow Wordpress to be decommissioned
 - d. Check Out Chorley – checkoutchorley.com - Currently in build to allow Wordpress to be decommissioned.
- 8. The foundations of the Shared Service Customer and Digital Strategy are now in place.
 - a. There is an established structure in Customer Services
 - b. the Customer Access Charter has been agreed and implementation is underway
 - c. the Enghouse telephone system has been implemented.
- 9. These changes have laid the foundations for future enhancements to the customer experience. However, a large part of this will be to invest and improve council’s online presence. Changes outlined, will enable more services to be accessible online, improve the responsiveness of service delivery, provide better customer interface through an integrated eforms package and view of customer contact through a new customer relationship management system, and simplify the logging in process for online users.
- 10. These enhancements will be included in any future agreement with GOSS or other supplier.
- 11. Irrespective of the technology agreed, online capability and AI are set to make the biggest changes to the customer experience and efficiencies over the coming years. This presents significant opportunity and consequently this is a major project for 2023/24 and beyond.

Commercial information

- 12. The current contract with GOSS is a shared contract with South Ribble Council, using separate instances to manage each councils’ different websites.

- 13. Discussions with GOSS have highlighted that the council should expect a significant cost increase upon contract renewal in July 2023.
- 14. A one year contract extension until July 2024 with GOSS has been agreed via Executive Member Decision to allow the council to quickly move to the next stages of development, and to enable time to fully evaluate the market without the added pressure of services terminating when the existing contract ends in July 2023.
- 15. The cost of GOSS in the current contract from July 2020 –July 2023 is listed in Appendix One. Within G-Cloud 13, GOSS have standardised pricing which means there are no like for like product modules to compare against for some pricing lines.
- 16. GOSS have suggested that more attractive pricing would be available if the councils had a shared iCM administrator and production environment. The cost of both a shared platform for 2, 4 and 5 years and separate platforms for 2 and 4 years are available in Appendix Two.
- 17. A shared platform will allow websites to remain independent with their separate individual branding and design. The iCM administrator platform that officers use to manage and edit the websites would become a shared platform.
- 18. The professional pricing tier recommended in the new quote includes the CMS, GOSS Forms, and MyAccount: Self Service and Assisted-Service.

GOSS considerations

- 19. The next steps of the GOSS implementation will commit the council to long term increases in costs. Not only are these expected to rise further, but the technology will then become fully established within the council and with customers. It will then be extremely difficult to change direction and migrate to alternative technologies when this happens. This strategy, the reliance on established technologies, is now synonymous with most software suppliers operating in the public sector and more so since COVID19.
- 20. Further transparency is required from GOSS to future costs and developments that will arise mid contract which they hold a monopoly on especially as it is not always possible to future proof against all developments from the onset.
- 21. It is recommended that a direct award to GOSS through a compliant procurement framework, only if favourable terms can be agreed. An example of favourable terms is available in Appendix Three.

Alternative options

- 22. Some market comparison of alternative CMS systems has been undertaken. The top 5 CMS systems used by local authorities and the number of authorities using those systems is indicated in the table below:

CRM System Provider	Number of local authorities using	Open Source	CRM included	Online forms included
Jadu	62	No	Yes	Yes
Drupal	60	Yes	No	Yes

Umbraco	58	Yes	No	Yes
GOSS iCM	32	No	Yes	Yes
Wordpress	14	Yes	No	Yes

- 23. Three of the top five council CMS systems are based on open-source software. This appears to be a local authority response to invest in alternative systems to proprietary ones. The open-source platform is based on sharing developments and on councils contributing collectively to future developments to try and manage costs.
- 24. Using an open source CMS provider would require a separate procurement of a CRM system.
- 25. The council's strategy is to work where possible with out of the box solutions to reduce the reliance of managing systems in house.
- 26. Moving the websites to a new provider would incur significant officer resource and reliance from ICT.
- 27. However, given the considerable increase in costs from the incumbent supplier, should favourable commercial terms not be agreed, the council will seek to explore the market for a new CMS preferably one design on the merits of being open source.

Climate Change and Air Quality

- 28. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.
- 29. The provision of improved digital services enables residents to access services online reducing the impact on the environment.

Equality and diversity

- 30. A full impact assessment would be completed at the necessary stage once the future CMS system provider has been identified.

Risk

- 31. There are several risks relating to this decision:
 - a. Potential for annual increases in costs from out of the box suppliers
 - b. Full costs for out of the box suppliers are not transparent
 - c. Large administrative overhead to move to a new supplier
 - d. Reliance of in-house resource if moving to an open source supplier.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 32. There is no current budget provision for any increase in costs. Should the additional costs be incurred, this would be a pressure to be addressed in 2024/25 budget setting. Based upon current costs this would be a to be £30k-40k increase.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

33. The council needs to be mindful of its best value duties. Recognising that there is a likely cost increase in 12 months on any new contract proposal enables an informed decision on the correct strategy for this contract.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report

Appendices

Appendix One – Current contract pricing from July 2020 –July 2023

Appendix Two - The costs of both a shared platform and separate platforms for 2, 4 and 5 years

Appendix Three - An example of favourable terms with GOSS

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This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

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