

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 25th January 2024, 6.30 pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley and

[You Tube](#)

### Agenda

#### Apologies

##### 1 **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.

##### 2 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 5 October 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

(Pages 3 - 8)

Minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday, 5 October 2023 attached for approval.

##### 3 **Public Questions**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask a question(s) on an item on the agenda will be asked to put their question(s) to the Committee. Each member of the public will be allowed to ask one supplementary question within his/her allocated 3 minutes.

#### Scrutiny of the Executive Cabinet

##### 4 **Executive Cabinet Minutes**

(Pages 9 - 22)

To consider the Executive Cabinet minutes of the meetings held on 12 October 2023, 9 November 2023 and 12 December 2023 (enclosed).

##### 5 **Notice of Executive Decisions**

(Pages 23 - 54)

The latest [Notice of Executive Decisions](#) has been published on the Council's website.

The document is also attached and correct as of 17 January 2024.

6	<b>Health Scrutiny update</b>	
	Councillor Margaret France to provide an update at the meeting.	
7	<b>Draft 24/25 Budget Update</b>	(Pages 55 - 70)
	To receive and consider the report of the Director of Finance.	
8	<b>Town Centre Action Plan Update</b>	(To Follow)
	Report of the Director of Communities to follow.	
9	<b>Youth Diversionary and Out-Reach Services</b>	(To Follow)
	Report of the Director of Communities to follow.	
10	<b>Reports from Task and Finish Groups</b>	(Pages 71 - 102)
	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Recruitment and Staff Retention - Final Report</b>	
	Please see attached which will be presented by the Chair of the Task Group, Cllr Michelle le Marinel.	
11	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme</b>	(Pages 103 - 104)
	To consider the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/2024.	
12	<b>Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair</b>	

Chris Sinnott  
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Aidy Riggott (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Kim Snape, Michelle Le Marinel, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh, Ryan Towers, Michelle Brown, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin, Pauline McGovern (Clayton East, Brindle and Hoghton), Joan Williamson and Debra Platt.

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](http://chorley.gov.uk)



**Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date Thursday, 5 October 2023**

**Committee Members present:** Councillor Aidy Riggott (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Kim Snape, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh, Ryan Towers, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin, Joan Williamson and Debra Platt

**Committee Members present virtually (non-voting):** Councillors Michelle Le Marinel and Pauline McGovern

**Guests present:** Councillors Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing) and Beverley Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention)

**Officers:** Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities and Leisure), Adam Nickson (Head of Property and Development Projects) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Michelle Brown

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

**10 Declarations of Any Interests**

No interests were declared.

**11 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 1 August 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Arising from Minute 9, Councillor Sarah Ainsworth provided an update on the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Empty Properties:

Following the helpful discussion and feedback at the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the review of Empty Properties, the Task Group met again last Thursday. The Task Group carefully considered the feedback and decided to remove the table on page 9 of the report breaking the number of empty properties down by parish. It was felt that the table did not add anything additional to the report and that more detailed information broken down by ward would be provided as part of

implementing recommendation 5 in the report (information to be provided to Neighbourhood Area Meetings).

The report will now be considered at Executive Cabinet in the usual way.

**Resolved:**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2023 be approved as a correct record.
2. That the update on the on the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Empty Properties be noted.

**12 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**13 Executive Cabinet Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the Executive Cabinet minutes be noted.

**14 Notice of Executive Decisions**

**Resolved:**

That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

**15 Health Scrutiny Update**

Councillor Margaret France submitted her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting. She provided a written update to the Committee as follows:

**Report of LCC Health Scrutiny Meeting of Wednesday, 13th September**

This meeting was largely taken up with Mental Health issues.

Firstly - an update on the NHS Community Mental Health Transformation Programme.

- 4 Community Mental Health Teams or hubs mirroring the 'Place' model in preparation for a go live date of 16/10/23
- Introducing Mental Health Practitioners into Primary Care
- Lancashire MIND working with VCFS agencies to map out provision of services
- Easy access to specialist mental health services - no 'wrong door' approach
- Multidisciplinary assessments - the right help at the right time

Secondly - Happier Minds Update, the work of LCC Public Health team around alcohol, drugs, self-harm and suicide across Lancashire.

- 5 key strands of work are  
Emotional Health and Well-being

Loneliness and Social Isolation  
Dementia  
Alcohol and Drug use  
Self-harm and suicide

There is work taking place to provide materials for schools to support the PHSE curriculum, and collaborative working towards prevention of harm.  
Central Lancashire is piloting a drug-related death panel (has the highest rate in Lancashire) with the first meeting to take place in September.

#### Happier Minds programme performance review

The aims are to reduce self-harm, reduce the number of suicides, increase numbers into treatment for substance misuse, and reduce drug related deaths.

#### **Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

### **16 Cost of Living Action Plan - Update**

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention) presented a report of the Director of Communities updating members on the Cost of Living Action Plan. Councillor Murray conveyed her thanks to the Communities team and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector network.

There were still some gaps, however. She highlighted page 45 of the report, which outlined a proposal to address furniture poverty by creating a new and recycled white goods and furniture scheme.

The Director of Communities, Jennifer Mullin, indicated that people could access information about support available such as food clubs via the Council website / social media, via telephone, leaflets, partner/ voluntary organisations, and postcards delivered to households. She agreed to provide members with data about recipients of the Household Support Fund.

One member highlighted the difficulty of getting support to groups such as pensioners, some of whom just miss qualifying for pension credit but were still on very modest incomes. Councillor Murray agreed vulnerable pensioners were one of the hard to reach groups; in such cases the Council works with partner organisations to identify people who use food banks and will hopefully reach people not accessing information digitally by distributing postcards. It was suggested that these postcards be distributed in community venues such as GP surgeries and libraries. It was also suggested that as winter approaches information about the location of warm hubs be included.

The Chair thanked Councillor Murray for her attendance.

#### **Resolved:**

1. That the report be noted;

2. That the Director of Communities provide members with data about recipients of the Household Support Fund.
3. That the Director of Communities pursue the distribution of postcards to community venues such as GP surgeries and libraries and arrange the inclusion of information about the location of warm hubs.

## 17 **First Monitoring Report - Select Move Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Oct 2023**

Councillor Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing) presented a report of the Director of Communities providing the first update of the work undertaken to deliver the 18 recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Select Move.

One member referred to page 62, recommendation 15 of the report regarding the demographics of people moving into the area through the 25% allowance not through Select Move and asked if the information had been requested from the Housing Associations again. The Director of Communities confirmed that the information had been requested again quite recently and that officers would continue to chase this up.

One member informed the Committee that they had met with the housing team last week and found it useful to have information about the properties available to bid on such as the waiting times. The Director Communities indicated that this was available via the Select Move system. It was suggested that a note be provided to new members on the Select Move system.

The Chair thanked Councillor Howarth for his attendance.

### **Resolved:**

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the Director of Communities provide a note to new members on the Select Move system.

## 18 **Wheelchair Accessibility**

Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development presented a report of the Deputy Chief Executive updating members regarding wheelchair accessibility across Council buildings and externally in Chorley.

The work which had recently been carried out at the back of the town hall to provide access to meetings for wheelchair users was commended.

However, one member highlighted a couple of issues as regards wheelchair accessibility at the front of the town hall as follows:

- The time delay is not sufficient and the door is too heavy to pull open

- The main door and the disabled door to the toilets are both too heavy making it difficult to use.

Adam Nickson said that would follow this up and feedback to members.

One member raised the issue of cars parking in disabled spaces and on the pavement. Adam Nickson indicated there was ongoing dialogue with Lancashire County Council about the matter and to let him know of any specific issues. The Chair stressed that parking on the pavement was a police matter and should be reported to them.

One member raised issues regarding disability awareness in the plans for Primrose Gardens. Adam Nickson said that he was happy to discuss this further.

One member raised the issues regarding lack of disabled access at restaurants in Chorley, i.e. who had benefited from Council grants. Adam Nickson indicated that he would feedback to relevant colleagues in the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That the report be noted;
2. That Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development would follow up the issues raised above.

**19 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 was presented for information.

The Chair gave updates to the Committee as follows:

As regards the Water Safety training session requested by members, the organiser Beckie Ramsay has been contacted, and she will be available to come to the Committee on 14 March next year.

As regards the Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support Task Group, there is a course being run by Lancashire Mind in October/November, which members may wish to attend as a foundation prior to the Task Group next year. Officers will be able to make contact with representatives from Lancashire Mind with a view to inviting them to the Task Group.

One member informed the Committee that the dates in November were now fully booked and there were only a few places available on 25 October.

The Chair suggested that it may be possible to arrange extra dates if there was additional demand for places.

**Resolved:**

- 1 That the report be noted;

2. That officers investigate if Lancashire Mind can offer additional dates / places for members who would like to attend the course.

## **20 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups**

Councillor Ryan Towers gave an update to the Committee regarding the Recruitment and Staff Retention Task Group.

He informed members that the Task Group had considered a range of policies and detailed information in areas such as apprenticeships, staff surveys and exit interviews. He highlighted that the Task Group had requested further investigation into the Council obtaining the Living Wage Accreditation. He explained that at present although the Council paid the Living Wage to all its directly employed staff, its sub-contractors were not all meeting that criteria. The Task Group had requested that options be explored to address this e.g. via the procurement route.

### **Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

## **21 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

There was no urgent business.

Chair

Date





In summary, Chorley has 2,727 children aged 4 – 16 receiving free school meals, and the programme aimed to address child food poverty during the school holidays. In line with national requirements, the 2024-25 delivery will be delivered for a week in the Easter and Christmas holidays and four weeks in the summer holidays with a minimum of four hours of activities each day four days a week.

Members expressed concern about the levels of childhood poverty and praised the programme and hoped that it could be extended to support more than 25% of children on free school meals.

It was raised that Inspire did not just operate in the town centre but have run programmes in the surrounding areas which included Coppull and Clayton.

### **Decision**

- 1. To approve the commencement of a procurement exercise for the management of the HAF programme from 2024-25, and for the following 2 years, subject to funding being secured for each year.**
- 2. To grant approval to receive funding from LCC to undertake the delivery of HAF 2024-25 following a successful procurement exercise.**
- 3. To accept the proposed service specifications and make any relevant recommendations.**
- 4. To grant approval for delegated authority that the Executive Member for Early Intervention be able to authorise the evaluation and awards criteria employed in the procurement exercise.**
- 5. To grant approval for delegated authority following the completion of the procurement exercise that the Executive Member for Early Intervention be able to authorise the award of the contract to the successful bidder.**

### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. Completing this procurement exercise will ensure that delivery of the HAF programme complies with the Council's statutory procurement responsibilities.
2. Completing this procurement exercise will add value (as outlined within the report) for Chorley residents to the delivery of the HAF programme for up to 3 years.
3. Granting delegated authority for the Executive Member for Early Intervention to be able to authorise the evaluation and awards criteria pending the procurement exercise, and award of the contract to the successful bidder following a successful procurement exercise complies with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules (5.4 – 5.6).
4. Granting delegated authority for the Executive Member for Early Intervention to be able to authorise the award of the contract to the successful bidder will expedite the approvals process and enable contract mobilisation to begin.

### **Other options considered and rejected:**

To not complete a procurement exercise would put the HAF programme delivery 2024/25 at risk of non-compliance with the council's statutory procurement responsibilities.

**31 Civil Penalties Policy**

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member for Early Intervention presented the report of the Director of Communities and Leisure which sought to utilise the ability to impose the Civil Penalties Policy as contained within the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (part 2 Rogue Landlords and Property Agents in England).

A civil penalty would require the same burden of proof as a criminal prosecution but would allow a more straightforward and efficient method of tackling offences without the need for criminal proceedings. Issued penalties would be between £500 and £30,000. Criminal proceedings would still be considered for serious breaches of legislation.

Members positively vocalised that action was taken against rogue landlords and property agents, and that civil penalties would include offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

**Decision**

- 1. Agree the proposed Civil Penalty Policy and Guidance Matrix for the use of civil penalties (Appendix A) and its inclusion into the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy.**

**Reasons for recommendation**

1. The use of these powers will support and complement the work that the Council continues to deliver to tackle rogue landlords. The civil penalties and extension of the use of rent repayment orders, could be a powerful deterrent to rogue landlords through the enforcement of significant financial penalties.
2. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 ("the Act") introduced a new financial penalty regime in April 2017, permitting local authorities to impose a Civil Penalty of up to £30,000.

**Other Options considered and rejected:**

To not implement the policy would continue to limit the enforcement options available to regulatory offers and reduce the deterrents available to improve the compliance of landlords and subsequently the housing standards within the borough.

Chair

Date

This page is intentionally left blank



**36 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q2**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out the council's revenue and reserves forecast for 2023/24, based on the position as at 30 September 2023.

In summary, there was a forecast overspend of £423,000, however due to the 2023/24 pay award negotiation, there was an unfunded budget pressure of £146,000, which revised the forecast outturn overspend of £569,000. The council would continue to work to contain net costs within the available budget and reduce overspend in the upcoming months.

Within the council's medium term financial strategy, it was reported that the funding reserves should be maintained at £4,000,000 to protect the council against future financial risks. It was forecast that at 31 March 2024, the General Fund Reserve should be £4,202,000

It was noted that Strawberry Meadow lettings were slightly behind, but progress was ongoing.

**Decision**

- 1. To note the 2023/24 forecast outturn for revenue and the level of reserves, based on the position at 30th September 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.

**37 Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q2**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which reported the outturn financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as of 30 September 2023. The report highlighted key issues, explained key variances and provided an overview of the Council's balance sheet as of 30 September 2023.

The capital budget for 2023/24 was set at £21,103,000 in February 2023, this was increased following the approval of the 2022/23 outturn to £22,998,000, which was further amended in the Capital Monitoring Report as at 31 July 2023 to £18,190,000.

**Decision:**

- 1. To approve the revised capital programme as attached at Appendix A, which includes an amendment to the programme of £190k, as detailed at point 11 of this report.**
- 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 30th September 2023.**

**Reasons for recommendation**

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

**Other options considered and rejected**

None.

**38 Chorley Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Chief Executive which set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2023/24, the period covered 1 July to 30 September 2023.

Overall performance of the Corporate Strategy projects was considered excellent with 17 (90%) rated green, and on schedule. One (5%) project was rated amber, which was a project that had warning signs of delay and one (5%) project was rated red. Action plans had been created for the red and amber projects. Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures continued to be closely monitored, with 79% of Corporate Strategy measures and 100% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target, or within 5% threshold.

It was highlighted that the red project was the Local Plan, it was not where it was hoped to be at this point. Issues were raised with staffing, and the added complexity of working with two other local authorities. The amber project was for the improvement to council buildings. An accommodation working group had been established to coordinate the year, progress was to be reported back.

The standout figure raised was the employment rate, with Chorley's significantly below the regional average of 73.8% at 64.1%. The age within the figure was between the age of 16 and 64. Work was to be undertaken to explore the measure of economic inactivity to provide a greater understanding before any conclusions could be made.

**Decision:**

- 1. That the report be noted.**

**Reasons for recommendations**

To ensure the effective performance monitoring of the Corporate Strategy and safeguard its delivery across 2023/24

**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.

### 39 **Property Valuation Services Procurement**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which sought approval to undertake a procurement exercise with South Ribble Borough Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council for the renewal of the property valuation services.

The current contract was due to expire December 2024, and a new, long-term agreement would create more interest and competition in the procurement exercise which would lead to preferential pricing. The tender exercise would be undertaken in compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Guidance. With the annual cost of the valuations considered across the three councils, the multi-year contract would be a high value procurement.

#### **Decision:**

- 1. That Members agree to the procurement with South Ribble Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council, being a collaborative exercise.**
- 2. To delegate authority to the Executive Member (Resources) to agree the route to contract (eg full tender, framework) and to agree the scoring methodology and scoring matrix.**

#### **Reasons for recommendations**

The procurement will result in a separate contract for each council's valuation requirement, however running the procurement process together will create efficiencies in officer time and cost.

#### **Other options considered and rejected**

Tendering for this procurement without the benefit of the joint exercise would lead to additional officer resource to deliver the tender, for the same or less competitive results.

### 40 **Chorley Council Sustainable Building Policy - Approval of Policy**

Councillor Adrian Lowe, Executive Member for Customer, Streetscene and Environment presented the report of the Interim Chief Executive which highlighted the council's Sustainable Building Policy to ensure feasibility and promote sustainable development across the buildings owned, and controlled by the council, in addition to all new council owned developments.

It was highlighted that specific policies for new developments in the borough could be recommended and encouraged within the new Local Plan, however, policies within the Local Plan would not supersede national planning policy.

#### **Decision:**

- 1. To approve the adoption of the Chorley Council Sustainable Building Policy.**

#### **Reasons for recommendations**

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and as part of this set the ambitious goal to be net zero by 2030 for both the borough and the council. The integration of low carbon and sustainable measures into all existing and new developments is a key factor in progressing the Council to reach its goal of net zero by 2030.



**Other options considered and rejected**

To reject the proposal of the policy and to continue retrofitting and development with existing practices.

Chair

Date

This page is intentionally left blank



hierarchy for printing and mail, to maximise efficiency and minimise environmental impact and to reduce council costs associated with printing and mailing.

**Decision**

1. Executive Cabinet approved the Print Strategy to be implemented at Chorley Council.

**Reasons for recommendation**

1. To ensure that the Council is leading by example in the delivery of the green agenda.
2. To ensure that communications from the Council are delivered in real time and using a digital first approach.

**Other options considered and rejected**

The Council could continue to operate without a Print Strategy, however, if the Council is going to encourage residents to adopt a digital first approach to reduce waste, then it is important for the Council to lead by example and follow these principles.

**45 Recycling and Waste Strategy**

Councillor Adrian Lowe, Executive Member for Customer, Streetscene and Environment presented the report of the Director of Customer and Digital which set out the new and innovative Recycling and Waste Strategy drafted for approval by full Council in January 2024. In summary, the strategy was designed to push the council towards achieving the waste reduction and recycling targets required in the Environment Act 2021 and the Resources and Waste Strategy for England, in addition to the council's own target of 65% of waste recycled by 2035.

It was highlighted that within the short to medium term there were local priority actions that would require an investment of £110,000.

**Decision**

1. The Executive Cabinet's views on the proposed aims, objectives, and actions were obtained
2. Approve the budget requirement for local priority actions.
3. Approve the strategy and action plan to be taken forward to full Council meeting in January for formal adoption.

**Reasons for recommendation**

1. To satisfy the requirement for a new strategy to drive the council towards its waste reduction and recycling targets and comply with new legislation and national waste policy.
2. To support the council's green agenda and climate change strategy objectives.

**Other options considered and rejected**

To not adopt and publish a strategy would fail to provide strategic direction at a time when there are significant national waste reforms including statutory requirements.

**46 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**Decision:** To exclude the public and press for the following item of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**47 Shared Building Control**

Councillor Alistair Morwood, Executive Member for Planning and Development presented the confidential report of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive which outlined proposals for the shared building control service. In summary, the Shared Services Joint Committee agreed to commence a review into a shared building control service for Chorley and South Ribble to help ensure resilience for both councils given the technical and specialist skills required in building control.

**Decision:**

Approve the proposals for implementation of the shared service, as set out in the table at paragraph 36.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

The shared service will help to deliver resilience for the council's building control function.

**Other options considered and rejected**

An alternative structure option was presented to the Shared Services Joint Committee and Executive Member Decision prior to formal consultation with staff. This structure had only one post instead of the two roles identified within the proposed structure. This option was rejected as it would provide less capacity and resilience.

Chair

Date

This page is intentionally left blank

## Chorley Council – Notice of Executive Decisions

1. This document gives 28 days notice of ‘key’ and other major decisions which the Executive Cabinet and Executive Members expect to take. The document is updated as required and is available to the public on the Council’s website at [www.chorley.gov.uk](http://www.chorley.gov.uk) or from the Town Hall, Market Street, Chorley, PR7 1DP.
  
2. A ‘Key’ Decision is defined as:
  - a) Any executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring significant expenditure or the making of savings where there is:
    - a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more; or
    - a contract worth £100,000 or more; or
    - a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more.
  - b) Any executive decision which will have a significant impact in environmental, physical, social or economic terms on communities living or working in two or more electoral wards. This includes any plans or strategies which are not within the meaning of the Council’s Policy Framework set out in Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution.
  - c) Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council’s Constitution, a ‘Key’ Decision may not be taken, unless 28 days notice have been given in this document;
  - d) The law and the Council’s Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in this document in accordance with General Exception and Special Urgency provisions.
  
3. The Executive Cabinet is made up of the Executive Leader, Deputy Leader and five Executive Members with the following portfolios:
 

Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)	Councillor Alistair Bradley
Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources)	Councillor Peter Wilson
Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Councillor Beverley Murray
Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	Councillor Terry Howarth
Executive Member (Planning and Development)	Councillor Alistair Morwood
Executive Member (Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships)	Councillor Margaret France
Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)	Councillor Adrian Lowe
  
4. Copies of the Council’s Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council may be accessed on the Council’s website: [www.chorley.gov.uk](http://www.chorley.gov.uk). If there are any queries, including objections to items being considered in private, please contact the Council on 01257 515151 or email [contact@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:contact@chorley.gov.uk). Please note representations should be received 14 days before the date the decision is due to be taken.

5. This Forward Plan is a formal notice that some of the decisions listed will be held in private because the report will contain exempt information listed under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as set out below and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.:
1. Information relating to any individual.
  2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
  3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
  4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
  5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
  6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
    - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
    - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
  7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

**Chris Sinnott, Chief Executive**

**Last updated: 16 January 2024**



Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Future meetings of the Executive Cabinet where there is an intention to hold part of a meeting in private: 18 January, 22 February and 21 March 2024							
January							
Draft 24/25 Budget Update	Executive Cabinet			18 Jan 2024	Open		Report of the
Fees and Charges 2024-25	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)		18 Jan 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Finance)
Payment Strategy	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)		18 Jan 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Updated Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Delivery Approach 2024-25	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	A change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	18 Jan 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Approval for the Contract Award procedure for ICT Hardware, Software and Support Services	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	18 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Future meetings							
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q3	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)		22 Feb 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Finance)
Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q3	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)		22 Feb 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Finance)
Chorley Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)		22 Feb 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Change and Delivery)
Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework Refresh	Executive Cabinet			22 Feb 2024	Open		Report of the

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Refurbishment of 17-23 Gillibrand Street into Residential Supported Housing	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)	A new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	22 Feb 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
New Letting - Unit 13 - Market Walk	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	22 Feb 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Deliver Improvements to Local Service Centres	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Planning and Development)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	22 Feb 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Water Safety Policy update	Executive Cabinet	Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)		21 Mar 2024	Open		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Executive Member Decisions							
Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Services Reform)							
Contract Award to Essensys Ltd Request	Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)	Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	13 Jul 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Chief Executive
Decarbonisation & Improvement Work (Leisure Centres) - Consultant Appointment	Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)			14 Jul 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources)							
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of AV Equipment	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	October 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of Meeting Room Technology	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	October 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure and Evaluation Criteria for ICT Hardware and Software: <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of Backup and DR	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	October 2023	Fully exempt	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure for ICT Hardware and Software - <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=9422&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=9422&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Backup and DR	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Backup and DR	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of In Cab CCTV and Driver Technology	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	September 2023	Fully exempt	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure for ICT Hardware and Software - <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=9422&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=9422&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of CCTV Support	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	1 Sep 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for CCTV	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)



Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of Elections Software	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	October 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure and Evaluation Criteria for ICT Hardware and Software: <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of GIS (mapping)	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	September 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure and Evaluation Criteria for ICT Hardware and Software: <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Approval of contract award for GIS	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval for the Contract Award for the Procurement of ICT Helpdesk Solution	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	September 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Approval for the Contract Award Procedure and Evaluation Criteria for ICT Hardware and Software: <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&amp;MId=8036&amp;Ver=4</a>	Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for ICT Hardware	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for ICT Helpdesk	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Approval of contract award for Managed Services	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Professional Services	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Housing Software	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Elections software	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Patching and Vulnerability Management	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Approval of contract award for Case Management Software	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Waste Management Software	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Email archiving/journaling	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	29 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Payment provider	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	22 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Approval of contract award for Payment provider	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	31 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Approval of contract award for Garden Waste Stickers	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	22 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Contract Award for Replacement Ride on Mowers	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	June 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Hardship Relief	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		April 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Discretionary Rate Relief 2022/2023	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		April 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Applications to waive Council Tax Long-Term Empty Premium	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		July 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 1: Information relating to any individual.		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)
Mutual Agreement	Executive Member (Resources)			9 Nov 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Finance)
Procurement Restructure	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		November 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 1: Information relating to any individual.		Report of the Director (Governance)
Procurement Restructure	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		11 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Governance)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Contract Award - Project and Programme Management Consultant to support the delivery of Major Projects	Executive Member (Resources)			20 Oct 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the
Contract Award - Remediation & Demolition Works - Bengal Street Depot	Executive Member (Resources)		A contract worth £100,000 or more	14 Jan 2024	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Contract Award - Professional Design Team (Depot Relocation Ackhurst Site)	Executive Member (Resources)		A contract worth £100,000 or more	20 Oct 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the
Chorley Leisure Centres - Approval to Bid for funding through the Public Centre Decarbonisation Scheme	Executive Member (Resources)			3 Oct 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the



Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Disposal of 3 Parking Spaces at Farrington Street Car Park Chorley	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		October 2022	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Land Rear of 50 and 52 Fairview Drive Adlington	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		September 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	No	Report of the Director (Commercial Services)

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Brookfield and Ingholme - Agreement for Compensation for Release of Restrictive Covenant	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		30 Nov 2022	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Commercial Services), Deputy Chief Executive
Grant of a Lease - Unit 12 Market Walk	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 27 Jul 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Chief Executive

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Renewal of a Lease - Unit 16 Market Walk	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 27 Jul 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Chief Executive
Strawberry Fields Digital Office Hub - Grant of a Lease - Offices 33a 34 35 36 37	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 7 Jul 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Strawberry Fields Digital Office Hub - Grant of a Lease - Office GO-B	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 1 Jun 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park - Grant of a 3 year lease - Office GO-C	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 20 Dec 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Grant of a 3-year lease - Office 6a and 6b Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		13 Jan 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Grant of a 6-year lease Units C12 and C 13 Strawberry Meadows Business Park	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		Before 9 Feb 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Kiosk/Cafe Coronation Recreation Ground Chorley	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		October 2022	Fully exempt	Contract Award for the Refurbishment of Coronation Recreation Ground Refreshment Kiosk: <a href="http://mod/mglsueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=72018&amp;optionId=0&amp;\$LO\$=1">http://mod/mglsueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=72018&amp;optionId=0&amp;\$LO\$=1</a>	Report of the Director (Commercial Services)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Lease of Cafe Coach House Astley Park	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)	A contract worth £100,000 or more	October 2022	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Business Engagement Grants	Executive Member (Resources)			October 2022	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Shop Front Grant	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		October 2022	Fully exempt	Vacant Property and Shop Front Grants - Programme Evaluation - <a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=44900">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=44900</a>	Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Approve an application for ERVS	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		October 2022	Fully exempt Paragraph 1: Information relating to any individual.		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Business Continuity – Electrical Hook Up's	Executive Member (Resources)			31 Jul 2023	Open		Report of the Chief Executive

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Replacement for Short Stay Car Park	Executive Member (Resources)	Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)		5 Dec 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Chorley Cemetry Toilet Refurbishment	Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Member (Resources)		13 Feb 2024	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive



<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Reason the decision is key</b>	<b>Earliest Date decision can be taken</b>	<b>Will the public be excluded?</b>	<b>Are there any background papers?</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>
Executive Member (Early Intervention)							
Public Health Funerals Policy	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		4 Apr 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)
Pest Control Service Review	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		14 Jun 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Communities)
Food Service Delivery Plan 23/24	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		30 Jun 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)
Community Safety Partnership Action Plan	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		26 Jun 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)
Civil Penalties Policy	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		18 Sep 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Appointment of Consultant to Prepare Proposal and Specification of Decarbonisation and Improvement Works at Leisure Centres Managed by Chorley Leisure Limited	Executive Member (Early Intervention)			29 Jun 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Grafton Street Alley Gate	Executive Member (Early Intervention)	Executive Member (Early Intervention)		20 Oct 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Communities)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Executive Member (Homes and Housing)							
Extra Care Policies	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)		October 2022	Open		Report of the Director (Commercial Services)
Adoption of revised Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	A significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards	July 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Director (Communities)
Land at Eaves Green	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	Executive Member (Homes and Housing)		16 Aug 2023	Open		Report of the Director (Communities)

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Executive Member (Planning and Development)							
New Playing Pitch Strategy for Central Lancs	Executive Member (Planning and Development)	Executive Member (Planning and Development)		8 Jan 2024	Open		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
Planning and Enforcement- Move to the New Terms and Conditions	Executive Member (Planning and Development)			Before 11 Oct 2023	Fully exempt		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Reason the decision is key	Earliest Date decision can be taken	Will the public be excluded?	Are there any background papers?	Documents to be considered by Decision taker
Executive Member (Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships)							
Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)							
Carbon Pathway Approval to Appoint	Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)	Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)		11 Sep 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).		Report of the Chief Executive
CCTV Camera Support - Award of Contract	Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)	Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)		7 Dec 2023	Fully exempt Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)		Report of the Director (Customer and Digital)





Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Finance (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	18 January 2024

**Draft 24/25 Budget Update**

Is this report confidential?	No
------------------------------	----

Is this decision key?	No
-----------------------	----

Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
---	---

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The report sets out the draft budget position for the council for 2024/25 and the forecast for 2025/26, reflecting the information contained within the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement announced on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
2. The draft budget position is published for consultation every year by the council. The figures in the report are subject to change, pending receipt of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement announcement which is due from Government in early February 2024.

**Recommendations to Executive Cabinet**

3. That Members agree the contents of this report in order to start the budget consultation process as follows:
  - A proposed 2.99% increase in council tax in 2024/25 with no proposed cuts to services;
  - A forecast balanced budget for 2024/25, based on a 2.99% increase in council tax as noted above and the use of £0.365m of reserves;
  - A forecast budget shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.575m, to be addressed through the development and delivery of the council's savings programme;
  - To note the proposals in the report for investment in the Labour Administration's priority areas.

**Reasons for recommendations**

4. The council wishes to set out its budget proposals and consult on them with residents.

**Other options considered and rejected**

- 5. None - this is the draft budget and alternative budgets may be considered as part of the final budget proposal.

**Executive summary**

6. The Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25 was announced on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with information regarding specific elements of funding and grants issued in the week thereafter. The settlement contained information regarding funding levels and council tax increases for 2024/25. Based on this information, the budget forecast for 2024/25 has been updated as follows:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) presented to Finance Council in February 2023 assumed an increase in council tax of 2.99% in 2024/25. This was in line with the 2023/24 settlement announcement, in which Government confirmed a council tax increase limit for district councils in 2023/24 and 2024/25 of the higher of 3% or £5; this was an increase from the 2% limit set in previous years. In light of the continued pressures on the council’s expenditure budgets, including the impact of high inflation and increased utility costs, combined with the real terms reduction in Government funding provided to the council since 2010, it is proposed to increase council tax by 2.99% in 2024/25, which equates to a 10p per week increase on a Band D property for the Chorley Council element of the council tax charge. This is in line with the assumption included in the MTFS last year for 2024/25.
- The MTFS in February 2023 assumed an increase in council tax of 1.99% for 2025/26. The Provisional Settlement has made no reference to council tax limits to be applied in 2025/26 and as such the MTFS reflects a 1.99% increase, although this assumption will be revisited next year and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements;
- The figures reflect continued investment in ongoing revenue budgets to ensure the delivery of corporate strategy priorities;
- A capital investment of over £20.9m is included in respect of corporate priority projects over the 3-year period, 2024-2027;
- The figures reflect the corporate strategies and decisions taken by the council to date to reduce the budget deficit over the medium term.

7. Consultation on the proposed budget for 2024/25 will commence following approval of the proposals by Executive Cabinet. The consultation will invite responses from residents, partners, parish groups and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including a short survey. The feedback will be used to frame the allocation of resources and investments, and the results will be analysed and published in February for consideration as part of the council’s final budget.

**Corporate priorities**

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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



### **Background to the report**

9. In presenting the draft budget position for 2024/25 it is important to review the context within which this has been developed, and how the budget and financial risk have been managed to date to ensure that costs remain controlled and savings generated, whilst investment has been made in service delivery to the residents and businesses of the borough.

### **Local Government Funding Uncertainty**

10. Uncertainty remains around the council's future funding streams as the Government's recent announcement was for yet another one-year financial settlement for 2024/25. This was made despite repeated demands over the past few years from across the sector for clarity on funding over the longer term through a multi-year settlement.
11. One-year settlements are necessary when there is only a single year's funding remaining within the horizon of the most recent Spending Review, or if there is uncertainty over the policy framework for future years. Certainly for some time there has been disruption in central government which has inhibited the development of a longer term funding strategy, but the consequences of this for local government are significant in terms of short and medium term planning, especially in a time of diminishing resources and increased demand
12. As such, the Provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 again represents a 'holding position' until the next Parliament to provide some stability in the short term for local government finances.

### **Economic Uncertainty**

13. Against this backdrop of future funding uncertainty, the council, its residents and businesses are now facing significant economic challenges. Whilst inflation and utility costs are slowly reducing, they are still substantially higher than two years ago, and fuel the cost of living crisis.

### **Budget Management and Investment**

14. Although the council has continued to experience unfunded inflationary increases in staffing and non-staff costs, it has been ambitious in its approach to meeting the budget deficit over the years by realising efficiency savings and generating additional income.
15. Whilst costs have successfully been controlled, the provision of high-quality services that are expected by residents and businesses remains. The council achieves this by continually reviewing its budgets and contracts, by delivering efficiencies and by realising savings such as those achieved through the exploration and investment in alternative delivery models, including sharing services with South Ribble Council.
16. The council has, and will continue to invest in the borough to improve housing, to provide employment opportunities, and to maximise opportunities to generate income, thereby making the council less reliant on the increasingly uncertain funding from Government.
17. Examples of developments that continue to support this strategy are:

- The investment in the **Market Walk Shopping Centre** – the investment generates approximately £937k of net income (after borrowing) each year, as well as notably improving the town centre, providing jobs and delivering on the council’s ambition and vision to regenerate the town centre;
- **Primrose Gardens** supports people to live independently whilst receiving the care and support needed to enjoy later life, whilst generating a net income for the council of approximately £313k per annum;
- Following reconfiguration of the internal floor areas given the level of interest from prospective tenants, and to manage the site as efficiently as possible, the **Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park** has increased its income levels; as such, the budget now reflects a net income to the council (after borrowing) of £179k for 2024/25 onwards;
- The investment in the **Logistics House** site on Buckshaw currently generates a net income, after borrowing costs, of £583k which is expected to rise to over £1.0m per annum towards the end of the lease term. To mitigate financial risk, the council set aside an initial £450k of net income in 2020/21 to create an income equalisation reserve that can be used, if necessary, to manage any potential budget implications from the site becoming vacant;
- **Strawberry Meadows** provides light industrial units and assists in driving forward local economic growth, whilst also generating a net income of £310k per year for the council;
- The extra care facility at **Tatton Gardens** opened in February 2023 and as well as addressing the need for this type of accommodation in the borough, it is expected to generate a net income for the council of £32k in 2024/25, after borrowing costs.

**Council Tax Increases**

18. Through effective management of its budget, Chorley Council has been able to maintain one of the lowest levels of council tax in Lancashire as demonstrated in **Table 1** below;

**Table 1:**

	<b>Band D Equivalent 2023/24 £</b>	<b>Band D Equivalent 2022/23 £</b>
Preston	343.60	333.63
Burnley	328.01	318.49
Rosendale	299.49	290.80
Pendle	289.92	281.50
Hyndburn	260.64	260.64
Lancaster	249.18	241.95
West Lancs.	224.92	218.39
South Ribble	223.24	223.24
Wyre	219.74	214.74
Fylde	218.89	219.19
<b>Chorley</b>	<b>203.63*</b>	<b>199.66</b>
Ribble Valley	165.69	160.69

(\* - includes Band D equivalent Special Expenses of £21.82)

19. The council remains committed to supporting those who may struggle to pay their council tax because of the challenging circumstances they find themselves in, and will make use of the monies it has available to support council taxpayers.

### Investing in Corporate Priorities

20. The council continues to invest in delivering the ambitions set out in its Corporate Strategy and to ensure that it delivers high quality services to its residents. The key areas of investment are set out on the following pages.

### Investment in 2023/24

21. The council allocates significant revenue and capital investment to deliver corporate strategy priorities through a programme of diverse activities. In 2023/24 these activities were designed to progress action to address the economic impact of the pandemic including support for businesses and activity to increase jobs and skills, establishing key assets for the future and to respond to the needs of communities by enhancing essential services and facilities.

### Housing where residents can live well

- Completion of the **£17.1m** investment in Tatton Gardens, providing vital amenities for local residents, including improved health care provision delivered through an onsite GP surgery and pharmacy, assisted living accommodation units and recreation ground improvements, supporting wellbeing outcomes and wider benefits such as community cohesion and reduced anti-social behaviour;
- **£110k** investment in a two-year home energy programme that has been developed to provide energy advice and practical support to install energy saving measures and to support residents with the increasing cost of energy. In collaboration with partners, the scheme offers visits to households who are vulnerable or in fuel poverty, to undertake a home energy audit and provide advice on energy efficiency measures; this is linked to the existing council-based services;

### A green and sustainable borough

- Investment of **£105k** was identified in 2023/24 to implement the first stage of the bus shelter improvement plan developed during the year as part of the council's commitment to improving public transport networks. The five-year programme covers replacement of 83 bus shelters. The replacement of the shelters will seek to encourage the use of public transport by transforming bus stops into modern, safe and inviting spaces that all residents throughout the borough can utilise;
- To address the challenge of rising energy costs for businesses, and to contribute to the council's carbon neutral ambitions, a **£130k** package of support was launched offering grants that can support energy efficiency measures and adaptations. The scheme provides a grant of up to £2,000 towards the costs of purchasing energy reduction equipment identified by free certified energy audits;

### An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

- Completion of the **£11.4m** investment in the Strawberry Meadows Business Park. This state-of-the-art facility, will enable the council to continue attracting people to do business in Chorley;
- **£100k** investment to promote future career pathways and to provide a local skills pipeline. The comprehensive Skills and Jobs Programme for Chorley will allow aspiring local businesses to stay and grow in the borough;

### Healthy, safe and engaged communities

- The **£715k** investment in the Cost of Living Action Plan continues to deliver a range of activities that support residents with pressures in the cost of food and energy. The Warm Spaces Programme was expanded to cover the summer months, and in addition, the Welcome Spaces Programme is supporting residents to access cost of living support alongside social inclusion activity. The Household Support Fund Phase 3 was completed in the year, with 6,744 households financially supported to a total value of £426k;
- **£400k** investment to help support specific challenges in rural areas by offering a rural grants scheme to enable eligible businesses to make capital improvements to their business. The scheme was launched in September 2023 for rural businesses across the borough to apply for grant funding.

### Investment in Priorities 2024/25

22. The council has invested in services and delivered positive outcomes for residents.
23. In continuing to do so, and following the refresh of the Corporate Strategy in November 2023, from across the capital programme, revenue budgets and specific ear-marked reserves, this budget will invest in activity that will continue to drive forward priorities and key projects to achieve the vision for Chorley to have strong communities, a resilient economy, excellent services and a greener future.

### Housing where residents can live well

- **£56k** investment to improve housing standards across the borough and prevent homelessness;
- **£132k** investment to deliver the Local Plan;

### A green and sustainable borough

- **£353k** investment to continue delivering improvements to Chorley's Bus Shelter Network;
- **£2.00m** investment in parks and open spaces, which will assist in increasing the number of parks with a Green Flag Status;

### An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

- **£45k** investment to encourage more visitors to the borough, and to improve the visitor offer and the economy;
- **£25k** investment to focus on the future growth of Chorley's economy;

### Healthy, safe and engaged communities

- **£315k** investment in an enhanced social prescribing service focussed on supporting family and early years;
- **£117k** investment to deliver a Health and Wellbeing Programme to support the needs of residents across the borough.

## 2024/25 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

24. The draft budget has been developed in line with the achievements, decisions and actions taken by the council to date as outlined above. Despite the difficult financial position and cost pressures faced, reflecting high levels of inflation, utility costs and interest rates, along with the uncertainty around future Government funding, the council is committed to delivering on the agreed priorities and the budget reflects this.
25. The key components of the draft 2024/25 Budget and MTFs, and the assumptions and information on which they are based, are detailed below.
26. A key contributory factor in the development of the draft 2024/25 Budget and MTFs for the following 2 years is the Local Government Finance Settlement, through which Government sets out the funding it will make available to local authorities along with the parameters within which other sources of income, Council Tax and Business Rates, can be raised.
27. The fact that again we have only received a one year settlement has exacerbated the uncertainty and the risk in our financial planning; in the absence of any figures or framework from Government, it is almost impossible to prepare a credible financial strategy beyond 31 March 2025 with any degree of confidence in the underlying assumptions. It is within this financial context that we are developing the MTFs.

## Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

28. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 was published on 18 December 2023 and the implications of this are outlined below. Unfortunately however, unlike the in the Settlement provided for 2023/24, the Government has not provided any planning assumptions for the 2025/26 local government financial settlement.

## Business Rates

29. The Provisional Settlement confirmed that the Lancashire Business Rates Pool will be able to continue in 2024/25; there is no mention as to whether this will continue into 2025/26. As a member of the Pool, Chorley Council benefits from additional business rates income of approximately £0.991m per annum. In the absence of any further

information regarding Business Rates Retention reform, the Pool is assumed to continue throughout the period of the MTFS.

### ***New Homes Bonus***

30. Whilst it has been stated by the government for several years now that funding from New Home Bonus (NHB) would be discontinued, the provisional settlement announced an allocation of £141k for 2024/25 (2023/24 - £297k). Reflecting prior announcements of its withdrawal, no further NHB allocations have been assumed beyond 2024/25.

### ***Council Tax***

31. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed a council tax increase limit for district councils in 2024/25 of up to 3% or £5 (whichever is the greater) on a Band D equivalent in 2024/25. This is in line with the MTFS presented to Finance Council in February 2023. There was no further information provided in the Settlement for 2025/26 and therefore the MTFS has assumed an increase of 1.99%.
32. In light of the continued pressures on the council's expenditure budgets, including the impact of high inflation and increased utility costs, combined with the real terms reduction in Government funding provided to the council since 2010, in line with last year's MTFS assumptions, it is proposed to increase council tax by 2.99% in 2024/25, which equates to a 10p per week increase on a Band D property for the Chorley Council element of the council tax charge.
33. The 2025/26 position will be revisited next year as part of the budget setting process and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements.

### ***Services Grant***

34. The grant was introduced in 2022/23 for which Chorley received an allocation of £203k. Although described as a 'one-off' grant it was provided again in 2023/24 but at a reduced level of £119k. As it was unclear what would happen to the grant in 2024/25, for budgeting purposes it was assumed it would cease in 2024/25. The grant has remained however, but at a much reduced level of £19k. It is assumed that it will cease for 2025/26 and beyond.

### ***Minimum Funding Guarantee***

35. This grant was introduced in 2023/24 and replaced the Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the previous funding provided for New Homes Bonus legacy payments; the grant is intended to provide a funding floor for all local authorities so that no authority will see an increase in Core Spending Power of less than 3% (before any assumption on council tax rate increases is applied, although after increases in the council tax base are applied).
36. The council has been allocated £1.494m in the Provisional Settlement for this in 2024/25 compared to £1.147m in 2023/24.
37. Given that the grant is based on, and is subsumed within, the council's Core Spending Power and that this figure is reported for all authorities across the country each year

within the Settlement as a measure of growth in the funding by Government, it has been assumed that this grant will continue into 2025/26.

## **EXPENDITURE**

### ***Pay Award***

38. At the time the 2023/24 Budget was approved, the negotiations for the pay award had yet to begin. As such a provision of 5% was included in the pay budget for 2023/24, however when the pay award was agreed in November 2023 it was for £1,925 per whole time equivalent, for which no additional funding was provided. The increase in costs over and above the budget provided equates to approximately £0.146m which presents a recurring cost pressure in 2024/25 and beyond.
39. Given the levels of inflation over the course of 2023 and the forecast for this moving forward, the pay award assumption for 2024/25 has been reviewed and has been retained at 5%, which was the amount already included in the MTFS presented to the Council meeting in February 2023. The MTFS assumes a 2% pay award for both 2025/26 and 2026/27 reflecting inflation forecasts.
40. The National Living Wage will rise from £10.42 to £11.44 an hour from April 2024, and has also been adjusted to include workers aged 21 and over; in previous years the National Living Wage only applied to workers aged 23 and over. This will not affect Chorley Council's pay bands for 2024/25 as the council pays above this level already.

### ***Pension***

41. The triennial actuarial valuation of the Lancashire County Pension Fund was undertaken in 2022. The pension contributions for the three years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 were based on these results which showed that the fund had had a strong performance over the 3 years through to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, albeit that since that date, with volatility in global financial markets, inflation and interest rates, the position has been more turbulent. Overall, the Chorley Council section of the fund has had a reduction in the financial contributions required, comprising:
  - an increase in the level of Employer Pension Contribution rates from 16.4% to 18.3% in each of the 3 years (i.e. a 1% increase results in approx. £115k of cost) however;
  - offset by a reduction in the annual cost of the repayment of the fund deficit from £467k per annum to £0.

### ***Inflation and Utilities Increases***

42. CPI rose by 6.7% in the 12 months to September 2023 (12 months to Sept 2022 – 10.1%). This is the rate that the government uses as the benchmark for uplifting many allowances and charges each year such as pensions and benefits.
43. Inflationary uplifts to budgets are only provided on contracts where such uplifts are specific and contractually agreed; for other non-pay budgets, budget holders are expected to manage and absorb any additional costs in this regard, For utilities, inflationary uplifts have been assumed in the budgets in line with the forecasts provided by utility specialist advisors.

44. The council will continue to support its wholly owned leisure services company in response to the increases in utility costs over the past 2 years, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the level of income generated; this is on the basis that any intervention will be short term and that the cost to the council will cease over the medium-term as the company develops its services to fully cover its own costs.

**Forecast outturn 2023/24**

45. In the last Revenue Monitoring report presented to the Executive Cabinet in November 2023 for Quarter 2 - the 6 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, a forecast overspend for the financial year of £0.569m was reported. This relates to many different factors including the unfunded, nationally negotiated pay award of £1,925 per whole time member of staff, compared to the budgeted provision of 5%, together with slippage and one-off pressures on some of the council’s major projects/investments, additional costs within the Property Team and the Events Team, offset by higher than expected returns on cash investments. The position continues to be refined as we finalise the Quarter 3 Monitoring report. A review of earmarked reserves will also be undertaken to ensure reserves deliver investment in priority areas.

**Balancing the Budget in 2024/25**

46. **Table 2** below presents the movement in the forecast of the Budget Gap for 2024/25 and 2025/26 from the figures that were presented in the 2023/24 Budget and MTFS approved at Finance Council in February 2023. The figures reflect an updated position based on the information provided in the Provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 18 December 2023, the work undertaken in developing the draft budget to date, and the assumptions made within this, of which the key assumptions are noted in the report.

**Table 2: movement in the forecast of the Budget Gap for 2024/25 and 2025/26**

	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Budget Gap Finance Council Report February 2023</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1,484</b>
<b>Cost Pressures</b>		
Union Street rental income	300	300
Housing Benefit Admin Grant	13	13
Markets	56	56
Events / Astley Hall	94	94
Housing Benefit Non-recoverable Subsidy	100	100
Repairs and Maintenance	100	100
Members Allowances	45	45
IT	50	50
Waste Strategy	40	40
Insurance	24	24
Other Miscellaneous cost pressures	92	92
Reduction in Building Control Income	50	50
Reduction in Land Charges income	20	20
Market Walk cost pressures	40	80



<b>Salary Related Cost Pressures and Budget Adjustments</b>		
Pay award above 5% in 23/24 and the impact of in-year restructures	495	561
<b>Savings and Additional Income Streams</b>		
Directors Review	(100)	(100)
Logistics House lease agreement review	(133)	(265)
Market Walk	(140)	(140)
Additional income Union Street	(71)	(71)
Fees and Charges	(126)	(252)
Electric Vehicle Charge points - Market Walk	(10)	(10)
Proposed increase in Garden Waste charges	(125)	(125)
<b>Funding announced in the Provisional Local Govt Finance Settlement</b>		
New Homes Bonus	(141)	0
Services Grant	397	416
Revenue Support Grant	(8)	(8)
Minimum Funding guarantee	(467)	(652)
<b>Treasury Management and Revenue Costs of Capital</b>		
Minimum Revenue Provision adjustments – (reflecting additional external financing secured during the year, and slippage in the capital programme)	(745)	(534)
Additional Interest Receivable on investments	(150)	(100)
Increase in Interest Payable	150	400
Borrowing costs of mechanical sweepers	48	48
<b>Proposed increase in Council Tax</b>		
An increase of 2.99% in 2024/25 is already included in the MTFS that was presented to Finance Council in February 2023.	-	-
<b>Utilisation of Reserves</b>		
Support for the recovery from the pandemic, inflation and cost of living crisis	(365)	
<b>Other Options/Funding/Savings to be firmed</b>		
Council Tax Growth	(70)	(140)
<b>Total Forecast (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,575</b>

*It should be noted that some of the assumptions are still subject to change, for example following the announcement of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement, which may impact positively or negatively on the budget.*

### Medium Term Financial Planning and Recommendations to Close the Budget Gap

47. As detailed in **Table 2** above, although a balanced budget position can be achieved for 2024/25, this is subject to increasing council tax by 2.99% and the utilisation of £365k from the 'Support for the recovery from the pandemic, inflation and cost of living crisis Reserve', that was designated to address such specific issues in the short term.
48. Despite the budget savings realised and additional income secured to date, a forecast budget deficit remains in 2025/26 of £1.575m which unless addressed, will be carried forward into 2026/27.
49. The council's medium-term plan to reduce the budget deficit beyond 2024/25 will be refined and developed over the coming months, and will be subject to future government funding announcements, the wider economic environment and other assumptions (e.g. future pay awards) which may change over the period.

### Future Savings

50. The council has always been successful in generating efficiency savings and additional income to bridge the budget gap whilst continuing to deliver outstanding services to its residents.
51. In order to reduce the impact on staffing and the level of services provided, the council will continue to invest in its services to recognise additional income and efficiencies.

Future opportunities include:

- The council is ambitious in its delivery of services and will continue to pursue **alternative models of delivering its services**. The expansion of shared services with South Ribble Council has continued during 2023/24 with the two councils agreeing that they will consider further opportunities alongside their wider priorities if improvements and efficiencies can be attained which would lead to further savings for them.
- A review of the council's **portfolio of assets** to recognise potential opportunities for sale, redevelopment, consolidation and/or to maximise income, whilst improving services.

### Savings Strategy

52. The Savings Strategy will be refreshed and refined to enable the continual improvement of services and performance while ensuring a sustainable financial position. Options will be developed to achieve savings and efficiencies as well as a programme of organisational change to support our workforce over the period.

### Reserves

53. The council has ensured a prudent and affordable approach to delivering the medium-term financial strategy and has set aside reserves to support this as outlined in **Table 3** below.
54. These reserves are necessary to mitigate the financial impact of the uncertainty that the council faces, such as reforms to future funding levels, the impact of unforeseen cost pressures during the period, e.g. inflationary increases and utility costs, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the residents and businesses of the borough.

55. Reserves provide the facility to manage budget shortfalls in the short term whilst planned savings are realised. The expected balance of these reserves at the beginning of 2024/25, as based on the position in the Quarter 2 Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report is as follows:

**Table 3: Forecast Reserve Balances at 1 April 2024**

	<b>1 April 2024</b>
	<b>£m</b>
<b>General Fund Reserve</b>	<b>4.202</b>
<b><i>Income relates Reserves</i></b>	
Market Walk Income Equalisation Reserve	0.332
Logistics House Income Equalisation Reserve	0.450
Business Rates Retention Reserve	0.210
<b><i>Other Reserves</i></b>	
Income Generation Reserve	0.368
Support for the recovery from the pandemic, inflation and cost of living crisis	0.827
Change Management Reserve	0.426
Asset Maintenance – incl Market Walk, Digital Office Park etc	0.405
Support to Local Businesses	0.508
Capital Financing – including capital bad debts	0.249
Planning Reserve – including appeals	0.129
Neighbourhoods and Communities	0.436
Elections	0.118
Green Agenda	0.168
Other	0.784
<b>Total Reserves – Other</b>	<b>5.410</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>9.612</b>

56. Details of the more significant reserve balances are as follows:

#### ***Income Reserves***

57. The council has set aside over £300k to manage any one-off reductions in income from Market Walk and £450k to cushion the impact of any future income pressures at Logistics House.
58. The council has set aside £210k to manage any one-off reductions in business rates such as unbudgeted changes to valuations or the implementation of government reforms.

#### ***Other Reserves***

59. To implement the transformation of services and generate additional income, the council has set aside £368k of revenue reserves to explore income generating projects.
60. Whilst continuing to deliver a large and ambitious capital programme, which will evolve over the course of the MTFS period as new schemes are presented for consideration, the council sets aside sufficient budget (£405k) to manage the maintenance of its existing assets including Market Walk and Digital Office Park for example.
61. The council continues to support its local businesses with £508k in reserves to attract businesses to the borough, as well as supporting existing businesses in the town centre and other areas of the borough. These grants enable the council to match fund local business investment to expand local businesses and job opportunities.
62. The council will continue to set aside funds to obtain greater influence around planning decisions. The council has set aside a reserve that stands at £129k to support the council to defend locally made planning decisions.
63. The council set aside £500k of reserves in 2022/23 to implement its Green Agenda with £332k already committed to date. Reducing the carbon footprint is a national and global issue; the council is committed to realising its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and will seek to attract support and funding from our partners, including the Government, to assist in achieving this priority objective.

#### ***General Reserves***

64. The council is forecast to hold £4.202m in General Funds (based on the Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring Report), which represents approximately 26% of the annual net expenditure budget of the council. This can be used to manage future uncertainty in expenditure and income over the medium-term.

#### ***Capital Programme***

65. This report has addressed the draft revenue budget of the council. Implicit in this however, and the investment programme set out above, are financial implications for the capital programme. There is an ambitious capital programme with approximately £20.9mm of investment over 2024/25 and the MTFS period.

**Climate change and air quality**

- 66. The budget set aside in this report, will continue to support the council’s future ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

**Equality and diversity**

- 67. Consultation will be undertaken regarding this budget with an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) reported with the full budget report.

**Risk**

- 68. There are no immediate risks associated with this report however if the final report is not approved in February 2024, this would risk the council being unable to finance its future commitments towards its corporate priorities.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

- 69. The financial implications of the report are contained within the text above but to clarify, all proposals are funded and can be accommodated within the 2024/25 budget. It should be noted that the report does contain several assumptions on future budget elements and on the final out-turn position for 2023/24. Should any of the assumptions or figures change due to unforeseen circumstances arising before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the financial position will be reviewed and reported.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

- 70. The budget proposals are in accordance with the requirement of legislation.

**Background documents**

There are no background papers to this report

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Hemangini Chevli (Senior Management Accountant)	Hemangini.Chevli@chorley.gov.uk,	01257 515151	2 January 2024
Neil Halton, (Principal Management Accountant)	neil.halton@chorley.gov.uk,	01257 515151	
Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and S151 Officer)	louise.mattinson@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

# **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Recruitment and Staff Retention**

**September – December 2023**



**Contents**

Contents.....2

Introduction.....3

Summary Recommendations.....4

Membership of the Task Group.....4

Officer Support.....4

Scoping the Review.....5

The Desired outcomes.....5

Terms of Reference.....5

Witnesses.....5

Meetings.....5

Background and Context.....6

Findings / Evidence presented.....6-25

Conclusions.....26

Appendices..... 27



## Introduction

**From the Chair of the Task Group Councillor Michelle Le Marinel and Vice Chair Councillor Ryan Towers.**



Following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 August 2023 (at which the annual workplan was agreed), this Task Group was set up in September 2023.

The aim was to identify any underlying issues relating to recruitment and staff retention, and if so, to address them ensuring the Council has an excellent workforce, providing quality services to residents and a reputation as a good employer.

The Task Group met on several occasions over the course of 4 months from September to December, gathering evidence from a range of witnesses and sources including Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources (the lead officer for the study), UNISON branch secretary Lesley Miller, survey responses from the Council's Senior Management Team and an interview with the Executive Member for Resources.

We would like to thank all the Members involved with this Task Group and to the officers, including Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources and Clare Gornall, Democratic and Member Services officer for their time, knowledge and support.

We hope the recommendations made within the report are acknowledged and accepted by the Executive Cabinet.

Councillor Michelle le Marinel  
Chair

Councillor Ryan Towers  
Vice Chair

### Summary Recommendations

The recommendations in this report are informed by the views and documentary evidence provided by the range of witnesses and sources engaged throughout the review.

1. That the Council's Senior Management Team be requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council working towards the Living Wage Accreditation, and if promising, present their proposals to Executive Cabinet
2. That the Council actively promotes health and wellbeing (including mental health) support available as part of its overall employee benefits package
3. That the Executive Member for Resources monitor recruitment and retention figures over the next 6 – 12 months especially in identified key risk areas
4. That a member learning session be arranged on an annual basis to update on workforce planning
5. To include performance reporting data on recruitment and staff retention on the new members portal from the new recruitment system

### Membership of the Task Group

Councillor Michelle le Marinel (Chair)  
Councillor Ryan Towers (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Karen Derbyshire  
Councillor Gordon France  
Councillor Christine Heydon  
Councillor Alex Hilton  
Councillor Samantha Martin  
Councillor June Molyneaux  
Councillor Dedrah Moss  
Councillor Kim Snape

(please note Cllr Karen Derbyshire was part of the Task Group until 14 November 2023)

### Officer Support

Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources  
Clare Gornall, Democratic and Member Services Officer

### Scoping the review

The objectives the Task Group were:

- To ensure service delivery is maintained
- To identify service areas at risk of failure and to look at how we can make recommendations to address this
- To identify aspirations and capacity for improving services

### The Desired Outcomes Were (not in preferential order):

- To achieve accreditation and awards for staffing
- To improve organisational reputation
- To maintain service delivery
- To retain staff
- Work to achieve the real living wage accreditation
- Attract and retain the best workforce

### Terms of Reference

Members of the Task Group will be clearly focussed on the high level, policy and strategic aspects of the retention and recruitment of staff, which is within the scope of councillors' role in decision making as per Governance arrangements within the Constitution.

The Task Group will only scrutinise operational processes (which is within the remit of officers) insofar as they may be impacting service delivery and/or impacting our role as councillors.

### Witnesses

The following witnesses met with the task group and/or provided information.

Hollie Walmsley, Head of HR  
Emily Monk, Transformation Officer (Organisational Development)

Lesley Miller, Branch Secretary, UNISON

Executive Member for Resources

### Consultees

Senior Management Team / Directors (via questionnaire / survey)

### Meetings

The agendas and minutes of each meeting can be found here  
[Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group](#)

## Background and Context

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was agreed on 1 August 2023. Recruitment and Staff Retention was agreed as one of the Task Group topics.

It had been noted that recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel, some Heads of Service had cited lack of staffing as an issue affecting performance. As part of this review members wanted to investigate in more depth whether issues with recruitment and retention of staff were impacting service delivery and / or if there were any wider issues to consider in this regard.

The Task Group held its first meeting on 6 September 2023. Councillor Michelle le Marinel was appointed Chair, and Councillor Ryan Towers was appointed Vice Chair.

### **6 September 2023**

#### Scoping the Review

When considering the scope of the review, members identified the importance of ensuring that the review focussed on strategic issues, which were in the remit of councillors, rather than operational issues, which were in the remit of officers. It was also acknowledged that currently employer-trade union relations were very good. The Task Group sought to be clear about its objectives for this piece of work.

The Task Group therefore requested clarification on the role of councillors (i.e. making strategic policy decisions) and role of the Chief Executive (as Head of Paid Service) as defined by the Constitution. It was acknowledged that statistical information was useful in informing decision making.

The Task Group made the distinction between recruitment and staff retention and whether either of these presented an issue. Hollie Walmsley indicated that at Chorley there was no issue as regards staff turnover (retention). She said that when high quality staff leave, often it is not personal, and if there are any concerns there are procedures in place to address this.

As regards recruitment, she indicated that there were challenges nationally and globally in the modern labour market. She informed members that the Council do have a strategic approach to workforce planning, which includes a reduction in spend on agency staff over the next 2 - 5 years. To meet this objective, a Recruitment and Talent Advisor had recently been appointed with Human Resources.

The Task Group discussed the scoping document and agreed upon the aims and objectives of the review, which included maintaining service delivery, identifying areas of risk and what can be improved. It was noted that the scoping document was a "living document" which could be amended during the course of the review.

To assist the review, members requested a number of policies and documents relating to recruitment and retention to be provided for consideration at the next meeting.

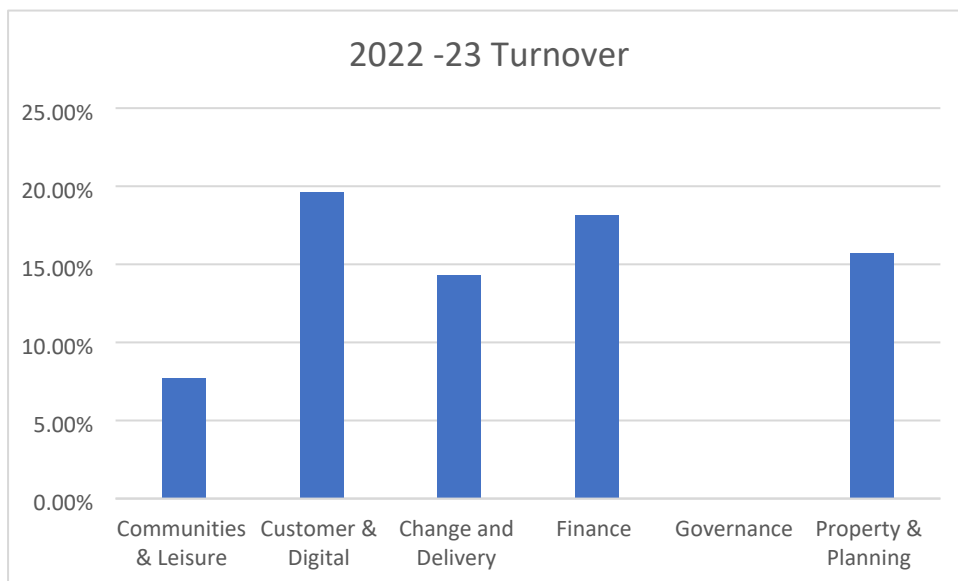
A copy of the scoping document can be found at appendix A to this report.

## Background information

Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources presented background information to provide context to the review which included details of organisational turnover 2022-23 and year to date 2023-24. The data included statistical information presented by Directorate and by reason for leaving (voluntary resignation, end of fixed term contract, retirement/ERVS, or dismissal / agreed exit):

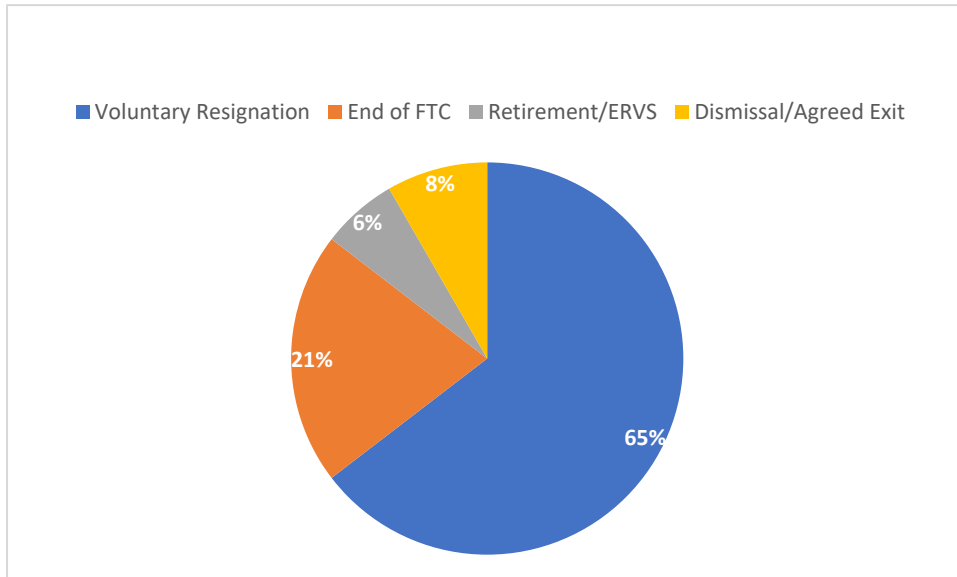
## Turnover

1. Organisational turnover for 2022-23 was 16.11%. 48 people left the organisation.

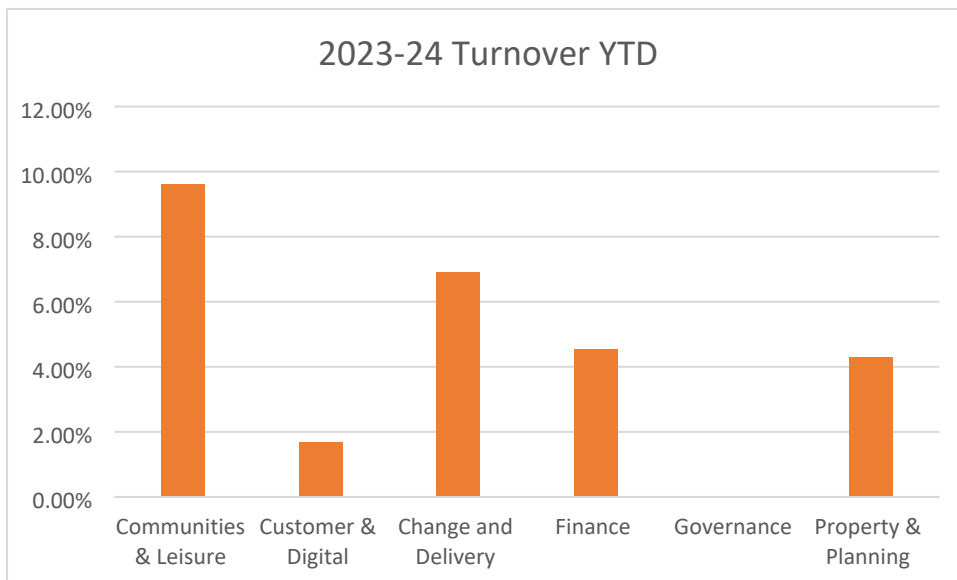


2. Within Customer and Digital 22 people exited:
  - a. 8 fixed term posts ended including 5 Seasonal Streetscene Operatives. Streetscene operates with an annual seasonal workforce.
  - b. 2 exits due to ERVS (Early Redundancy/Voluntary Severance)
  - c. 1 retirement
  - d. 11 resignations of which 5 were within Streetscene, 5 in Customer Services, and 1 in ICT.
3. Change and Delivery saw 4 people exit, all within HR:
  - e. 2 resigned
  - f. 2 fixed term posts ended
4. Voluntary resignations made up the leavers in both Communities and Finance, with 4 and 4 respectively.
5. Across Property and Planning 14 people left:
  - a. 10 resigned of which 4 were in Spatial Planning, 6 were in Property (1 person moved to a new role employed by SRBC).
  - b. 3 were managed exits

- c. 1 person was dismissed
- 6. There were no leavers in Governance for Chorley as this is a function fully employed by SRBC as part of shared services.
- 7. Leavers by reason for 22/23 are demonstrated below.

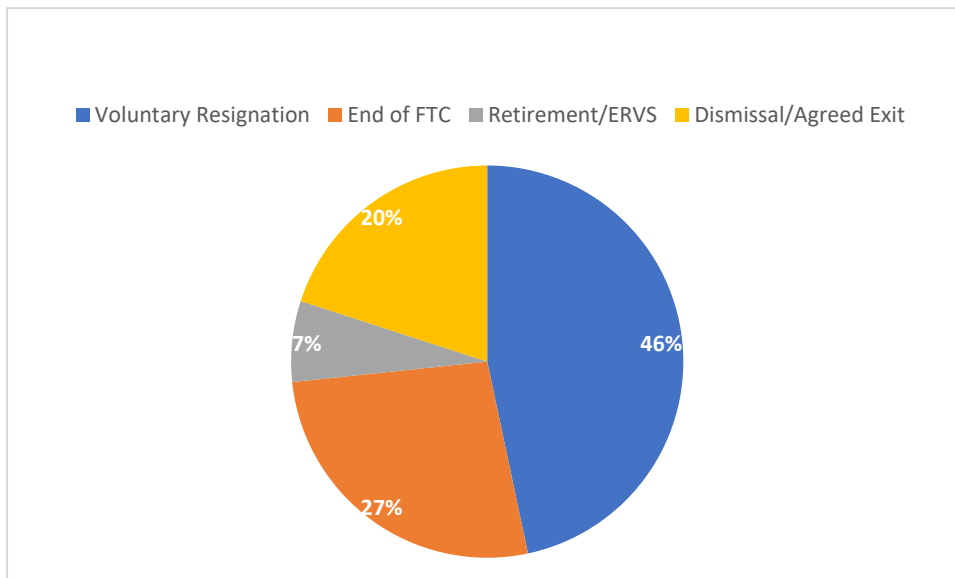


1. Year to date for 2023-24 turnover is 4.71%. The total leavers are 15.



- 2. Communities and Leisure have seen 4 people leave, 3 voluntarily and 1 on an agreed basis.
- 3. Customer and Digital have had 2 exits, both the end of fixed term contracts.

4. Across Change and Delivery 4 people have exited:
  - a. 2 voluntarily (1 person moved to a role employed by SRBC)
  - b. 1 redundancy
  - c. 1 due to the end of a fixed term contract
5. 1 person left Finance due to the end of a fixed term contract.
6. 4 people exited Property and Panning, all within the operational Assets function:
  - a. 2 resignations
  - b. 2 dismissals
8. There were no leavers in Governance for Chorley as this is a function fully employed by SRBC as part of shared services.
9. Leavers by reason for 23/24 to date are demonstrated below.



Hollie Walmsley explained that the corporate Recruitment and Selection Policies had been jointly agreed with UNISON.

She stressed that the Council wanted to minimise turnover, however it was equally important to have a steady influx of new employees to maintain a healthy organisation. She indicated that as regards the year to date, she would expect the final end of year turnover to be lower (i.e.14-15%). In comparison with other Lancashire councils, Chorley usually comes in about the mid-range. Compared with the private sector, the public sector generally has a lower turnover. However there are exceptions e.g. NHS which has a very high turnover.

Hollie clarified that staff moving to other areas within the organisation does not count as turnover.

### Meeting - 3 October 2023

At the second meeting, held on 3 October 2023, Members were provided with the following information:

Behaviour policies – Grievance policy, Code of Conduct, Social Media policy, Disciplinary policy, Conduct Policy

Benefits policies – ERVS guidance, Pensions & long service, flexible retirement, Reservist Policy, Sustainable Travel Policy, Expenses policy.

Changes policies – Change policy and Written Statement of Particulars (examples with/without flexi etc).

Recruitment and Development policies – Capability policy, Recruitment Selection and Onboarding, Leavers Guidance, Probation form.

Website Recruitment Pages (job applications) - How to apply, People with Disabilities, Recruitment Equality Monitoring Guidance

Wellbeing Policies – Managing the effects of the menopause, Emotional wellbeing policy, Smoke free and substance use policy, Improving attendance policy

Work-Life Policies – Homeworking policy, Flexible working policy, Parental leave, Leave policy.

The documents above and those relating to equality monitoring and people with disabilities were provided via the [modern.gov. library](#).

A note was also provided which clarified the respective roles of elected members and the Chief Executive with regard to staffing and recruitment. (See Appendix B).

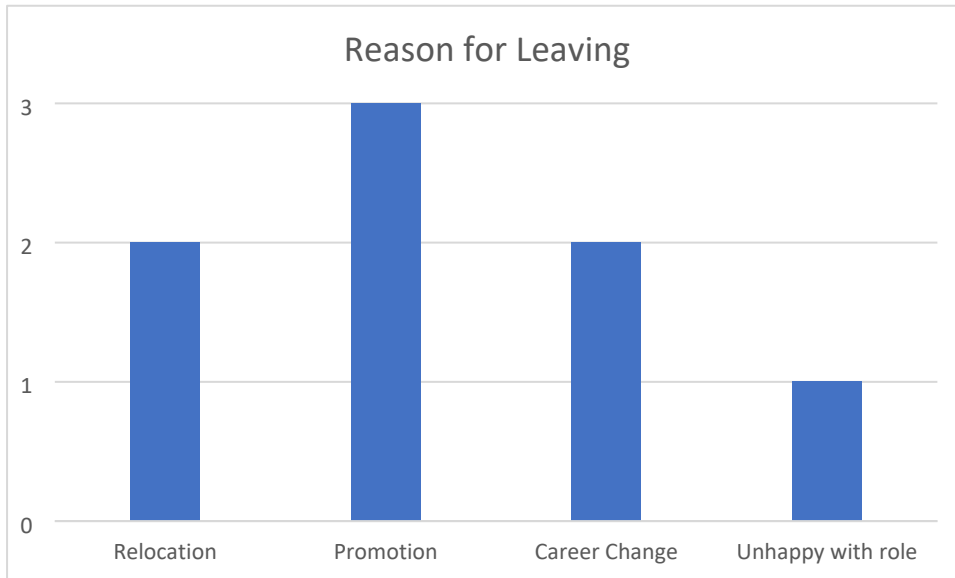
Detailed information was provided regarding the following:

1. Exit interview data analysis and an example exit interview
2. Living Wage Accreditation summary and next steps.
3. 2023/24 Recruitment Strategy report to SMT and project plan
4. Workforce planning summary

### Exit interviews



The exit interview process was refreshed and relaunched in July 2023. All leavers were offered an exit interview, however this was not compulsory and as such only 8 people had so far engaged.



The report summarised that reasons for leaving were due to relocation, promotion, other opportunity in a different sector and one was unhappy with working for the council.

The responses to the subsequent exit interview questions were as follows:  
 7 would recommend the council as an employer one would not;  
 7 would work for the council again one would not;  
 7 agreed that the council is a good employer and 1 does not.  
 The negative responses were all from the same person

The Task Group noted that due to the extremely small sample size it was not useful to identify service level trends or issues, so the information was considered in conjunction with other employee feedback including staff surveys and PDR comments to provide a broader picture.

A summary of the data received so far demonstrated the following positives:

- The majority of the people surveyed thought our benefits in relation to leave, pension, allowances, work life balance are either good or very good.
- Mainly positive feedback about support from line managers throughout their career with the council.
- Positive about colleagues, working together, friendly teams and staff.

The following negative comments demonstrated areas of for improvement:

- Some negative feedback regarding our learning and development offer and our office accommodation. Some leavers feel this can be improved.
- We received feedback that our benefits are good but we could advertise them better so more people know about them and use them.
- Lots of snippets of information regarding the line manager and some feedback that workloads are too heavy. Some people had been promised things which didn't materialise.
- Leavers feel that recognition could be better and communicated to the wider business, but some teams do this well.
- Some negative feedback about the burden of bureaucracy and politics.
- Communication across teams could be better.

Hollie Walmsley explained that people who had already raised issues previously were more likely to complete exit interviews, which tends to be reflected in the figures. However, Human Resources try and get as much feedback as possible either in person or in writing.

The Council also obtains feedback from its employees throughout their employment, via regular one to one meetings with line managers, and personal development reviews.

Full graphical data and analysis of exit Interviews and the exit interview questionnaire can be found at Appendix C.

### Living Wage Accreditation

#### Requirements

The Living Wage Foundation has two main criteria:

1. The Organisation in question pays its employees a 'Living wage', to avoid confusion with the national minimum wage this is referred to as the Real Living Wage. The Council pays all employees the Real Living Wage, other than apprentice employees in their first year, who are all paid the top rate of national minimum wage. This is accepted as good practice due to the amount of training a first year apprentice is expected to undertake, in comparison with working time.
2. The Organisation has a plan in place to ensure that its contractors are paid a 'Living Wage'
  - The Living Wage Foundation casts a 'wide net' in who is considered to be contracted, essentially all staff the organisation comes into contact with must be paid the Real Living wage (e.g. if you rent space in a Building with other organisations, that Buildings cleaners must be paid the Living Wage)
  - The Foundation does allow some leeway by allowing accreditation through a phased implementation approach, provided that at some point contracts are renewed include the Real Living Wage. Similarly, sub-contractors can

continue at their agreed rate provided there are plans in place to source alternate contractors at some point who do pay the Real Living Wage.

- Chorley Council does not currently require contractors to pay a Real Living Wage. The scale of this would need to be understood.

Hollie Walmsley explained that at present although the Council paid the Living Wage to all its directly employed staff, its sub-contractors were not all meeting that criterion. Hence the Council currently did not have the Living Wage Accreditation.

It was suggested that options be explored to address this e.g. via the procurement route. This would be a long term project as would involve a review of the Council's contracts once they were due to expire.

The next steps would be:

- Commence an assessment of rates paid by contractors. Undertake an analysis of the scale and gap.
- Seek approval to commence the accreditation process.
- Work with Procurement and individual contract managers to develop a plan for phased implementation.

**The Task group agreed that one of its recommendations would be to investigate the feasibility of working towards a Living Wage Accreditation.**

### Recruitment Strategy

Hollie Walmsley outlined a number of improvements the Council was making with regard to recruitment, including use of LinkedIn, and developing a dedicated front-end micro website for job vacancies. This would reduce recruitment costs as the Council would not be relying on outside agencies.

Hollie Walmsley also outlined other recruitment initiatives such as promoting the Council at careers events (e.g. for school leavers) and investing in the local community via apprenticeships / opportunities to gain professional qualifications with the Council. This "upskilling" approach was something the Council also promoted to its partners. It was noted that a "careers day" was due to be held on 9 October.

The Task Group enquired about learning agreements, where people must stay with the Council for a certain length of time after gaining a qualification (this doesn't apply to apprenticeships, however). Hollie Walmsley stressed that where a learning agreement was in place, employees would be provided with a clear pathway of career development. She also stressed that this approach ensured that new employees quickly move off the "bottom rung" of the organisation, freeing up space for new recruits and refreshing the workforce.

A copy of a report to Senior Management Team, outlining the new approach to the recruitment and action plan, was provided to the Task Group.

The report explained:

1. How we intend to ensure an intelligent approach to recruitment
2. The projects and tasks that will constitute the upgrade in our approach.
3. The priorities for upgrading our current recruitment processes.

It was identified that over half of employers have “hard-to-fill” vacancies and a third anticipate significant problems in filling roles (CIPD, 2023). Amongst rising inflation pushing salaries higher, and an increase in the availability of hybrid roles, recruitment has becoming increasingly challenging.

Both South Ribble BC and Chorley BC had experienced this over the past 12 months. 23%, almost 1 in 4 of external recruitment campaigns across the councils were unsuccessful in appointing someone. This sample size was taken from the 7 months between May – Dec 22.

The Council had already taken action to improve recruitment methods including a dedicated recruitment and talent advisor and procurement of a new recruitment system to enhance the applicant experience. These measures were already achieving benefits with improvement in roles appointed to. There were further opportunities to improve the current recruitment approach to make it more efficient and effective as part of a cohesive strategy to support building our workforce for the future.

The objectives were as follows:

<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>When</b>
Implement a recruitment system with a focus on candidate experience and manager self-service.	Update on recruitment system procurement to be presented to SMT.	Implementation Q3 2023\24
Develop an employer brand to increase proactive recruitment ability and communicate this brand.	Define our brand and intensively communicate using digital channels including social media.	From June – October 2023
Use a data-based approach to support workforce planning and recruitment trends	Monitor and report on recruitment metrics, using intelligence in discussions with managers. Develop reporting and dashboard functionality in the new recruitment system.	From June – October 2023

Develop a diverse talent pool	Develop talent pool functionality in the new recruitment system. Signpost job seekers to register with the talent pool. Work with OD to develop and support internal talent.	From June – October 2023
Upskill managers to be confident and capable recruiters	Use training, masterclasses, coaching, and drop-ins to develop a cohort of skilled managers.	By December 2023.

The full report to Senior Management Team on the Council’s Recruitment Strategy can be found at Appendix D.

A Recruitment Project Plan was also provided, which can be found at Appendix D.

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is the process of assessing current and future workforce needs, taking into account internal and external factors and establishing a strategy. This is undertaken by the Council at service level on a quarterly basis. There are a number of considerations with workforce planning, however the following focusses on recruitment and retention, specifically difficult to fill roles.

The following demonstrates the number of services by risk level, based on the difficulty to fill roles due to a known skills gap. Red services are those which, should no interventions be implemented, would experience significant short and long-term service disruption. Amber services are those where there are established plans already in place to mitigate risks. Green services are considered unlikely to be impacted by skills gaps.



A breakdown by Directorate and Service revealed the following:

Directorate	Service	RAG
Change and Delivery	Investment and Skills	G
Change and Delivery	Economic Growth	G
Change and Delivery	HR	G
Change and Delivery	Performance and Partnerships	G
Change and Delivery	Transformation and Change	G
Change and Delivery	Communications and Visitor Economy	G
Communities	Public Protection	A
Communities	Communities and Housing (Ch)	A
Communities	Leisure (CH)	A
Customer and Digital	Neighbourhoods and Waste	G
Customer and Digital	Streetscene and Waste	G
Customer and Digital	Customer Services	R
Customer and Digital	ICT	R
Finance	Finance	A
Governance	Audit and Risk	A
Governance	Democratic Services	G
Governance	Legal	A
Planning and Property	Planning and Development	A
Planning and Property	Operational Assets	G
Planning and Property	Major Projects	G
Planning and Property	Planning and Enforcement (Ch)	R
Planning and Property	Spatial Planning	R

Service plans

In the majority of services, it is a small number of specific roles which can present difficulties should they be vacant.

Service	Issues	Solutions
Spatial Planning	Shortage of planning policy officers. Historic approach to recruitment. Local Plan.	Graduate roles Contractors as an alternative to employees Direct approach recruitment search
ICT	Skills gaps – cyber security, software developers, senior technician.	Recruitment and talent advisor – CV search, LinkedIn. Have filled 3 roles. Graduate and apprentice roles. Career pathways.
Planning and Enforcement	Building control – competition from private sector.	Shared services. Development role with qualifications at all levels.

Customer Services Officers	Specialist skills within local government. Ageing workforce. Internal recruitment – internal talent pool	Apprentice first approach to recruitment. Cohorts of developing employees.
Environmental Health	Ageing workforce Skills shortage Lack of local training providers	Influenced local educational providers to set up course Graduates and apprentices.
Housing	Competition from housing providers.	Developing internal staff e.g. customer services officers into housing officers. Career pathways.
Finance	Management and financial accountants skills shortage nationally – require specific public sector knowledge.	Career pathway approach – graduates, apprentices, professional apprentices.
Leisure	National shortage of swimming teachers Anti-social and part-time hours	Roles with training full and qualifications Generic roles to create full-time hours across contract
Legal	Procurement in public sector skills shortage	Graduate role.
Audit and Risk	Ageing workforce Skills shortage – audit	Trainee auditor role with full training and qualification.

The Task Group enquired about the impact of staffing levels on the performance of the Council (for example, recently members had been informed the Statement of Accounts was published late due to staffing levels). Hollie Walmsley explained that staffing structures are very lean, and it was the responsibility of Shared Leadership Team to manage resources in line with service need.

Members highlighted “pinch points” at certain times of year which could be predicted and form part of business planning e.g. garden waste is seasonal. Hollie Walmsley explained that this detail would be addressed at Service Plan level. She stressed that transferring staff from other services is generally not practicable, because skill sets are different and teams do not have the capacity.

### People Strategy

Emily Monk, Transformation Officer (Organisational Development) gave a presentation on the People Strategy, which included the feedback from staff via the Pulse Survey carried out in 2021/22 and May 2023.

It was noted that some feedback, i.e. in relation to job descriptions related to South Ribble due to Shared Services. Hollie Walmsley also confirmed that there were no back pay issues (which had affected some other Councils nationally).

It was noted that staff had recently experienced a lot of fast paced change which had generated a substantial amount of internal communications. The Task Group were assured that the approach would now be more engagement with the Pulse Survey. Emily monk indicated that the response rate had increased and so had staff satisfaction levels.

A copy of the presentation can be found at Appendix E.

### **Meeting – 19 October 2023**

#### **Interview with Lesley Miller, UNISON Branch Secretary**

The Task Group invited Lesley Miller, UNISON Branch Secretary, to make representations on behalf of her members regarding recruitment and staffing levels as part this review.

Lesley was asked if, in her discussions with Chorley Council staff who were UNISON members, there had been any general patterns / trends in respect of views expressed on recruitment and staff retention.

Lesley referred to a meeting held the previous day where she had been chatting to apprentices and the following trends were identified from the feedback given:

- There appeared to be some inconsistency when comparing the apprentices' experiences in different departments, for example comparing customer services with 'back office' functions such as revenues and benefits.
- Customer services apprentices felt that due to more experienced staff leaving, staff training was being left to less experienced staff.
- Customer services apprentices felt that pressure to meet performance indicators (e.g. in relation to answering phone calls) was impacting on their capacity to learn effectively. They also said that they did not feel sufficiently confident or experienced enough to deal with the volume of calls.

Hollie Walmsley, Head of HR acknowledged some of the issues associated with Customer Services, provided some context and explained ways in which the Council had addressed those issues. She indicated that there had been a planned review of customer services at Chorley, which was then delayed due to the move to shared services. During that period, a number of people left the Council and in addition, as the experience gained in customer services was often in high demand, staff in the team tended to quickly move on to other areas in the organization.

Hollie indicated that the shared services arrangement had now been implemented, and a number of vacancies had been filled. The Council had identified the need, and now appointed, a dedicated Training Officer for the customer services team. She also stressed that this year was the first time a cohort of 18 apprentices had been taken on, and the lessons learned will lead to an improved experience next year as part of long term plan.



A member of the Task Group asked Lesley if she was aware of any situation where lack of staff in post; wrong skill mix / level training; terms and conditions, pay or morale - have led to service failure or poor level of service that have affected the running or reputation of this Council.

Lesley indicated that she was not aware of any specific instance where the above issues had led to service delivery failure. However, she was aware of instances where staff had left the council for increased pay and that subsequently services had suffered due to staff leaving. She said that a lot of services had been cut right to the bone. She cited the example of Housing Options, where experienced staff had been lost. Salaries at Chorley were often less competitive than other local councils e.g. Preston City Council.

Lesley stressed that dedicated staff work very hard to prevent service delivery failure. The feedback from staff was a general feeling that some services were close to the edge.

The Chair enquired as to whether figures could be obtained regarding staff sickness and where this attributed to staffing levels. Hollie Walmsley indicated that absences due to mental ill health are complex and often there are a combination of factors. The Vice Chair however felt strongly that the information would be helpful to the Task Group.

Lesley indicated that the feedback she had received from apprentices in customer services was that that they were just about managing to meet their time allocation for learning and development associated with their apprenticeship, compared to other departments such as Council Tax and Revenues and Benefits where apprentices were allocated specific time for this purpose (which should be 20% - about 1 day per week).

Lesley acknowledged that for the first cohort of apprentices, there was less paperwork whereas for the second cohort, a training officer had introduced personal development plans so it was an improved experience, however some of it was being completed in their own time not work time.

Hollie Walmsley indicated that the 20% time allocation was part of their employment contract and she would prioritise addressing this following the feedback received. It was also planned that apprentices would meet with their line manager to see what their aspirations are and how the Council can better support them e.g. if they want to move to another service area.

The Task Group then discussed issues arising from Aged Debts (which had been identified in a report to Governance Committee). Hollie Walmsley explained that the Council had been pulled up on its ineffective processes in that individual services had not been chasing up / collecting on their debts, and it was customer services' role to keep a record of those debts. The Council was to implement a solution where ownership was taken by each service of their debts – the issue was not specifically related to recruitment or retention of staff.

The Task Group also discussed staffing levels in procurement; Hollie Walmsley informed members that this had been addressed with the creation of two extra posts.

The Task Group discussed the issues of recruitment and retention more generally, with a view to identifying positive measures the Council was not already taking. It was noted that Chorley Council offered an excellent benefits package e.g. discounts at local businesses. It was acknowledged that due to the current financial climate and cost of living crisis some people would prioritise salary over other benefits. However, in comparison with other Lancashire Councils, Chorley offered very good terms and conditions particularly in the area of mental health and wellbeing. Hollie Walmsley informed members that this included the following:

- Signposting
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Counselling
- 1-2-1 discussions with line manager, identifying what we can do as an organisation to support employees, and to try and remove any barriers

The Task Group requested that figures be obtained regarding staff sickness to indicate where this linked to issues with recruitment and retention in specific services.

**The Task Group agreed that one of its recommendations would be that the Council actively promotes health and wellbeing (including mental health) support available as part of its overall employee benefits package.**

#### Recruitment Strategy Update – New Recruitment Website

Hollie Walmsley presented a working draft of the new recruitment website which will go live on 8 January 2024.

During the presentation Hollie explained that:

- the site will contain job descriptions, videos, and employee stories;
- applicants will be able to register, login and upload their CVs, allowing the Council to search for skills;
- enable monitoring of equality and diversity information. The Council had also been assisted in its Recruitment Strategy by the learning experiences of Leicester University, which had spotted trends e.g. on interview panels, and how they were able to improve their recruitment practices by having more mixed and diverse panels.

Overall, members were very positive about the website.

You can view the new recruitment website here ([About Us - Chorley South Ribble](#))

Data on Pulse Survey (Staff Survey)

Emily Monk, Transformation Officer provided the following Pulse Survey data for Chorley Council:

Response Rate:  
June 2022 – 103  
May 2023 – 103

Employee satisfaction:  
June 2022 – 68%  
May 2023 – 82.52%

**Meeting – 30 November 2023**Staff Sickness Figures – specifically where they are linked to recruitment and retention issues

The Task Group was provided with the following information:

In total, since April 2023 for services shared with SRBC (regardless of the employer of the person) or Chorley council employees:

788 days of absences recorded for mental ill health - 30 instances in total

181 days lost attributed wholly or in part to work - 6 instances, 5 people

Of the 181 days wholly or in part attributable to work, two absences of 19 and 20 days respectively were attributed to workloads.

These two absences were both within customer services, both are South Ribble employees working within a shared service.

Arising from queries from members, Hollie informed members that there was not one service disproportionately represented, the figures just highlighted overall trends. She confirmed that in some service areas, (e.g. relating to the Local Plan), staffing issues related to difficulty to recruit rather than sickness.

Responses to Survey Questions – Senior Management Team

At the request of the Task Group, Hollie Walmsley circulated a survey to members of the Senior Management Team regarding recruitment and staff retention.

The full set of questions and responses are attached at Appendix F to this report.

Hollie Walmsley gave a presentation on the survey responses received. The responses reflected issues and trends already identified during the course of the study, but they also detailed what measures had been taken to address and hopefully resolve those issues.

Some examples were:

- Finance – issues had been resolved by the implementation of a longer term strategy including the creation of ‘career grade’ posts.
- Use of consultants for planning policy and planning enforcement;
- ICT – using external partners / consultancy where appropriate;
- ICT – career progression – as individual skills develop, salary and expectation increase. So the more basic level tasks are delegated to another person (e.g. at entry level) or are automated through use of technology
- Director of Communities – re-examined their approach to graduate positions, in terms of career progression

Hollie explained that sometimes using a consultant was better value for money, for instance where recruitment costs are high and the post is required less than five days a week. In such instances, the monies would be re-allocated from the staffing budget to another budget.

In some circumstances, outsourcing is more appropriate (having a “bank” of agency staff). The most important thing is to ensure that whatever approach is used, it demonstrates best value for money.

It was important to acknowledge that in some sectors, such as building control and ICT, there would be a higher turnover of staff due to the attraction of better pay in the private sector. In addition, ICT had an extra level of competitiveness due to the fact the industry can recruit internationally as often roles can be performed remotely. One option would be to become a sponsored employer and so recruit non UK residents. It was also noted that as yet not all the vacancies had been filled following the ICT restructure. Arising from the discussion, Hollie clarified that all staff who attend late/evening meetings outside the flexi time bandwidth are entitled to time off in lieu.

Hollie summarised that the issues cited in the survey were being addressed as part of shorter or longer term plans (such as in the examples given) and/or as part of a new recruitment strategy.

### **Meeting – 14 December 2023**

One member highlighted that the latest version of the corporate risk register was made available to the Governance Committee at the last meeting on 29 November 2023 (Agenda page 98) Risk 5, directly related to lack of resources money and staff to deliver services. Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources was asked to provide a risk update to give a full picture of the current position and any mitigating actions currently being taken.

Hollie Walmsley indicated that the initial report presented to the Task Group in September 2023 outlined 5 main objectives:

- a. Implement a recruitment system with a focus on candidate experience and manager self-service;
- b. Develop an employer brand to increase proactive recruitment ability and communicate this brand;
- c. Use a data-based approach to support workforce planning and recruitment trends;
- d. Develop a diverse talent pool;
- e. Upskill managers to be confident and capable recruiters.

She informed members that since September 2023 progress made was as follows:

**Implement a recruitment system with a focus on candidate experience and manager self-service.**

The new Eploy system has now been implemented and will go live on 8 January 2024 to capitalise on the increased numbers of active job searchers in the new year.

Eploy has been fully tested with managers across the councils and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The front end of the system is the recruitment microsite which was demonstrated to the task group in November. The enhanced functionality of this system will enable a data-based approach to recruitment, and to manage our talent pool.

**Develop an employer brand to increase proactive recruitment ability and communicate this brand.**

Activity to develop the employer brand includes the use of LinkedIn and other externally focussed media channels.

Additionally, since October 2023:

- a. A series of LinkedIn masterclasses have been delivered to Shared Leadership Team (SLT) – following which we have seen increased use and posting on LinkedIn by SLT.
- b. Two articles have been published in the Management Journal to aid senior recruitment.

**Upskill managers to be confident and capable recruiters**

A series of masterclasses are planned to follow the implementation of the new system, to support the processes around it. These masterclasses will include:

- Advert writing
- Interview techniques
- Passive vs active job seekers and the differing approaches

In-person training on the recruitment system has taken place.

Coaching with managers has improved the outcomes of recruitment drives.

### **Benefits**

From September -December 2023, across both councils, 69 roles have been advertised and 64 have been filled, a success rate of 93%.

The use of direct approaches to passive candidates has enabled the appointment of 2 software developers, a cyber security officer, and a bio-diversity net gain officer. These are very difficult posts to fill.

The average time to hire has reduced from 53 days to 29 – time to hire is defined as the time from when a vacancy is created to when a formal offer of employment is made.

The Council has appointed 5 senior leaders on the first attempt and the quality of the applicants was extremely high.

The Task Group thanked Hollie for the updated information. She was also requested to obtain comparative information from other local authorities which will be provided on an annual basis, in line with other local authority reporting frequency.

### Interview with the Executive Member (Resources), Councillor Peter Wilson

The Executive Member (Resources), Councillor Peter Wilson, attended the meeting to relate his views and perspective on the issues raised during the course of the review.

He highlighted the following points in relation to recruitment and staff retention at Chorley:

- As a relatively small district – we do very well to recruit and retain high quality candidates especially in respect of shared services, where there is more responsibility and expectations of the candidates appointed. For example, we recently carried out a recruitment to vacancies within Senior Management Team and were able to attract and appoint very good candidates to the posts. This was reflected in both shared and non- shared services and could be attributed to the key elements of pay and employee benefits / support forming part of the attractive Chorley offer.  
Chorley Council compares favourably with its neighbouring local authorities.
- It was acknowledged that certain teams (e.g. ICT, planning) experience certain recruitment challenges due to the pay being higher in the private sector. The gaps in specialist areas like planning are a concern.
- In respect of customer services, it was noted that the team had recently moved to shared services and there were challenges, however the situation was moving in the right direction. Councillor Wilson acknowledged that the issue regarding apprentices being put under pressure had been identified and there

was a need to allow time for people to develop skills balanced against the demands of the service.

Arising from questions by the Task Group, Councillor Wilson made the following further points:

- Despite reports in the national media about some Councils experiencing financial difficulties, Chorley is fortunate to be in a financially stable position. It therefore has the advantage to promote itself as an employer able to offer a good career in local government.
- Councillor Wilson saw his role as Executive Member (Resources) to hold officers to account and provide challenge to ensure that human resources were in place to deliver the Corporate Strategy and the Council's Policies.
- The Council is committed to quality apprenticeships, and going forward we will ensure that our stated aims, development plans, mentoring etc. are all specified as part of the package we offer. The Council does not want to rely on apprentices to deliver a service and will ensure a blend of apprentices and experienced staff within teams.

The Task Group thanked the Executive Member (Resources) for his attendance.

### Conclusions

The Task Group reviewed all the evidence, interviews and discussions that had taken place. It then considered its conclusions in light of the aims and objectives of the scrutiny review.

The conclusions were as follows:

- 1.The Task Group are satisfied that the new Recruitment Strategy is tackling the issues identified in the report.
- 2.That service delivery is being maintained; however it should be highlighted that there are challenges in certain service areas as identified during the course of the review.
- 3.That Executive Members and Directors hold heads of service to account where on occasion performance gaps are being attributed to lack of staffing, when there are other identifiable reasons.
- 4.That the Task Group recognises the dedication of all its employees and thanks them for their hard work.

### Recommendations

1. That the Council's Senior Management Team be requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council working towards the Living Wage Accreditation, and if promising, present their proposals to Executive Cabinet
2. That the Council actively promotes health and wellbeing (including mental health) support available as part of its overall employee benefits package.
3. That the Executive Member for Resources monitor recruitment and retention figures over the next 6 – 12 months especially in identified key risk areas
4. That a member learning session be arranged on an annual basis to update on workforce planning
5. To include performance reporting data on recruitment and staff retention on the new members portal.



**Appendices**

Appendix A -Scoping Document

Appendix B – [Exit interviews and exit interview questionnaire - analysis](#)

Appendix C – [Briefing note regarding role of Chief Executive and Elected Members](#)

Appendix D – [Recruitment Strategy – full report to SMT](#)

Appendix E – [People Strategy presentation](#)

Appendix F – [Responses given by SMT to survey questions](#)

Appendix A

## Scrutiny Inquiry Project Outline

### Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry Project Outline

**Review Topic:**

**Retention and Staff Recruitment**

**Objectives:**

- To ensure service delivery is maintained
- To identify service areas at risk of failure and to look at how we can make recommendations to address this
- To identify aspirations and capacity for improving services

**Desired Outcomes:**

- To achieve accreditation and awards for staffing
- To improve organisational reputation
- To maintain service delivery
- To retain staff
- Work to achieve the real living wage accreditation
- Attract and retain the best workforce

**Terms of Reference:**

Members of the Task Group will be clearly focussed on the high level, policy and strategic aspects of the retention and recruitment of staff, which is within the scope of councillors’ role in decision making as per Governance arrangements within the Constitution.

The Task Group will only scrutinise operational processes (which is within the remit of officers) insofar as they may be impacting service delivery and/or impacting our role as councillors.

**Equality and diversity implications:**

Oversight into recruitment processes, which impact on equality and diversity issues (e.g. accessibility for people with a disability or neurodivergent)

**Risks:**

- To identify instances, if any, where service delivery is at risk due to recruitment and staff retention issues
- Manage expectations
- Ensure activities of the task group do not impede and impact ongoing work or relationships.
- Avoid scope creep.

**Venue(s):**

Town Hall, Market Street, Chorley.

**Chair: Councillor Le Marinel**

**Timescale:**

**Start: September 2023**

**Finish: December 2023**

**Information Requirements and Sources:****Documents/evidence:**

- Clarification on role of head of paid service as regards recruitment and staff retention and the role of councillors
- Breakdown of recruitment – vacancies
- Full set of standard employee Terms and Conditions
- Recruitment Strategy & Process
- Oversight of workforce planning
- Benchmarking retention, recruitment figures
- Selection training (for managers)
- Exit interview data – themes
- HR policies
- Oversight into recruitment processes – Accessibility, Equality and Diversity
- Process of accreditation to become a Living Wage Employer
- Staff surveys/pulse surveys

**Witnesses:**

- Directors and relevant Executive Members
- Unison representative

**Consultation/Research:**

■ External benchmarking

Site Visits

n/a

**Officer Support:**

**Lead Officer: Hollie Walmsley  
(Head of HR)**

**Democratic and  
Member Services Officers: Clare  
Gornall**

**Likely Budget Requirements:**

<u>Purpose</u>	£
<b>Total</b>	_____

**Target Body<sup>1</sup> for Findings/Recommendations**

**Executive Cabinet**

---

<sup>1</sup> All project outcomes require the approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee before progressing

---

**Chorley**  
Council



This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank