

Executive Cabinet

Thursday, 22nd February 2024, 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley, and [YouTube](#)

Agenda

Apologies for absence

- 1 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 18 January 2024 of Executive Cabinet** (Pages 5 - 10)

- 2 **Declarations of Any Interests**

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

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

- 3 **Public Questions**

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

Matters Referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (introduced by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Aidy Riggott)

- 4 **Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Recruitment and Staff Retention** (Pages 11 - 52)

To receive the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group and accept it for consideration, with a view to the Executive Cabinet's recommended response to the recommendations being reported to a future meeting.

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

- 5 **Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q3** (Pages 53 - 74)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Finance.

6 **Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q3**

(Pages 75 - 84)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Finance.

7 **Chorley Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24**

(Pages 85 - 104)

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

8 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

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

By Virtue of Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Condition:

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

The Companies Act 1985

The Friendly Societies Act 1974

The Friendly Societies Act 1992

The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978

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

The Charities Act 1993

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

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

Item of Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) (Introduced by Councillor Alistair Bradley)

9 **Deliver Improvements to Local Service Centres**

(Pages 105 - 114)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Planning and Property.

10 **Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

Chris Sinnott
Chief Executive

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

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

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

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

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Minutes of	Executive Cabinet
Meeting date	Thursday, 18 January 2024
Committee Members present:	Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Howarth, Alistair Morwood, Margaret France and Adrian Lowe
Observers present:	Councillors Julia Berry, Gordon France, and Tommy Gray, with Councillors Michelle Beach, Aaron Beaver, Alan Cullens, Craige Southern and Alan Whittaker (attended virtually)
Officers:	Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Director of Governance), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance) Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities and Leisure), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Caroline Wolfenden (Director of Change and Delivery) Polly Patel (Performance and Partnerships Manager), and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

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

48 **Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of any interests.

49 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 7 December 2023 of Executive Cabinet**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held 7 December 2023 of Executive Cabinet be approved as a correct record.

50 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

51 **Draft 24/25 Budget Update**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out the draft budget position for the council for 2024/25, and the forecast for 2025/26, which reflected the information contained within the provisional Local Government Financial Settlement.

In summary, it was explained that the council was in a good position, and unlike other councils, there was not the looming prospect of bankruptcy or the need for a Section 114 notice. The council would be able to continue to deliver services outlined within the report, address the needs of the residents and achieve its corporate priorities. It was acknowledged that there was a budget gap of £1.5m for the year 25/26, however, through efficient saving, revenue through investments and cooperative working, there was optimism.

Decision:

That Members agree the contents of the 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 recommendation:

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

Other options considered and rejected:

None – this is the draft budget and alternative budgets may be considered as part of the final budget proposals.

52 Fees and Charges 2024-25

Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out the current position around fees and charges and the proposals for 2024/25. If agreed, the increases would be implemented from 1 April 2024, or the most suitable date after.

The 10p a week increase for garden waste was viewed to be reasonable. With Tatton Gardens, there was a leak prior to Christmas that delayed the move of some occupants. The process of how lets usually became available and let at Tatton Gardens was explained, and how it was a different process to where occupants move out. There was understood to be a list of applicants seeking accommodation at Tatton Gardens.

Decision:

- 1. To note the current levels of budgeted fees and charges and the issues specific to these;**
- 2. To approve an uplift in the Strawberry Fields service charge of £1 per square foot to better reflect the current costs incurred at the site, as detailed at point 29.**
- 3. To approve an uplift in the rents of all Council owned housing (including Extra Care but excluding Cotswold House) of 7.7%. This is the approach agreed by Executive Cabinet in July 2022 of increasing these rents by CPI plus 1%, where CPI is based on the rate applicable at September each year. As service charges and utility charges are still broadly in line with the**

actual costs incurred, there is no proposal to increase these; these were reviewed last year.

4. To approve an increase in rent at Cotswold House of 3.07%, plus an increase in service charge of 7.52%, but with a reduction in the personal charge of 13.47% as detailed in point 28.
5. To approve an increase in the core charges for the Lancastrian by 6.7% as per point 33.
6. To approve the changes to the structure of community centre hire charges as per point 32 and Appendix 4. Report of Meeting Date Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources)) Executive Cabinet 18th January 2024 Agenda Page 23 Agenda Item 5
7. To approve an increase of £12.80 per annum for the allotment plots that have water access and a 6.7% increase for the plots with no water access as per point 30.
8. To approve the changes to the structure of Other Licensing Fees, Housing and Pest Control as per point 34 and Appendix 3.
9. To approve a general increase of up to 6.7% in the fees for 2024/25, limited to the services listed in Table 3 of Appendix 1. Given that the rate of CPI in September was running at 6.7%, and RPI at 8.9%, the recommended uplift is in line with CPI.
10. To note that fees and charges in respect of Astley Hall will be reviewed during the year as part of the commercial strategy review.
11. To approve a change to the split of cost in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates Court Summons and Liability Orders as per point 35. The overall cost will remain the same.
12. To approve the full list of fees and charges for upload onto the Council website. Recommendations to Council
13. To recommend to Council an increase in garden waste collection charges of £5.00 as per point 31.

Reasons for recommendations:

To ensure that fees and charges are set at appropriate levels and are publicly available.

Other options considered and rejected:

No other options considered as we are required to review fees and charges each year.

Payment Strategy

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Customer and Digital which set out to review the proposed Payment Strategy.

The new Payment Strategy aimed to encourage on demand methods, and be easy, stress free and intuitive for users. Within the Strategy, it was made clear that cash payments would still be accepted at Union Street, in addition to the 69 establishments across the borough that accept payment on behalf of the council.

Decision:

Executive Cabinet to approve the Payment Strategy to be implemented at Chorley Council.

Reasons for recommendation:

To ensure that the payment methods used to transact with those using council services are up to date and 'on demand' to meet the expectations of customers.

Other options considered and rejected:

The council could continue to operate without a Payment Strategy, resulting in being unable to meet the needs and expectations of those customers who prefer to use 'on demand' payment methods.

54 Updated Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Delivery Approach 2024-25

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member for Early Intervention, presented the report of the Director of Communities. Which sought approval to deliver the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme by retaining the management fee to fund dedicated resources within the Communities team, and to commission HAF delivery partners by employing a tiered grant funding approach.

Decision:

- 1. To approve the recruitment of a fixed-term HAF Coordinator within the Communities team to coordinate the programme. This post is subject to final grant funding being confirmed but will be funded from the 10% management fee within the grant.**
- 2. To approve the approach to commissioning HAF delivery partners through a tiered grant fund approach.**

Reasons for recommendations:

Including HAF delivery within the Communities team presents opportunity to build additional value into the programme for the benefit of residents.

Other options considered and rejected:

To procure a contractor to manage the delivery of the HAF programme does not present best value for residents.

55 Exclusion of the Public and Press

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

56 Approval for the Contract Award Procedure for ICT Hardware, Software and Support Services

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the report of the Director of Customer and Digital, which set out to highlight the proposed shared procurement for ICT hardware, software, and support, and to seek agreement to the shared of costs and assessment criteria.

Decision:

- 1. To approve the contract award procedure for a number of joint procurements with South Ribble Council outlined at Appendix One for software, hardware and support services.**
- 2. To approve the hierarchy for the procurement route outlined in paragraph 16.**

3. To approve the evaluation criteria of 80% cost and 20% quality.
4. That the decision to award is delegated to the Executive Member Resources at Chorley Council

Reasons for recommendation:

By jointly procuring these contracts it ensures alignment of software and hardware across both authorities supporting Shared Services.

Other options considered and rejected:

Each council could procure software independently, but this would make it very difficult to align software or services in future.

Chair

Date

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Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Recruitment and Staff Retention September – December 2023



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Introduction

From the Chair of the Task Group Councillor Michelle Le Marinell 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 Marinell
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 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.

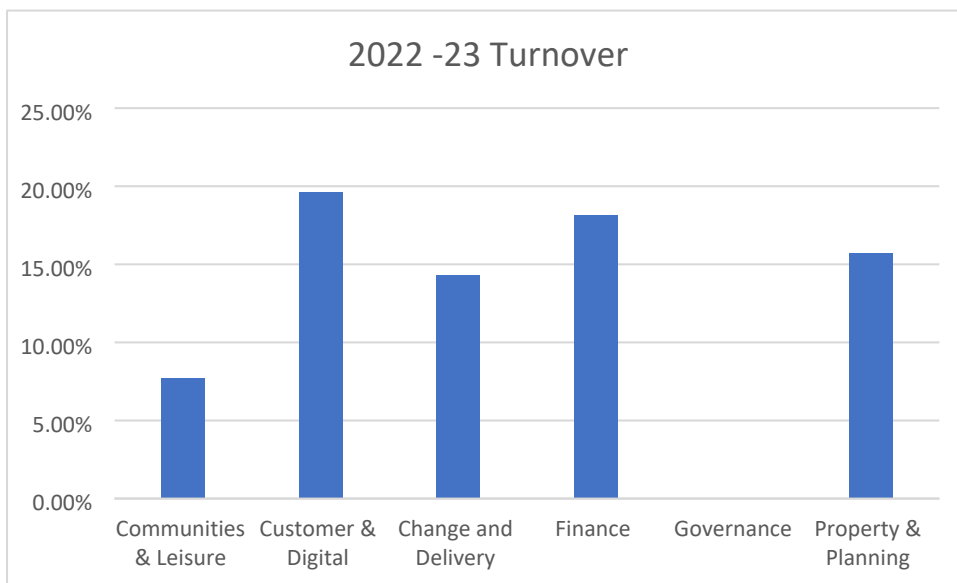
A copy of the scoping document can be found at appendix A to this report.

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):

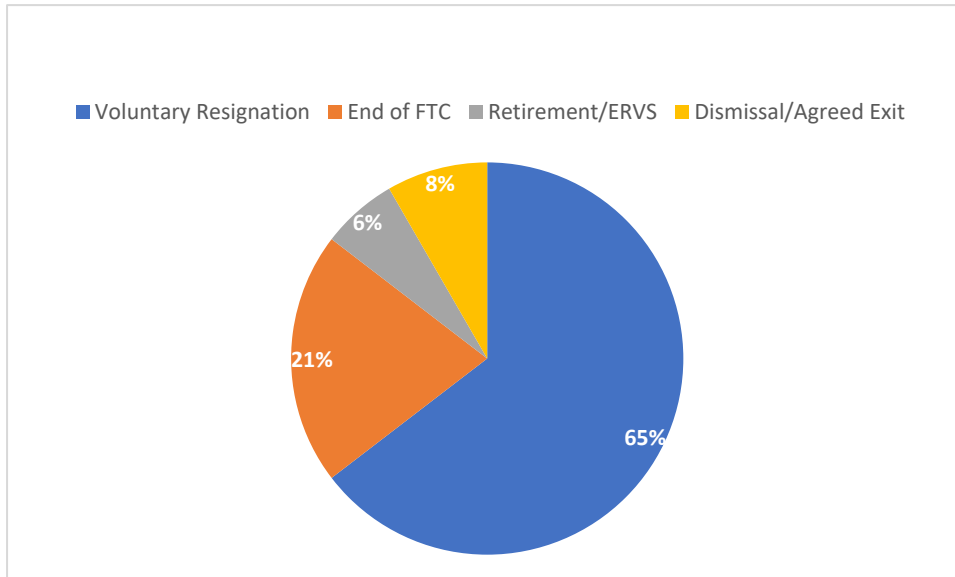
Turnover

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

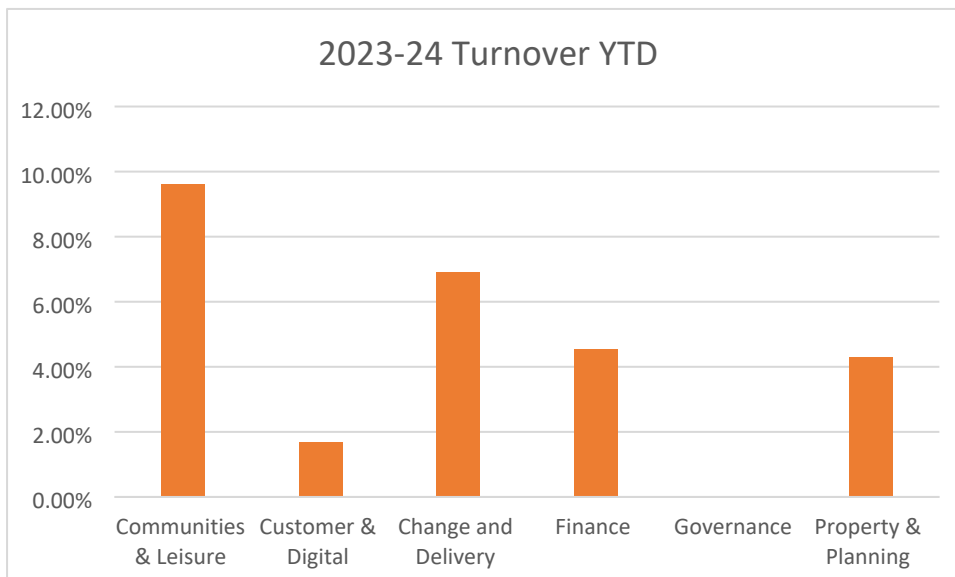


2. Within Customer and Digital 22 people exited:
 - a. 8 fixed term posts ended including 5 Seasonal Streetscene Operatives. Streetscene operates with an annual seasonal workforce.
 - b. 2 exits due to ERVS (Early Redundancy/Voluntary Severance)
 - c. 1 retirement
 - d. 11 resignations of which 5 were 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.

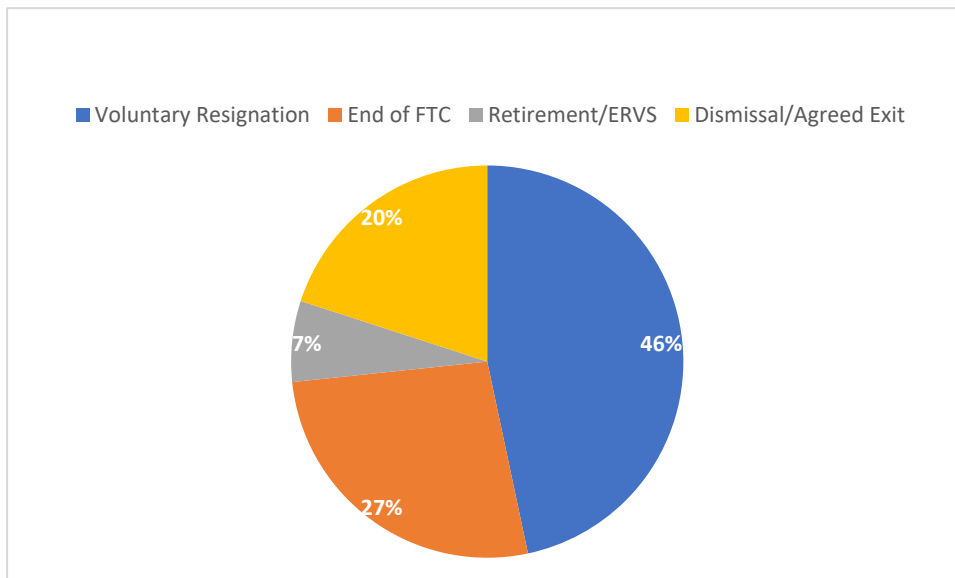


1. Year to date for 2023-24 turnover is 4.71%. The total leavers are 15.



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

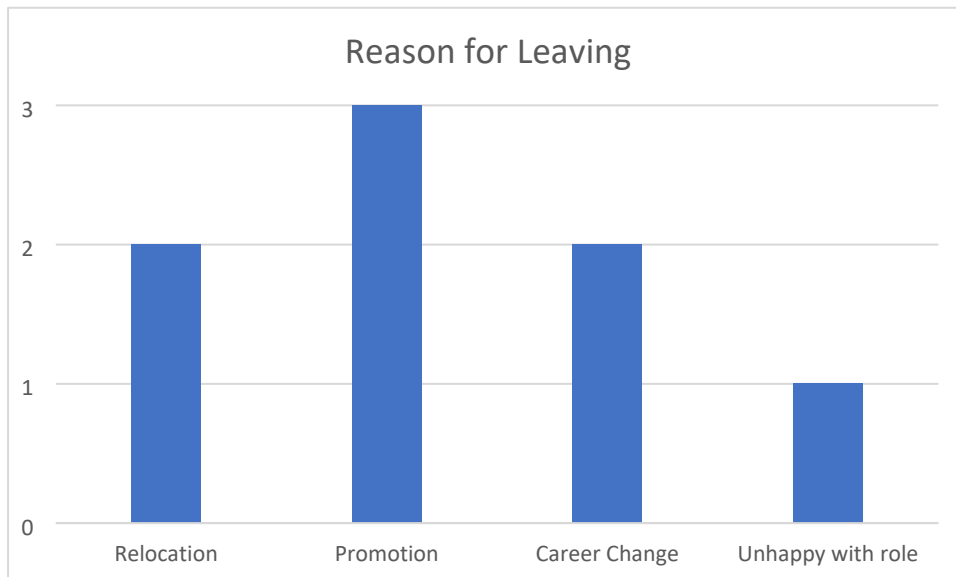
A note was also provided which clarified the respective roles of elected members and the Chief Executive with regard to staffing and recruitment. (See Appendix B).

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.

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:

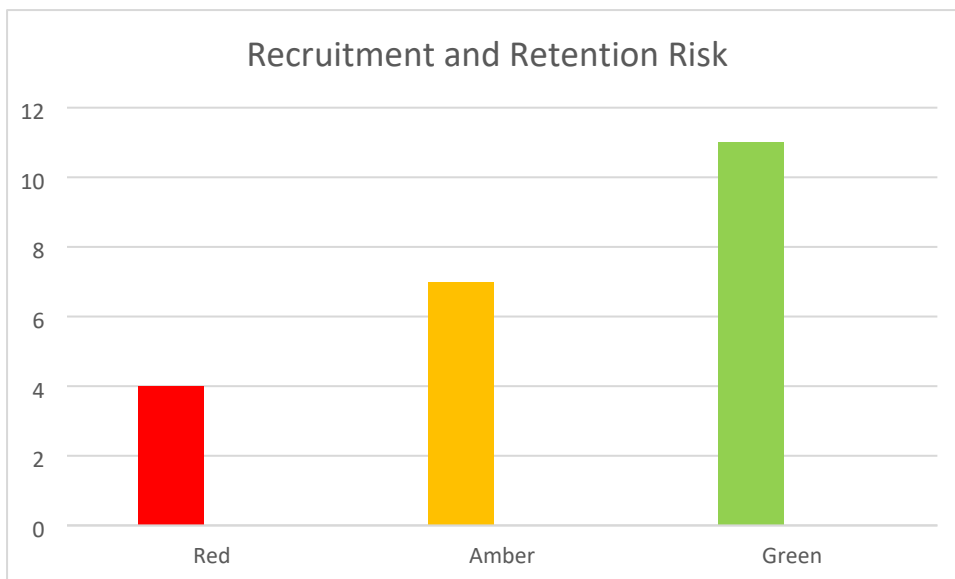
What	How	When
Implement a recruitment system with a focus on candidate experience and manager self-service.	Update on recruitment system procurement to be presented to SMT.	Implementation Q3 2023\24
Develop an employer brand to increase proactive recruitment ability and communicate this brand.	Define 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.

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	Influenced local educational providers to set up course Graduates and apprentices.

	Lack of local training providers	
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 C.

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 of 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.

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 – Briefing note regarding the role of the Chief Executive and Elected Members

Appendix C – People Strategy presentation

All background documents presented to the Task Group are available to councillors on the [modern.gov extranet](#).

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>	£
Total	_____

Target Body¹ for Findings/Recommendations

Executive Cabinet

¹ All project outcomes require the approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee before progressing

Appendix B

Recruitment and Staff Retention Task Group

Clarification regarding Role of Councillors and Role of Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service with regard to staffing and recruitment

Elected members and officers have distinct, but complementary roles in the way the Council is run and managed.

Elected members are responsible for taking decisions about strategy and policies of the Council. Officers are responsible for implementing those policies and carrying out the day-to-day functions of the Council.

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out that the Council must have an officer designated as Head of Paid Service responsible for:

- a) the manner in which the discharge of different functions is co-ordinated;
- b) the number and grades of staff required by the authority for the discharge of their functions;
- c) the organisation of the authority's staff; and
- d) the appointment and proper management of the authority's staff.

This statutory role and distinction is also enshrined in the Council's constitution, outlined below.

Role of Councillors

The role of councillors, as set out in Part 1 of the Council's Constitution is as follows.

Councillors main roles are:

- To act as champions for the community, representing and advocating for the whole community but with a particular responsibility for the residents of their Ward, including those who did not vote for them.
- **To contribute to setting the policies and budget of the Council.**
- Where they are Executive Members or members of regulatory committees, to take or participate in decision making on behalf of the Council.
- Either as members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees or individually to hold decision makers to account and to contribute to policy development
- **To promote improvements in services which benefit the Community.**
- To demonstrate high ethical standards and, in particular, to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct

Role of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) has overall corporate management and operational responsibility (including overall management responsibility for all officers). He or she gives professional advice to all parties in the decision-making process.

The Council's Employees

The Council's employees (usually called Officers) are responsible for the day-to-day delivery of Council services. Council Officers also offer advice to the Council's decision-making bodies and on the development and implementation of Council policies. Some Officers have powers delegated to them on behalf of the Council. Usually those will be decisions of a managerial nature or the more routine regulatory decisions. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely.

Extracts from the Constitution

Part 2, Article 9 of the Constitution states:

9.02 Functions of the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service

(a) The statutory functions of the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service are to report to the Council on:

- (i) the manner in which the discharge of the Council's functions is coordinated;
- (ii) the number and grade of staff required for the discharge of the Council's functions; and
- (iii) the organisation and proper management of those staff.

(b) Restrictions on functions. The head of paid service may not be the monitoring officer but may hold the post of chief finance officer if a qualified accountant.

Part C - Council Functions which the Council has delegated to an Officer of the Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 -

With regard to the Chief Executive, paragraph 1.2 states "Appointment of all staff below Director level, including power to authorise other officers to make such appointments on his or her behalf, whether generally, to posts within certain categories or descriptions or to specific posts on particular occasions, and to vary or withdraw any such authorisation given."

These principles are also referenced in **Part D – Executive Functions -**

PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING as follows:

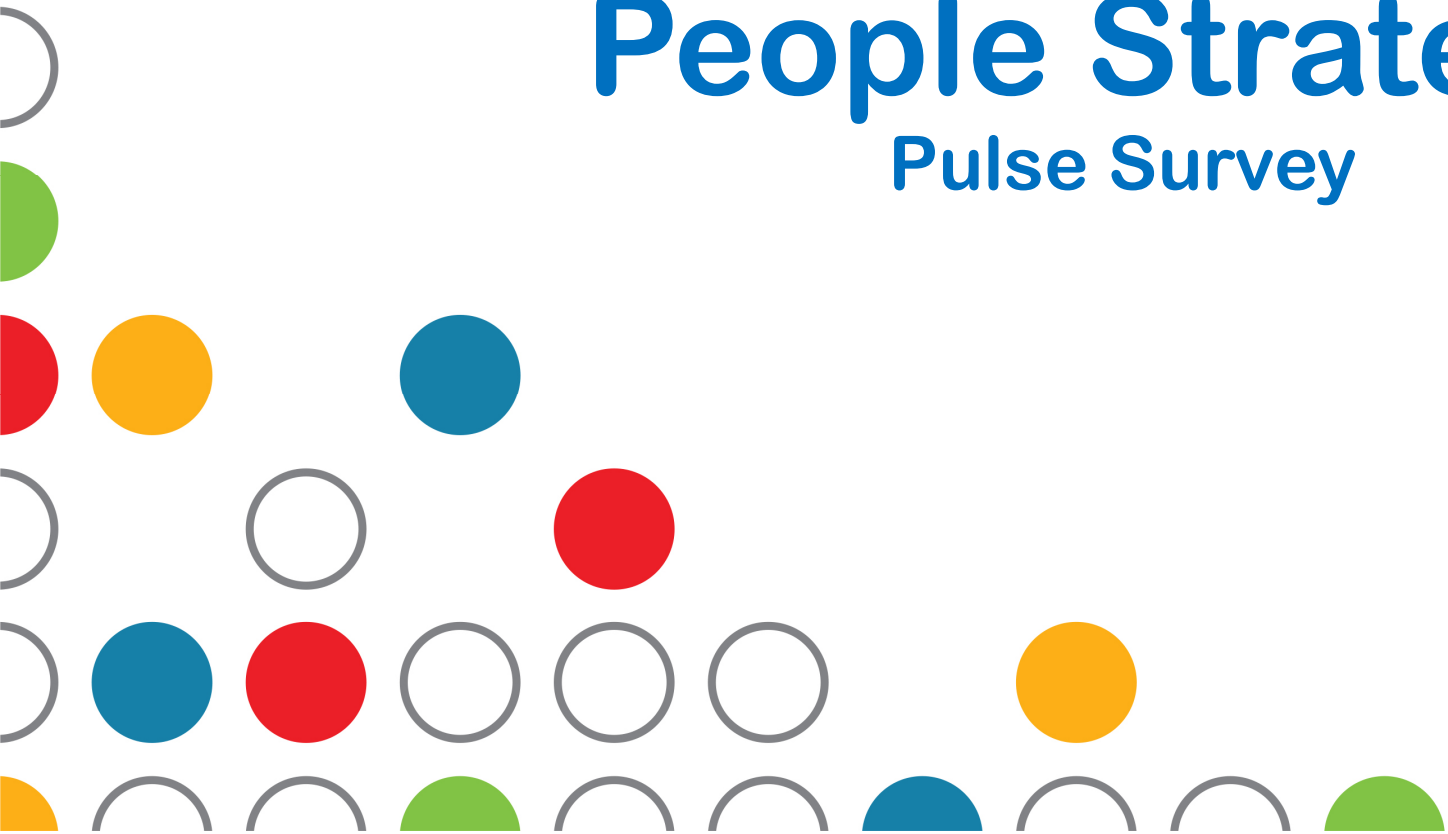
“Decisions of an operational or managerial nature should normally be made by Chief Officers. Decisions of a strategic nature would normally be made by Members.”

Chorley
Council



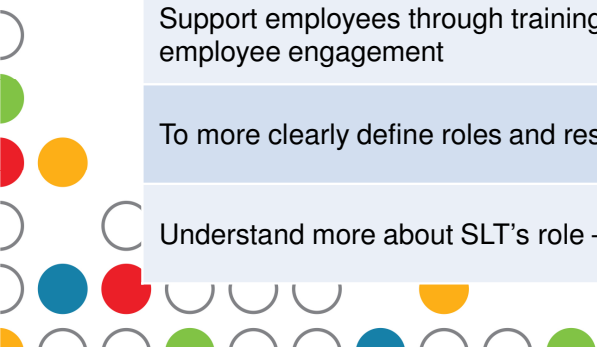
People Strategy

Pulse Survey



Pulse Survey feedback 2021/22

Employees Feedback	
To support employees with hybrid working	Passport to People Management Programme
Pockets of workload and capacity issues, primarily within harder to recruit to areas	End to end review of the recruitment and onboarding process Targeted recruitment in difficult to recruit to areas New apprenticeship and graduate offer
Consistency around 1-2-1s and team meetings	Management Framework
Access to well-being initiatives	Well-being resources, training and well-being activities
Improving internal communications – communication between teams and feedback mechanisms	Internal communication strategy Refresh of the staff intranets for better staff experience Leadership Development Programmes
ICT support around new systems and ways of working	ICT Project Programme
Develop managers to ensure consistent management and to support our employees	Passport to People Management Programme
Support employees through training and development opportunities and employee engagement	Through a range of People Strategy employee engagement initiatives
To more clearly define roles and responsibilities in some areas	Full review of terms and conditions and job descriptions
Understand more about SLT's role – increase their visibility	Director action plans



Latest Pulse Survey - May 2023

Strengths

Social Activities

- The new social activities were raised as a positive opportunity for employees to engage with new activities.

Resilience and Support

- Employees indicated that their immediate teams support them in meeting current workloads.

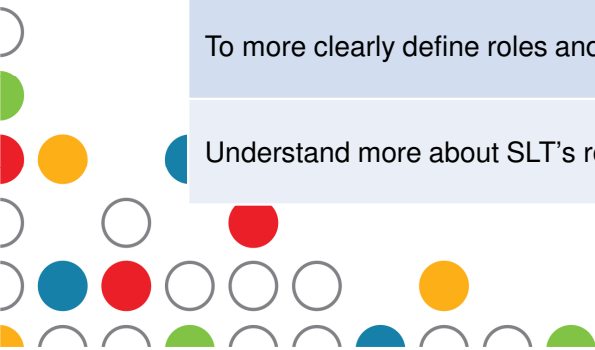
Hybrid Working

- Hybrid working was positively mentioned, indicating it helps with work-life balance.



Latest Pulse Survey - May 2023

Employee Feedback	Initiatives
Pockets of workload and capacity issues, primarily within harder to recruit to areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-led improvement programme will identify capacity needs within services and consider succession planning and vacancies. • Review of recruitment and onboarding projects • Targeted recruitment in difficult to recruit to areas • New apprenticeship and graduate offer to build our talent pool and to support with succession planning
Improving internal communications, how we communicate change and how we communicate across different teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the internal communication strategy and initiatives • New staff intranets to improve employee experience • Embedding the Management Framework • Digital Feedback Box promoting two-way communication • The new monthly staff email to replace Core Brief
ICT development and know more about how to access wider support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of the new IT helpdesk to support employees
Support employees through training and development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support employees through the new performance review process • The introduction of new training principles to support employee development
To more clearly define roles and responsibilities in some areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full review of terms and conditions and job descriptions.
Understand more about SLT's role – increase their visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership Team Development Programme



Key Initiatives - Communication



Internal Communication Strategy initiatives



Digital Feedback Box promoting two-way communication



New staff intranets to improve employee experience



The new monthly staff email to replace Core Brief



Embedding the Management Framework



Key Initiatives - Capacity



Service-Led improvement programme



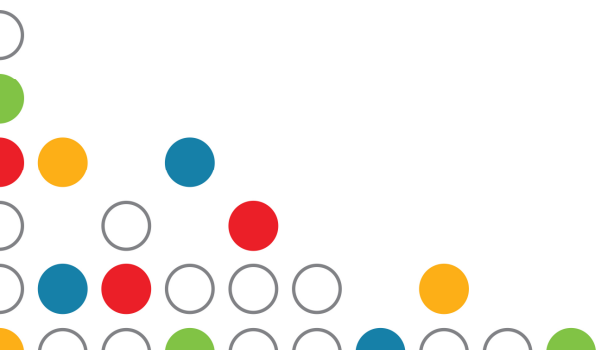
Recruitment and onboarding projects



Apprenticeship and graduate offer



Building our talent pool and succession planning



Key Initiatives – Ways of Working



Re-setting our culture through the It's All About us through the values & behaviours discovery



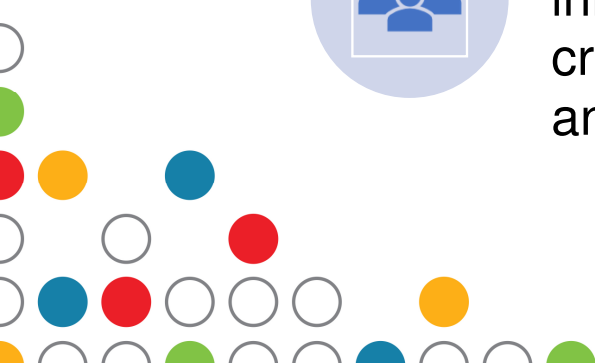
The introduction of new employee recognition initiatives



Cross Team Development Day initiative to support cross team learning and collaboration



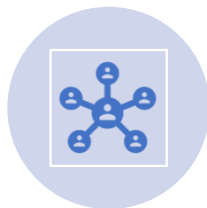
Tailored People Strategy initiatives through engagement and well-being activities.



Plans for the Future



New Recruitment System



Manager Network



Employee Recognition Programme



Employee Conference



Values driven organisation



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	22/02/2024

2023/24 Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and Reserves for the 9 months to 31st December 2023

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the revenue and reserves forecast for 2023/24 for the Council, based on the position at 31st December 2023.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To note the 2023/24 forecast outturn for revenue and the level of reserves, based on the position at 31st December 2023.
3. 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

4. To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Other options considered and rejected

5. None, it is a requirement to report quarterly on the Revenue Budget monitoring and Reserves.

Executive summary

6. Based on the position at 31st December 2023, the forecast outturn, including the unfunded budget pressure of £0.146m following the payment of the 2023/24 pay award in November 2023, is an overspend of £0.780m, as detailed in **Appendix 1**.
7. The forecasts are based on the actual income received and expenditure incurred for the 9 months to 31st December 2023, and on assumptions and projections made for these over the remaining 3 months of the year. The position may change over the coming months, however the figures presented provide the best estimate based on the current position and information available. The Council will work to contain net costs within the budget available, and to reduce the overspend over the coming months.

8. The Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy reported that the minimum level of general fund reserves should be maintained at £4.0m to cushion against any potential, future financial risks that may face the Council.
9. Based on the above forecast overspend, the level of general fund balances as at 31st March 2024 will be £3.991m; all efforts will be made to contain net costs within budget and to reduce the current forecast overspend. We will monitor the position during the year and report to members accordingly.

Corporate priorities

The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

Background to the report

10. The current net revenue budget for 2023/24 is £15.538m.
11. **Appendix 3** provides further information about the specific earmarked reserves that the Council holds at 31st December 2023.

Current Outturn Position – Revenue

12. The forecast revenue outturn, based on the position at 31st December 2023, shows a forecast overspend against the Council’s budgets of £0.780m. A breakdown of this by department within the various directorates is detailed in **Appendix 1**, and the movement on reserves and reserve balances, are outlined in **Appendix 3**. The main variances by directorate are detailed below;

13. Variations from Budget

Directorate	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Forecast 2023/24 at 31 Dec 2023 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
Property	832	1,501	669
Communities and Leisure	2,946	2,877	(69)
Customer and Digital	6,296	6,286	(10)
Planning	911	934	23
Policy and Governance	6,069	6,337	268
Major Projects	(5,149)	(4,405)	744
Financing and Other Budgets	3,633	2,907	(726)
Total Net Expenditure	15,538	16,437	899
Funding	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Forecast 2023/24 at 31 st December 2023 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend 2023/24 £'000
Council Tax	(7,807)	(7,807)	0
Business Rates	(7,265)	(7,265)	0
New Homes Bonus	(297)	(297)	0
Government Grants	(119)	(238)	(119)
Reserves	(50)	(50)	0
Total Funding	(15,538)	(15,657)	(119)
Net Outturn	0	780	780

14. The National Employers pay offer of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 was accepted and payment (including arrears) made in November 2023. The table below shows the overall implications of the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the provision of 5% included in the base budget.

Directorates	Pay Award including NI & Pension	Pay Award Budget at 5%	Net increase in cost
Property	110,838	90,197	20,641
Communities and Leisure	88,588	81,282	7,306
Customer & Digital	314,349	217,296	97,053
Major Projects	47,274	30,985	16,289
Planning	81,613	77,171	4,442
Policy & Governance	154,931	154,720	211
Total	797,593	651,651	145,942

15. With regard to utilities, based on current assumptions, there are pressures on gas, electricity, and water across all of our properties, resulting in an overspend of £614k (Qtr 2 - £405k). The overspend includes a further £99k of costs in the previous year for

increases in utilities that had not been accrued for in 2023/24. Although the utility budgets were increased by 50% compared to the levels set in 2022/23, they assumed that the price cap introduced by the government in 2022/23 would remain in place for 2023/24, unless energy prices significantly fell, and such a cap would not be required. After the budget was approved however, the government announced that they did not intend to continue with the price cap for 2023/24 and so whilst the forecast reflects the recent reduction in costs, the impact of the withdrawal of the cap has offset this.

16. The Council has variable rate energy contracts meaning that financial forecasting is difficult as prices are volatile with changes in the energy market. A further update has been received which indicates that the cost of utilities is likely to reduce by the start of the new financial year. This will continue to be monitored during the budget setting process over the coming months.
17. A proportion of the overall increase in costs, and therefore of the overspend, will be recovered as utility costs are recharged to our tenants where applicable (£163k); this is reflected in the figures in the table at point 13 above.

Explanation of key variances by Directorate are as follows:

18. Property – forecast £669k overspend (Month 6 - £697k overspend)

The key variances to note are:

- £59k net overspend on staffing costs across the directorate. The overspend is mainly due to use of agency staff (£138k) that is partially offset by increased recharges to South Ribble Council (£102k). The figure also reflects a reduction in the level of forecast Service Level Agreement income from Chorley Leisure Ltd and South Ribble Leisure Ltd (£17k combined). The overspend includes the cost of the pay award for 2023/24 (£21k) compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget (£20k).
- £43k reduction in market rental income due to vacant units, particularly in the food and beverage area. This is to be addressed in 2024/25 budget setting process.
- £187k overspend on utility costs as noted in point 15 above. As stated, these forecasts are based on current estimated rates but as the council is on variable rates, the position could still move as the year progresses. There have also been a number of unexpected invoices that have come through for previous years (£18k), particularly in respect of Market Walk.
- £319k overspend relating to reactive and planned maintenance within the directorate; £86k of this is due to expenditure on repairs and maintenance relating to previous years which the Property Services Team have been working to resolve.
- £35k overspend due to the purchase of new Christmas lights, including set-up and storage for the year. This overspend has been offset by the utilisation of repair and maintenance related reserves of £35k.
- £64k overspend due to an increase in the provision for bad debts in line with the council's accounting policy which makes 100% provision for all debts over one year old. If the debts are recovered, then the provision will be reduced and the charge to the revenue budget will be reversed, thereby creating an underspend.

- £38k reduction in investment property income due to void units (both part and full year) and a reduced level of rental income secured on one site.
- £90k net increase in income relating to recharges above those budgeted for on heating and lighting, as well as grants received in respect of Cotswold Supported Housing and an increase in rental income for general let/affordable housing.
- £49k net overspend at Cotswold due to the increase in the cost of the security contract, the internal recharges for grounds maintenance and laundry expenses and various other non-staffing costs.

19. Communities and Leisure – forecast £69k underspend (Month 6 - £69k underspend)

The key variances to note are:

- £19k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate compared to budget. This includes agency staff costs offset by a member of staff moving to an externally funded post and includes the costs of the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget (£7k).
- £61k underspend on temporary accommodation compared to budget as there has been a reduction in the demand on the homelessness budget. This underspend is largely due to the additional £70k, non-recurring budget uplift provided for in 2023/24 for homelessness.
- £11k overspend relating to various small variances within the directorate.
- The Communities and Leisure directorate is carrying forward various significant grants, totalling £994k, either in the revenue budget for 2023/24 or in ear-marked reserves. At present, £317k of these grants have been utilised, and this figure is expected to rise over the remainder of the year. It is important to note that some of these grants must be used by March 2024 (e.g. the Homes for Ukraine Scheme ends in March 2024 - £499k) or they must be returned to the relevant awarding body.

20. Customer and Digital – forecast £10k underspend (Month 6 - £63k overspend)

The key variances to note are:

- £73k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate. This is mainly due to the staff vacancy savings within ICT Services offsetting staff vacancy rate provision of 2.5% that has not been achieved in several teams within the directorate as they are fully staffed, and the costs of the pay award for 2023/24 (£97k) compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget for this.
- £38k unbudgeted income received in respect of New Burdens funding and DWP (Department for Works and Pensions) payments.
- £161k overspend due to various IT costs such as computer software purchases, annual licences, maintenance security and support services. Whilst some of the overspend reflects inflationary pressures following retender exercises as contracts have expired, some of this is non-recurring as there have been one-off set-up costs associated with the new contracts, and/or some overlap in costs whilst moving from

the old contract to the new, to ensure a seamless continuity of service. This overspend is partly offset by utilisation of the IT Modernisation Reserve of £62k.

- £60k underspend in the FCC waste contract compared to budget as there has been a reduction in the payments made across the year to date in line with the terms of contract.
- £40k overspend in relation to additional cost to Streetscene transport, specifically fuel and new contract lease for the sweepers.
- £22k overspend relating to multiple variances within the directorate.

21. **Planning – forecast £23k overspend (Month 6 - £14k overspend)**

The key variances to note are:

- £47k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate compared to the budget for 2023/24. This is mainly due to staffing vacancies (£278) offset by the use of agency staff (£229k) within Enforcement Services and Development Control. The forecast also includes the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget (£4k).
- £163k forecast overspend on consultant fees, professional fees, statutory notices, and legal fees within the Planning Services budget, which reflects the external commissions taken due to the vacancies noted above. This overspend has been reduced by £45k income for Neighbourhood Planning and Bio-Diversity Net Gain grant and the utilisation of £70k of the Planning Appeals ear-marked reserve in relation to costs incurred within Planning Services, specifically related to appeals.
- £17k reduced level of income compared to budget on pre-plan applications, as the service is not fully operational.
- £5k overspend relating to various small variances within the directorate.

22. **Policy and Governance – forecast £268k overspend (Month 6 - £22k overspend)**

The key variances to note are:

- £265k net underspend on staffing across the directorate compared to the budget for 2023/24. The underspend is primarily due to the centralisation and movement of the budgets and expenditure for all Directors from the individual directorates above, to the Policy and Governance directorate; across the 'Director' budgets there is an underspend of £163k due to vacant posts. In addition to this, there are vacancies in the Finance Team (£26k) and the Corporate Policy and Partnership Team (£103k). These underspends are offset by agency staff costs within the Procurement team and the non-achievement of the staff vacancy provision of 2.5% across several teams within the directorate who are now fully staffed. The forecast also includes the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget.
- £52k overspend in relation to the members allowance salary uplift as agreed by the Council for the percentage increase in 2022/23 and 2023/24 of 5.95% and 5.62% respectively.
- £219k overspend due to the increased cost of utilities in council buildings, as referred to in point 15 above. As stated, these forecasts are based on current estimated rates

but as the council is on variable rates, the position could move in the final 3 months of the year. There have also been a number of unexpected invoices that have come through for previous years (£15k), particularly in respect of the Town Hall, Union Street Offices and Astley Park Coach House.

- £140k forecast overspend/under-recovery of income on the events (£70k) and tourism (£70k) budget.
- £62k overspend on future events over the remainder of the year, based on current levels of expected expenditure, including Winter Wonderland.
- £18k increase in income compared to budget due to the support provided by central government towards the increase in external audit fees following the Redmond Review, offset by a further increase in the external audit fee of £11k as the scale fee for 2023/24 has increased.
- £82k net increase in costs over the amount budgeted within Human Resources due to an increase in council wide recruitment fees, PAYE settlement agreements covering several years paid over to HMRC relating to the tax on employee benefits, together with additional IT software annual licence costs following re-procurement of contracts and a subsequent overlap in the running of the contracts.
- £15k increase in cost for subsidised bus services compared to budget. The cost has been re-estimated for 2023/24 based on the actual cost for 2022/23.
- £39k increase in income relating to the new lease for office space at the Union Street office.
- £19k of additional income over budget relating to work carried out within the Corporate Policy Team for the Primary Care Network.
- £28k net overspend relating to various other small variances within the directorate.

23. Major Projects – forecast £744k overspend (Month 6 - £568k overspend)

Further details of the major projects, including Market Walk, Strawberry Fields, the industrial units at Strawberry Meadows and the Extra Care schemes at Tatton Gardens and Primrose Gardens, are outlined in **Appendix 4**.

The key variances to note are:

- £69k forecast overspend on the Market Walk investment (Q2 £102k overspend) – this includes;
 - £6k overspend on staffing due to the level of the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% provision included in the base budget, and the fact that at this point in time the forecast would indicate that the staff vacancy rate provision of 2.5% will not be achieved;
 - £37k forecast increase in electricity costs;
 - £395k overspend due to an increase in the provision for bad debts in line with the council's accounting policy, however this overspend is being offset by utilisation of reserves – Capital Bad Debt reserves of £104k and Market Walk Income Equalisation reserves of £271k;
 - £58k net over-recovery of rent, service charge income and insurance recharges compared to budget. This figure includes an over-recovery of

- income of £147k arising from rental income (partly due to previous provisions made for bad debts which have now been reversed following settlement of tenant debts on completion of their new leases). This is offset however by a £99k overspend on service charge income due to management fee caps, temporarily void units and tenants excluding elements of service charges from their agreed tenancy agreements, such as seasonal decorations. The remaining income variance relates to insurance recharges and settlements;
- £40k overspend on reactive repairs at Market Walk and the processing of historic invoices which were not accrued for, including £9.5k invoices for works completed in 2021/22 and 2022/23;
 - £24k overspend on non-domestic rates due to vacant units;
- £103k overspend for Primrose Retirement Living (Q2 £61k overspend) - this includes;
 - £22k overspend on staffing, mainly due to an additional half post that is temporarily over and above the budgeted establishment, the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% included in the base budget and the fact that it appears unlikely at this point in time that the staff vacancy rate provision of 2.5% will be achieved;
 - £42k overspend on utility costs;
 - £81k overspend on repairs and maintenance, largely due to costs to re-decorate as well as repairs and maintenance spends relating previous years;
 - £34k net increase in service charge and rental income;
 - £8k net underspend relating to various small variances across several budget lines;
 - £183k overspend for Strawberry Meadows (Q2 £141k overspend) - this includes;
 - £169k reduced rental income due to the timing of the letting of several of the units compared to budget, along with marketing concessions made. 91.34% of the floor space is now occupied and discussions are in train to fill the remaining floor space;
 - £14k overspend on electricity costs, salting & gritting and promotional expenses;
 - £241k overspend for Tatton Gardens (Q2 £177K overspend) - this includes;
 - £42k overspend due to maintenance costs incurred as part of the contract and the purchase of fixtures and fittings and tools and equipment;
 - £34k overspend on income due to the timing of the letting of the commercial units compared to the budget assumptions;
 - £73k overspend on electricity costs largely due to a number of high-cost invoices coming through relating to 22/23;
 - £84k overspend on rent and service charges on the residential properties compared to budget. This is in part due to the staggered nature of moving tenants into the facility once the building became operational, as well as unforeseen issues including tenants withdrawing just prior to the agreed move-in dates. Also, we are currently forecasting an overspend (£49k) because of leaks in six of the flats leaving the rooms unlettable; options are being explored to recover the income;
 - £16k overspend on security costs due to increase in the value of the contract;
 - £8k net underspend relating to various small variances across several budget lines;
 - £148k overspend for Strawberry Fields (Q2 £86k overspend) - this includes;

- £17k overspend on staffing due to staff cover provisions and the pay award for 2023/24 compared to the 5% budget provision;
- £32k overspend on electricity due, in part due to several invoices relating to previous years coming through that had been accrued for;
- £50k overspend on reactive and planned maintenance;
- £42k net reduction in rental income from the offices, meeting rooms, hot desks, and pods and from service charges, compared to budget. 94% of the offices are occupied and this equates to 95% of the floor space. The new glass office accommodation is now complete and will be occupied from January 2024.
- £7k net overspend due to small variances on various codes including promotional expenses and professional fees;

24. Financing and Other Budgets – forecast £726k underspend (Month 6 - £607k underspend)

- This includes a £100k underspend on interest payable; given the slippage in the capital programme in 2022/23, the budget for 2023/24 has been refined to reflect that borrowing has been deferred compared to the cashflow forecast on which the interest payable budget was constructed. £10m of short-term borrowing was taken in March 2023 and further borrowing of £10m is anticipated before year end.
- Due to further Bank of England interest rate increases since the budget was set, Interest receivable is over-recovered against the budget by £280k due to a better rate of return on cash balances. Depending on cash flow demands over the remainder of the year, this may increase further.
- There is also an underspend of £125k on the Minimum Revenue Provision as a result of changes made after the budget was set for the mix of funding used to finance capital schemes in 2022/23, and also to reflect the slippage in the capital programme in 2022/23 as reported to Executive Cabinet in the 2022/23 Revenue Outturn Report in June 2023.
- £185k of the underspend relates to the release of the contingency budget that was created to cushion the impact of inflationary increases, over and above those specifically budgeted for in relation to the council's energy costs, pay award and other cost pressures. This offsets some of the overspends noted in the individual directorates above.
- £82k overspend due to a required increase in the Bad Debt Provision in line with the council's accounting policy for bad debts.
- £7k increase in compensatory added years pension payment compared to budget.
- £125k underspend due to the LCC (Lancashire County Council) transition funds included in the one-off budget for 2023/24 for an independent highways consultant that has not been required.

Funding – forecast £119k underspend

- £119k additional Revenue Support Grant income received compared to the budget set.

Other supporting information

25. Further information in respect of the variations noted above can be found as follows:

Appendix 4 – Property - Major Projects

26. Planned Reserves movement

- Reserves transactions have been reflected in the relevant service area.

General Fund Resources and Balances

27. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy reported that the minimum level of general fund reserves should be maintained at £4.0m to cushion against any potential, future financial risks that may face the Council.
28. The forecast level of general fund balances as at 31st March 2024 based on the detail covered in this report will be £3.991m.
29. The forecast is based on the actual income received and expenditure incurred for the 9 months to 31st December 2023 and on assumptions and projections made for these over the remaining 3 months of the year. As is expected, the position may change over the coming months however the figures presented provide the best estimate based on the current position and information available. The Council will work to contain net costs within the budget available and to reduce the overspend over the coming months.
30. As detailed at **Appendix 3**, as at 1 April 2023 the Council held a £4.271m in General Fund reserves to manage budget risks not covered by earmarked reserves or provisions within the budget. The movement based on the forecast outturn for 2023/24 and the transfer to General Fund during the year identifies that the General Fund closing balance will be £3.991m as detailed below:

Movement in General Fund Reserve

Summary of Movement in General Reserves	£'m
General Fund Reserves at 1 st April 2023	(4.271)
Forecast 2023/24 outturn revenue budget (surplus) / deficit	0.780
Movement from Earmarked Reserves to General Fund	(0.500)
General Fund Reserve Closing Balance 2023/24	(3.991)

31. **Appendix 3** provides further information about the specific earmarked reserves and provisions available for use throughout 2023/24.

Movement in Earmarked Reserves

32. Taking account of the adjustments highlighted in **Appendix 3**, the level of Earmarked reserves held for discretionary use by the Council at 31st December 2023 is £5.400m compared to a balance of £8.059m at 31st March 2023.

Summary of Movement in Earmarked Reserves	£'m
Earmarked Reserves at 1 st April 2023	(8.059)
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	
Release of S31 grant received and held in reserves in respect of Business Rates reliefs (this was provided by the Government during 2020/21 – the grant offsets the Business Rates deficit for 2020/21 brought forward on the Collection Fund into 2022/23)	0.312
Use of revenue reserves for Capital Financing	0.884
Transfer from Ear-Marked Reserve to General Fund Reserve re: remaining balance on the Business Rates Exceptional Payments Reserve no longer required (see point 37 below)	0.500
Transfers to Ear-Marked Reserves	(0.730)
Use of other specific Earmarked Reserves	1.693
Earmarked Reserves Closing Balance 2023/24	(5.400)

33. The £1.693m use of other specific Earmarked Reserves shown in the table above includes the following items:

- £75k use of Business Investment for Growth and Choose Chorley grant.
- £442k provision of extra support to Chorley Leisure Limited
- £49k use of Climate Change reserves.
- £44k use of NHS CCG Covid Support reserves.
- £84k use of Apprentices and Graduates reserves.
- £81k use of Customer & Digital reserves.
- £91k use of Elections reserves.
- £70k use of the Planning Appeals reserve.
- £193k use of Bus Station – Transition of service reserves.
- £62k use of ICT/Streetscene Modernisation reserves.
- £375k use of Market Walk Income Equalisation reserves and Capital Bad Debt reserves to offset the bad debt provision within Market Walk Investment.
- The remainder of the movements are various, smaller adjustments related to revenue spending.

34. The £730k transfer into ear-marked reserves comprises of £80k due to increases in forecast transfers from income generation and Communities and Local Plan budgets in 2023/24. There is also a transfer of £650k for the operation of Chorley Bus Station following transfer to the council from LCC.

35. The use of earmarked reserves shown in the table above are reflected in the revenue budget monitoring position detailed in this report.

36. Movement in Reserves – the Business Rates Exceptional Payments Reserves was created in 2020/21 to hold the funding provided by the Government during the Covid pandemic to offset the Business Rates deficit for 2020/21 that was brought forward on the Collection Fund into 2022/23. Adjustments for the smoothing of the 2020/21 deficit over a 3-year period have been made over the last couple of years in the accounts, resulting in a balance on the reserve of £1.222m. Of this, the current estimate for the final year of the smoothing adjustment is approximately £312k, however a contingency has been made for a further £210k, leaving a balance of £700k. As noted in the Quarter

2 report, the balance will be reallocated with a transfer of £200k to the Change Management Reserves to support review and restructure costs, and £500k to General Fund Reserves. There is a further transfer of £543k from the VAT Shelter Income – capital/revenue financing reserve, the Neighbourhood Working reserve, and the Market Walk – Asset Management reserve, into the Capital Repairs and Maintenance Reserves, to consolidate these related reserves.

- 37. Given the inflationary, cost and demand pressures faced by the council, alongside the uncertainty of future government funding, we have established a Budget Equalisation Reserves from the reserves previously established to support the recovery from the pandemic and cost of living crisis, in recognition of the fact that the potential financial challenges and risk presented are wider than these alone. In doing so we have amalgamated reserves that are already established for a similar purpose i.e £137k Policy and Governance General reserves. There is a further consolidation of a few reserves into Customer and Digital (i.e. £30k Government & other Grant Funding, £67k Waste Mobilisation, £32k Maintenance of Grounds).
- 38. As part of our regular review of reserves, we have transferred £189k of funding from the Income generation reserves to our Income Equalisation Reserve to mitigate against any future potential risk for property investment income.
- 39. Some reserves have been renamed as below:

Original Description	New Description
IDOX Migration	Civica Property Management
NHS CCG Covid Support Project	Social Prescribing
Communities - Neighbourhood	Refugees/Asylum Seekers Funding
Change Management Reserve	Delivery of the Transformation and Savings Programme Reserve

Climate change and air quality

- 40. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

- 41. None.

Risk

- 42. The forecasts above are based upon 9 months of the financial year and contain significant assumptions around pay awards, energy costs and interest rates. The volatility in these figures means it is likely there will be movement in the financial position over the final 3 months of the year which will be reflected in the next Quarterly Revenue Monitoring Report. These risks will be managed through budget monitoring and reporting and a cost centre level.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 43. The Financial implications are contained within this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- 44. There are no concerns with this report from the Monitoring Officers perspective.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revenue 2023/24 - position as at 31st December 2023

Appendix 2 – Revenue Budget Movements at 31st December 2023

Appendix 3 – 2023/24 Reserves Programme position at 31st December 2023

Appendix 4 – 2023/24 Major Projects position at 31st December 2023

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Hemangini Chevli, Neil Halton, Gaynor Simons	Hemangini.Chevli@chorley.gov.uk, Neil.Halton@chorley.gov.uk, gaynor.simons@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	19/01/24

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APPENDIX 1

Revenue 2023/24 - Forecast based on the position as at 31st December 2023

Directorate	Department / Section	Original Budget £'000	Budget at 31st December 2023 £'000	Forecast Outturn based on position at 31st December 2023 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
Property	Director - Commercial Services	107	-	-	-
	Employment, Skills & Business Support	92	92	73	(20)
	Facilities Management	222	222	274	52
	Income Generation	117	117	117	-
	Markets & Town Centre	149	149	261	112
	Property Services	694	268	797	529
	Housing Accommodation	(15)	(15)	(21)	(5)
Property Total		1,365	832	1,501	669
Communities and Leisure	Communities	797	797	713	(84)
	Director - Communities	232	170	179	10
	Housing & Public Protection	1,212	1,212	1,216	4
	Leisure	350	768	768	-
Communities and Leisure Total		2,591	2,946	2,877	(69)
Customer & Digital	Customer Transformation	777	777	764	(14)
	Director of Customer & Digital Services	63	-	-	-
	ICT Services	1,293	1,293	1,313	20
	Waste & Streetscene Services	4,218	4,227	4,210	(16)
Customer & Digital Total		6,351	6,297	6,287	(10)
Planning	Director of Planning & Development	55	-	-	-
	Enforcement Services	327	327	372	45
	Planning Services	74	44	30	(14)
	Spatial Planning	510	540	532	(8)
Planning & Total		967	912	934	23
Policy and Governance	Change & Delivery	237	237	226	(11)
	Chief Executives Office	246	643	481	(162)
	Communications & Events	678	681	974	294
	Director - Governance	144	89	91	1
	Legal and Governance	2,489	2,502	2,728	226

Directorate	Department / Section	Original Budget	Budget at 31st December 2023	Forecast Outturn based on position at 31st December 2023	Variance (Under)/ Overspend
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Performance & Partnerships	786	827	758	(69)
	Shared Financial Services	1,014	973	926	(47)
	Transformation Management	26	26	47	21
	Transition Fund	90	90	106	16
Policy and Governance Total		5,710	6,069	6,337	268
Major Projects	Investment Properties	(68)	(68)	(67)	0
	Market Walk	(1,762)	(1,762)	(1,693)	69
	Primrose Gardens Retirement Living	(368)	(368)	(265)	103
	Strawberry Meadows	(700)	(700)	(517)	183
	Chorley BC Property Ltd (TVS)	(1,661)	(1,661)	(1,661)	-
	Tatton Gardens	(249)	(256)	(15)	241
	Strawberry Fields	(334)	(334)	(186)	148
Major Projects Total		(5,142)	(5,149)	(4,405)	744
Financing and Other Budgets	Benefit Payments	(4)	(4)	(4)	-
	Financing	3,707	3,707	3,202	(505)
	Pensions Account	218	218	225	7
	Corporate	(349)	(414)	(517)	(103)
	Transition Fund	125	125	-	(125)
Financing and Other Budgets Total		3,697	3,633	2,906	(726)
Funding	Collection Fund	(15,072)	(15,072)	(15,072)	-
	New Homes Bonus	(297)	(297)	(297)	-
	Reserves	(50)	(50)	(50)	-
	Government Grants	(119)	(119)	(238)	(119)
Funding Total		(15,538)	(15,538)	(15,657)	(119)
Net (Surplus) / Deficit		-	-	780	780

APPENDIX 2

Revenue 2023/24 - Position as at 31st December 2023

Directorate	Property £'000	Communities and Leisure £'000	Customer and Digital £'000	Planning £'000	Policy and Governance £'000	Major Projects £'000	Financing/Other Budgets £'000	Funding £'000	TOTAL £'000
Budget approved by Council 28th Feb 2023	1,365	2,591	6,351	967	5,710	(5,142)	3,697	(15,538)	0
<i>Transfers between directorates</i>									
Realignment of budgets following Directors review	(418)	418			65		(65)		0
Miscellaneous correction of budgets	(8)		8		7				0
Transfer of Insurance budgets to General Insurance					287	(7)			0
Movement of Directors budget to Policy & Governance	(107)	(62)	(63)	(55)					0
<i>Realignment of budgets following Management changes</i>									
									0
									0
<i>Transfers (to)/from Earmarked reserves</i>									
									0
									0
									0
<i>Transfers (to)/from General Fund reserves</i>									
									0
									0
									0
Revised Budget as at 31st December 2023	832	2,946	6,297	912	6,069	(5,149)	3,633	(15,538)	0

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APPENDIX 3

2023/24 Forecast Reserves position as at 31st December 2023

Reserves	Opening Balance 1st April 2023 £000s	Forecasted Movements				Forecast Balance 31st March 2024 £000s
		Capital Financing £000s	Movement between Reserves £000s	Transfers from Reserves £000s	Transfers to Reserves £000s	
General Fund Balance	(4,271)	-	(500)	780		(3,991)
Corporate Reserves						
Delivery of the Transformation and Savings Programme Reserve - Formerly Change Management Reserve	(238)		(200)	13		(426)
Capital and Repairs and Maintenance Reserves	(313)	252	(388)	18		(431)
Market Walk / DOP Works	(301)		301			-
ICT Programme Reserves	(215)	215				0
Capital Bad Debts Reserve	(104)			104		-
Climate Change Reserves	(641)	417	(34)	49		(209)
Support for Apprentices, Graduates, Training Posts	(222)			84		(138)
Investment in Play & Open Space Across the Borough	(77)					(77)
Budget Equalisation Reserve - Formerly Support for the recovery from the pandemic and the cost of living crisis - communities & businesses	(1,269)		(137)	442		(964)
Income Generation Reserve	(314)		189		(46)	(171)
Business Investment for Growth (BIG) Grants	(302)			60		(242)
Choose Chorley Grants	(105)		(43)	15		(133)
Retail Grants Programme	(171)			-		(171)
Civica Property Management	(78)			14		(64)
Social Prescribing	(111)			44		(67)
Refugees/Asylum Seekers Funding	(525)			-	(24)	(549)
Customer & Digital	(123)		(129)	81		(172)
Government & other Grant Funding	(30)		30			-
Waste Mobilisation	(67)		67			-
Maintenance of Grounds	(44)		32	12		-
Planning Appeal Costs	(199)			70		(129)
Policy & Governance General	(137)		137			-
Elections	(156)			91		(65)
Bus Station - Transition of service				193	(650)	(457)
Market Walk - Income Equalisation Reserve	(332)		(189)	271		(250)
Logistics House Income Equalisation Reserve	(450)					(450)
Business Rates Exceptional Payments Reserve	(1,222)		700	312		(210)
Local Plan Reserve	(16)			-	(10)	(26)
Reserves used in Year						
Other Investment Projects	(43)		43			-
Mayoral Charities	(5)			5		0
Check Out Chorley	(30)			30		-
ICT/Streetscene Modernisation Reserve	(62)			62		-
Transfers between Reserves						
VAT Shelter Income - Capital/revenue financing	(9)		9			-
Neighbourhood Working (pump priming)	(43)		43			-
Market Walk - Asset Management	(104)		69	35		-

Reserves	Opening Balance 1st April 2023 £000s	Forecasted Movements				Forecast Balance 31st March 2024 £000s
		Capital Financing £000s	Movement between Reserves £000s	Transfers from Reserves £000s	Transfers to Reserves £000s	
						-
Total Earmarked Reserves	(8,059)	884	500	2,005	(730)	(5,400)
Total Reserves - General and Earmarked	(12,330)	884	(0)	2,785	(730)	(9,392)

APPENDIX 4

Major Projects 2023/24 - Forecast based on the position as at 31st December 2023

Market Walk

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(1,668)	(1,825)	(157)
Service Charge Operational budget	444	552	108
Service Charge Income	(538)	(440)	98
Bad Debts Provision	-	395	395
Net Income (excluding financing)	(1,762)	(1,318)	444
Financing Costs	915	915	-
Net Income (including financing)	(847)	(403)	444
Income Equalisation Reserve (Annual Contribution)	(50)	(271)	(221)
Asset Management Reserve (Market Walk)	50	(104)	(154)
Net Income	(847)	(778)	69

Strawberry Meadows

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(750)	(581)	169
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	50	64	14
Net Budget/Income (excluding financing)	(700)	(517)	183
Financing Costs	390	390	-
Net Budget (including financing)	(310)	(127)	183

Strawberry Fields

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(788)	(747)	41
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	453	561	107
Net Budget/Income (excluding financing)	(334)	(186)	148
Financing Costs	168	168	-
Net Budget (including financing)	(166)	(18)	148

Primrose

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(747)	(793)	(46)
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	379	527	148
Net Income (excluding financing)	(368)	(265)	103
Financing Costs	-	-	-
Net Income (including financing)	(368)	(265)	103

Tatton Gardens

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(654)	(540)	114
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	398	525	127
Net Income (excluding financing)	(256)	(15)	241
Financing Costs	247	247	-
Net Income (including financing)	(9)	232	241

Chorley BC Property Ltd (TVS)

	2023/24 Budget £000s	2023/24 Forecast £000s	2023/24 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(1,661)	(1,661)	0
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	-	-	-
Net Income (excluding financing)	(1,661)	(1,661)	0
Financing Costs	1,211	1,211	-
Net Income (including financing)	(450)	(450)	0

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LReport of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	22/02/2024

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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2023/24 Corporate Capital Programme and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Outturn Position at 31st December 2023

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the outturn financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme at 31st December 2023, highlighting key issues and explaining key variances, and to provide an overview of various elements of the Council’s Balance Sheet at 31st December 2023.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To approve the revised capital programme, attached at **Appendix A**, which includes an amendment to the programme of £6.754m, as detailed at point 11 of this report.
3. To note the variations to the programme (which are detailed by scheme at **Appendix B** and referenced within the body of the report);
4. To note the position in the Balance Sheet monitoring section of the report, in respect of cash, investment and loan balances, and debtors, at 31st December 2023.

Reasons for recommendations

5. To ensure the Council’s Capital Programme is monitored effectively.

Other options considered and rejected

6. None

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and local areas	Green and sustainable Borough
Housing where residents live well	Healthy, safe, and engaged communities

Background to the report

- 8. The Capital Budget for 2023/24 was set at £21.103m by Council in February 2023. This was increased following approval of the 2022/23 outturn to £22.998m, then further amended in the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Capital Monitoring Reports covering the first 6 months of the year to £13.930m, as approved at Executive Cabinet in November 2023.
- 9. Following the changes detailed in this report, the total programme now stands at £15.822m, the details of which are shown in **Appendix B**.

Section A: Capital Programme

Key issues

- 10. The total cost of the Council’s capital investment programme for 2023/24 has increased since the 2023/24 Quarter 2 report approved by Cabinet, **from £13.930m to £15.822m** as at 31st December 2023. The change reflects variations approved since the last report, along with those contained within this report. A summary of the total costs of the programme, and the funding of this, is detailed at **Appendix A**.
- 11. The breakdown of the net increase in the programme of **£1.892m** is detailed in **Appendix B**. The net variation includes those variations approved since the previous monitoring report and variations in respect of the reprofiling of budgets within the existing programme
- 12. Budget variations approved since the last monitoring report have resulted in a total increase of **£6.754m** to the capital programme. The table below details the changes.

Table 1: Approved budget changes since the last monitoring report

	Increase / (Reduction) 2023/24 £'000	Increase / (Reduction) 2024/25 and future years £'000	Virement From	Virement To	Approved by	Date approved
Woodlands Development Site	5,449	1,118			Full Council	21/11/23
Land For Tree Planting	2				This report	N/A
Play and Recreation and Open Space Projects:						
Milestone Meadow	3				This Report	N/A
Astley Park Play Area	8				This Report	N/A
Euxton Villa Grant	100				Executive Member Decision	18/12/23
King George UKSPF Footpath and Landscaping	74				Full Council	18/07/23
Play and Recreation and Open Space Projects:				(2)	This report	N/A
Tatton				2	This Report	N/A
TOTAL	5,636	1,118	(2)	2		

- 13. A re-profiling of budgets from 2023/24 to future years has been undertaken. The total movement of budgets from 2023/24 amounts to **£3.745m**. The movements are shown in Appendix B and explanations are contained in the major variations section that follows.

Table 2: Slippage and reprofiling across years

Scheme	Slippage and Reprofiling £'000
Chapel St and Surrounding Public Realm	400
Town Hall and White Hart Works	(90)
Unit Above Iceland	70
Chorley Adaptation Grant (formerly Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG))	200
Leisure Centres – capital works and maintenance	80
Leisure Centres Improvements	410
Properties for Refugees	375
Purchase of Affordable Housing	2,000
Chorley Lodge	300
Total	3,745

14. As at 31st December 2023 the actual capital expenditure across the programme was **£9.646m**, which represents 61% of the forecast position as at the 31st December 2023.

Major variations in the 2023/24 Capital Programme since the previous report

An Enterprising Economy with Vibrant Local Centres in Urban and Local Areas

15. Chapel Street and Surrounding Public Realm – £400k of the scheme budget has been reprofiled into future years as it is anticipated that this scheme will be included in the Levelling Up Chorley Town Centre future capital scheme. A report will be brought forward on the development of the Levelling Up scheme, to incorporate this into the capital programme and to include the total funding and scope of the scheme.
16. Town Hall and White Hart Works – £90k budget is being brought forward into 2023/24 from future years to cover the cost of the works required to the Lancastrian Suite in the Town Hall.
17. Unit Above Iceland - budget of £70k has been slipped from 2023/24 into 2024/25 as there is no programme of work at this time.

Housing Where Residents Live Well

18. Chorley Adaptation Grant (formerly DFG) – on track for all 2023/24 budget to be committed by the end of the financial year and £200k has been reprofiled into 2024/25 to match the timing of the actual undertaking of the works.
19. Land For Tree Planting – there is a small overspend of £2k on this scheme, relating to Stamp Duty Land Tax. This increase will be covered by borrowing.
20. Leisure Centre Capital Works and Maintenance – interim works, including reception works, first floor alteration works, a ground floor spin studio and electrical works are underway; the remaining £80k budget has been reprofiled into 2024/25.

21. Leisure Centre Improvements - as per the Executive Member Decision report dated 13 October 2023 the contract for the refurbishment works at Brinscall Baths has been approved. The costs are £694,915, including a contingency of £50k. This leaves a budget of £1.545m for the future refurbishment works across the Chorley Leisure sites.
22. Play Recreation and Open Space Projects – There are several increases to the Play, Recreation and Open Spaces capital programme.
- increases to the programme for £3k for Milestone Meadow and £8k for the Astley Park Play Area, both to be funded by S106 contributions;
 - as per Executive Member Decision report approved on 18 December 2023, an increase to the programme is reported of £100k;
 - additional UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) funding of £74k was approved at Full Council on 18 July 2023 for footpath and landscaping works at King George Playing Fields.
23. Tatton – a virement of £3k from the Play, Recreation and Open Space Scheme is requested to reflect the S106 contribution received for Tatton Recreation Ground, for which the costs of the works have been included in the Tatton capital scheme.

Section B: Balance Sheet Monitoring

Overview

24. Strong balance sheet management assists in the effective use and the control over the Council's asset and liabilities. Key assets comprise of the Council's tangible fixed assets, debtors, investments and bank balances, and key liabilities include long and short-term borrowing, creditors, and reserves.

Non-current Assets

25. Tangible, non-current assets include property, plant and equipment held by the Council for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others or for administrative purposes. One fifth of all assets are re-valued every year, and annual reviews are undertaken to establish whether any impairment or other adjustments need to be applied. New assets and enhancements to existing assets are managed through the Capital Programme as reported in **Appendices A and B**.

Borrowing and Investments

26. Long-term borrowing requirements flow from the capital programme. Regular dialogue and meetings take place between the Director of Finance, her staff and the Council's independent Treasury Consultants, Link Treasury Services, and options for optimising treasury management activities are actively reviewed.
27. Both short and long-term borrowing interest rates have risen over the last few years following increases in the Bank of England Base Rate from 0.1% in April 2020 up to the current rate of 5.25%, effective since September 2023. Interest rates on investments have also increased in response to this. The key variances compared to budget are a £100k forecast underspend on debt interest payable, as borrowing has been deferred due to higher-than-expected cashflow balances, and because of these cash balances interest and investment income is forecast to over-recover against the budget by £280k. There is also an underspend on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) budget of £125k due to the differences in the mix of funding used to fund the capital programme in 2022/23 and the slippage of some schemes from 2022/23 into 2023/24.

	Original Budget 2023/24 £000s	Forecast Outturn at 31st Dec 2023 £000s
Interest and Investment Income	(20)	(300)
Debt Interest Payable	2,197	2,097
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,530	1,405
Total Net Borrowing Costs	3,707	3,202

28. The current borrowing and investment position, compared to the position at the same point last year, is as per the table below. Based on current cashflow forecasts, further borrowing of £10m is anticipated before the year end.

	As at 31st Dec 2023	As at 31st Dec 2022
Short term borrowing	£10.000m	£1.833m
Long term borrowing	£66.502m	£67.043m
Total Borrowing	£76.502m	£68.876m
Investments made by the Council	£5.450m	Nil
Cash Balances Held	£8.382m	£3.683m

29. The Council has a corporate debt policy as well as other specific policies for the management of debt in the key areas of council tax, business rates and housing benefit overpayments. The table below summarises the collection performance of the various debts and the total outstanding debt in the respective areas as at 31st December 2023. The table also shows the corresponding level of debt at the same point in the last financial year.

	Position as at 31st Dec 2023 £000s	Position as at 31st Dec 2022 £000s
Council Tax		
Expected Council Tax Collectable in 23/24 (22/23)	82,679	78,996
Current year balance outstanding	12,194	10,852
Previous years balance outstanding	4,671	4,157
Total Council Tax balance outstanding	16,865	15,009
Collection Rates Current Year	81.6%	82.11%
Business Rates		
Expected Business Rates Collectable in 23/24 (22/23)	25,961	25,075
Current year balance outstanding	4,331	4,694
Previous years balance outstanding	1,185	1,001
Total Business Rates balance outstanding	5,516	5,695
Collection Rates Current Year	74.13%	75.82%
Housing Benefit		
Overpayment balances outstanding	849	846
Sundry Debtors		

Balance Outstanding – General*	459	364
Balance Outstanding – Commercial*	1,164	1,143

**Figure excludes invoices relating to public-sector, one-off development contributions, rents billed in advance, Chorley leisure debtor invoices*

- 30. Business rate collection can fluctuate month-on-month, but collection is broadly in line with expectations.
- 31. In respect of the figures above, the Council’s share represents 9% of Council Tax income and 40% of Business Rates income.
- 32. The Sundry Debtors figure reflects the position compared to the same period last year. As debt ages, the provision required increases, as the likelihood of non-payment also increase the longer that debt is outstanding.

Climate change and air quality

- 33. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

- 34. N/A

Risk

- 35. Risks are broadly addressed in the body of the report however recent tender results and cost changes have been seen due to inflationary pressures. These will be monitored on an individual project basis and any budget changes reported when necessary.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 36. The financial implications are contained within the body of this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- 37. No comment.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Capital Programme Summary

Appendix B – Scheme Variations

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Gaynor Simons	Gaynor.Simons@chorley.gov.uk	N/A	15/01/2024

Capital Programme 2023/24 - position as at 31st December 2023

APPENDIX A

Table 1 - Forecast Capital Expenditure	Budget 2023/24 Approved at Council Feb 2023	Budget 2022/23 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations	Revised Budget 2023/24 as at 31st December 2023	Budget 2023/24 and Future Years Approved at Council Feb 2023	Budget 2022/23 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023	Slippage and reprofiling of budgets (to)/from 2023/24	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations	Revised Budget 2024/25 and Future Years as at 31st December 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

COSTS

An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Local Areas	11,415	4,302	(380)	5,449	9,370
Green And Sustainable Borough	2,189	784	-	-	784
Housing Where Residents Live Well	7,499	8,476	(3,365)	188	5,299
Healthy, Safe and Engaged Communities	-	369	-	-	369
Total Forecast Expenditure	21,103	13,930	(3,745)	5,636	15,822

	300	11,335	380	1,118	12,833
	-	1,788	-	-	1,788
	1,650	2,890	3,365	-	6,255
	-	-	-	-	-
	1,950	16,013	3,745	1,118	20,875

RESOURCES

Disabled Facilities Grants	1,109	1,207	(200)		1,007
Brownfield Release Fund	1,100	200			200
Homes England	-	-			-
Rural Prosperity Fund	400	-			-
LEP Grants		-			-
Other Grants	285	10		74	84
Total Grants	2,894	1,417	(200)	74	1,291
External Contributions	-	20			20
Capital Receipts	-	125			125
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	1,070	971	(10)	(471)	491
Reserves and Revenue	554	891	(70)		821
Section 106	1,517	1,689		(72)	1,617
Unsupported Borrowing	15,068	8,816	(3,465)	6,104	11,456
Total Forecast Resources	21,103	13,930	(3,745)	5,636	15,822

	1,550	1,551	200		1,751
	-	900			900
	-	-			-
	-	400			400
	-	-			-
	-	285			285
	1,550	3,136	200	-	3,336
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	7,400	7,400
	-	646	10	471	1,127
	-	-	70	-	70
	-	829	-	-	829
	400	11,402	3,465	(6,753)	8,114
	1,950	16,013	3,745	1,118	20,875

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Scheme Name	Budget 2023/24 Approved at Council Feb 2023 £'000	Budget 2023/24 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023 £'000	Budget 2023/24 Approved by Cabinet for the 9 months to December 2023 £'000	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years £'000	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations £'000	Revised Budget 2023/24 as at 31st December 2023 £'000	Budget 2024/25 and Future Years Approved at Council Feb 2023 £'000	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023 £'000	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 9 months to December 2023 £'000	Slippage and reprofiling of budgets (to)/from 2023/24 £'000	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations £'000	Revised Budget 2024/25 and Future Years as at 31st December 2023 £'000
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An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Local Areas

Strawberry Meadows Development	1,608	400				400						
Asset Improvements	643	538				538						
Buckshaw Village Rail Station	695	-				-						
Chapel St and Surrounding Public Realm	2,747	500		(400)		100						
Chorley Borough Service Centres	500	-				-						
Strawberry Fields	-	196				196						
Market Walk Extension	-	(0)				(0)						
Markets - Works to Existing Market		5				5						
Public Realm Town Centre	2,984	-				-						
Town Hall and White Hart Works	1,053	42		90		132						
Bengal Street	1,100	200				200						
Relocation of Bengal Street		2,000				2,000						
Queens Road Car Park		321				321						
Unit Above Iceland	85	100		(70)		30						
Woodlands Development Site	-	-	-		5,449	5,449					1,118	1,118
A strong local economy	11,415	4,302	-	(380)	5,449	9,370	300	11,335	-	380	1,118	12,833

Green And Sustainable Borough

Chorley Health Centre	250	-				-						
Delivering Green Agenda	411	396				396						
Town Hall Decarbonisation	1,528	-				-						
ICT Mobile Devices, Citrix, CCTV, Software and Cloud-based upgrades	-	388				388						
An ambitious council that does more to mee	2,189	784	-	-	-	784	-	1,788	-	-	-	1,788

Housing Where Residents Live Well

Chorley Adaptation Grant (Formerly DFG)	1,109	1,207		(200)		1,007						
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	-	752										752
	300	300										300
	-	696										696
	-	2,297		400								2,697
	-	500										500
	-	-										-
	-	70										70
	-	-										-
	-	2,869										2,869
	-	1,200		(90)								1,110
	-	900										900
	-	1,750										1,750
	-	-										-
	-	-		70								70
											1,118	1,118
	300	11,335		-	380	1,118						12,833

	-											-
	-	250										250
	-	-										-
	-	1,538										1,538
	-	-										-
	-	1,788		-	-	-						1,788

	1,550	1,550		200								1,750
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Scheme Name	Budget 2023/24 Approved at Council Feb 2023	Budget 2023/24 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023	Budget 2023/24 Approved by Cabinet for the 9 months to December 2023	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations	Revised Budget 2023/24 as at 31st December 2023
Land for Tree Planting	-	250			2	252
Leisure Centre Transfer	-	-				-
Leisure Centres - capital works and maintenance	100	199		(80)		119
Leisure Centres Improvements	1,700	1,000		(410)		590
Play, Recreation and Open Space Projects	1,000	1,998			183	2,181
Properties for Refugees	1,200	1,375		(375)		1,000
Purchase of Affordable Housing	2,000	2,000		(2,000)		-
Chorley Lodge	-	350		(300)		50
Tatton	390	97			3	99
Clean, safe and healthy homes and commun	7,499	8,476	-	(3,365)	188	5,299

Healthy, Safe and Engaged Communit

Astley/Astley Cottage	-	249		-	-	249
Westway Playing Fields Sports Campus	-	120		-	-	120
Involving residents in improving their local a	-	369	-	-	-	369
Total	21,103	13,930	-	(3,745)	5,636	15,822

Budget 2024/25 and Future Years Approved at Council Feb 2023	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2023	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 9 months to December 2023	Slippage and reprofiling of budgets (to)/from 2023/24	Quarter 3 2023/24 Variations	Revised Budget 2024/25 and Future Years as at 31st December 2023
-	-				-
-	-				-
100	100		80		180
-	1,240		410		1,650
-	-				-
-	-		375		375
-	-		2,000		2,000
-	-		300		300
-	-				-
1,650	2,890	-	3,365	-	6,255
-	-				-
-	-				-
-	-				-
-	-				-
1,950	16,013	-	3,745	1,118	20,875



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Change and Delivery) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	Thursday 22 February 2024

Chorley Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. This monitoring report sets out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the third quarter of 2023/24, covering 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

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

Other options considered and rejected

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

Executive summary

5. This report sets out the performance against the Corporate Strategy and key service delivery measures for the third quarter of 2023/24. The report provides for the final time, assessment of the performance based on the 2022/2023 Corporate Strategy along with the key service delivery measures and indicators. From quarter four we will report on the 2023/2024 Corporate Strategy.
6. Overall performance of the Corporate Strategy projects is excellent with 16 (84%) rated as complete or green, meaning they are progressing according to schedule. Three projects (16%) have been rated amber, which provides an early warning sign of potential delays. Action plans for the amber projects are contained within this report.

7. Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures continue to be closely monitored, with 69% of Corporate Strategy measures and 100% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target or within the 5% threshold.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

Background to the report

9. The Corporate Strategy is the key strategic document for the authority and includes performance indicators and projects that focus in delivering the Council’s four priorities.
10. The Corporate Strategy was approved by the Council in November 2022 and includes 19 corporate projects. This includes projects with a focus on the delivery of large-scale ambitious schemes that will have a significant impact on local outcomes and ensuring that Chorley is in the best possible position for the future.
11. Key performance measures for each service have been set so that targets remain challenging and reflective of the Council’s ambitions. These are reviewed annually as part of the service level business planning process.
12. A refreshed Corporate Strategy was approved by Council in November 2023. The refreshed strategy includes a new suite of projects and updated performance indicators. Those projects are in the process of commencing delivery, and arrangements are being put in place for the reporting of those and updated performance indicators. The reporting against the refreshed strategy will commence from the next quarter.

Housing where residents can live well



Our commitments:

- Deliver affordable and energy efficient housing,
- Strive for good quality housing for all,
- Work with partners supporting new ways to prevent homelessness,
- Support our most vulnerable residents.

Delivering our Commitments in Quarter Three

13. The council has committed to develop further options for the delivery of solutions for high quality, affordable and green housing. Work on this project has included gathering data and intelligence around housing need and delivering a housing workshop to enable effective discussions with stakeholders to shape future plans.
14. As part of the council's commitment to support residents with the high cost of energy and to promote positive action on climate change, progress has been made this quarter on the implementation of a home energy support scheme. Home visits commenced in September and a resident information pack was developed to support home visits and events. The information packs include information about home energy efficiency and wider forms of health and wellbeing support available. There have been over 1,200 small energy efficiency measures (i.e. hot water bottles, blankets, dehumidifiers) procured to support residents at home assessments. The council have attended a range of community events including food clubs, a Chorley Council parent engagement event, Adlington Friendship Group, winter warmth events, Chorley Dementia Action Group, Children and Families Wellbeing Service and family hubs. Work will continue during the next quarter, as colleagues will be distributing the information packs, attending council and community events and conducting home visits.
15. The project to deliver the Local Plan continued during the quarter with significant delivery progress made, including the production of a draft Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS will set out the high-level timeframe for the plan making process, commencement of policy reviews and commissioning of evidence updates. Despite some delays, site assessment work has been ongoing with partners to progress the programme. The Local Plan delivery programme has been reviewed and reprofiled to ensure that sufficient progress is achieved. The revised programme including the LDS will be presented to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and to all three councils for agreement in quarter four 2023/24.

Performance of key projects

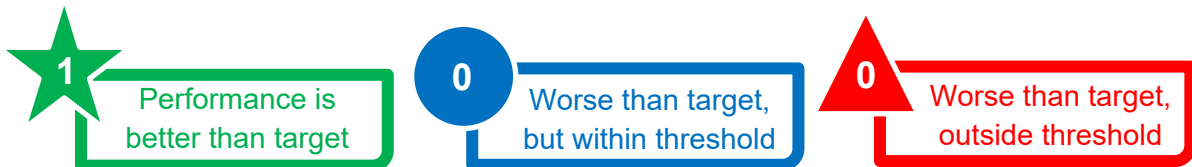


16. There are five projects included in the 2022 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is good.

- 17. One project was classified as completed in quarter four 2022/23 indicating that it has delivered all milestones planned for this year:
 - Open the extra care scheme at Tatton Gardens.
- 18. Three projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:
 - Deliver affordable housing,
 - Deliver flexible housing solutions,
 - Implement the home energy support scheme.
- 19. One project is rated as Amber
 - Deliver the local plan.

Project Title:		Project Status:
Deliver the Local Plan		Amber
Explanation:	<p>This project has been rated as amber to highlight the potential risk to elements within the site assessment and key decisions required to progress the programme.</p> <p>As has been previously reported, despite delays against the original programme, progress continues to be made in developing a new local plan. This has recently included site assessment work. A new Local Development Scheme has also been drafted to set out a revised timeline for the Local Plan.</p>	
Action required:	<p>The update Local Development Scheme is due to be presented to the Joint Advisory Committee and then to each of the three councils for agreement in quarter four. This will set a new delivery timeline for the local plan and enable it to be brought back on track.</p> <p>In addition to the revised timescale, a new post has been created and is out for recruitment. The new post, combined with additional input from existing teams, will mitigate any potential risk caused by capacity issues and will provide dedicated project management support to the project over the next 12-month period.</p>	

Performance of corporate strategy measures



- 20. At the end of quarter three, one of the three corporate performance indicators under this priority is due to be reported.
- 21. One indicator is performing on or better than target:
 - The number of long-term empty properties in the borough

A green and sustainable borough



Our commitments:

- Work towards our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030,
- Support waste reduction, reuse, and recycling,
- Work with partners to retain natural habitats and improve air quality,
- Promote sustainable transport and infrastructure.

Delivering our Commitments in Quarter Three

22. The implementation of natural green initiatives has continued over the quarter as part of the council's commitment to establishing an environmentally friendly and sustainable borough. Focus this quarter has been on creating and enhancing biodiversity, including the completion of the enhancement works to Westway Ponds Nature Reserve. Wildflower meadows have been thriving in a number of locations following the sowing and planting of wildflower bulbs. The creation of a new pond on council owned land has been explored. Successful tree and biodiversity giveaways were held in November 2023, with a further giveaway planned to take place in February 2024.
23. Over the quarter, progress has been made in advancing a sustainable energy package to support businesses to thrive amid the current economic climate. The new Business Energy Support grant was launched to businesses operating across the borough at an event in November 2023, along with the council's Climate Change Accreditation Scheme. The Business Energy Support grant can be used to fund equipment that has been identified by an Energy Audit as reducing energy use and costs and that will in turn deliver a contribution towards carbon reduction. To support the process the council has agreed to fund the energy audits which are required as part of the grant application process. Additionally, the website has been updated with further information on the grants and the process to apply for an energy audit. The council will now engage with businesses that have enquired, book in energy audits and commence the processing of grants.
24. The project to explore the feasibility of green energy in Chorley has progressed with the completion of a low carbon technology options report in September 2023. The options paper provided senior management and elected members with an overview of the available low carbon and renewable technologies to the council. Progress has also been made on the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charge Point feasibility study across the council's assets and is expected to be completed in January 2024.
25. The programme of bus shelter upgrades across the borough as part of the commitment to improving public transport networks has progressed with agreement on the design of the bus shelters. The contractor has undertaken in-depth surveys of all the identified locations, and the production of the bus shelters has commenced. These works will enable the 19 bus shelters to be installed this year as part of a five year programme. Following the decision to install five living roof bus shelters next year (2024/25), all five sites for implementation have been agreed. Over the next quarter, a communication plan will be developed to promote the shelter replacement programme and the five living roof shelters. All 19-shelters included in year one of the replacement programme will be installed by the end of March 2024.

Performance of key projects



- 26. There are five projects included in the 2022 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three overall performance is good.
- 27. Three projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescale and plan:
 - Deliver natural green initiatives,
 - Launch sustainable energy package for business,
 - Develop the use of green energy in the borough.
- 28. Two projects are rated as amber, which is an early warning sign of delays with the project:
 - Improve our Council buildings,
 - Deliver improvements to public transport networks.

Project Title:		Project Status:
Improve our Council buildings		Amber
Explanation:	This project has been rated as amber because its scope and timescales have changed from the originally anticipated project. The project had planned to make significant changes to the Town Hall and surrounding area. However, with the planned move of the council's depot from Bengal Street and announcement around the Levelling Up Fund, the focus of this project has changed to fit with those priorities. The changed focus is set out below.	
Action required:	The scope of the project has changed to focus on the development of plans for the future use and maintenance of the main office buildings including the Town Hall and Union Street offices. It will seek to ensure that the buildings are well maintained, well used and also explore the potential for renting out spaces to other organisations.	
Project Title:		Project Status:
Deliver improvements to public transport networks		Amber
Explanation:	Good progress has been made over the last quarter. However, the project has been rated as amber to highlight the potential risk due to potential delays in the delivery of new shelters to the contractor.	
Action required:	Work has progressed in preparation to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the programme. Designs of the shelters have been agreed and in-depth surveys of all the agreed locations have been undertaken. Planning permission has also been submitted where required for the living roof installations.	

Performance of corporate strategy measures



- 29. At the end of quarter three, two of the four corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
- 30. One indicator is performing on or better than target:
 - The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting.
- 31. One indicator is performing below target and outside the 5% threshold.
 - The number of bus shelters improved.

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Q3 2022/23	Q3 2023/24	Symbol	Trend
Number of bus shelters improved	Bigger is Better	4	N/A	0	▲	NEW for 2023/24
Reason below target:	This indicator has been rated as off track this quarter due to logistical delays outside the control of the contractor.					
Action required:	Work has progressed in preparation to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the programme. Designs of the shelters have been agreed and in-depth surveys of all the agreed locations have been undertaken. Planning permission has also been submitted where required for the living roof installations.					
Trend:	This is a new indicator for 2023/24 therefore no previous performance data is available.					

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



Our commitments:

- Support business growth and expansion across the borough,
- Work with partners to support skills, development, and innovation,
- Work with partners to promote the district as a visitor destination and attract investment in our local service centres,
- Promote the green economy.

Delivering our Commitments in Quarter Three:

32. As part of the council's commitment to preserving Astley Hall as a valuable community asset and promoting it as a visitor destination and attraction, during the quarter, preparatory work for the remainder of the renovations to the Hall commenced. This included agreeing the colour scheme, applying for Listed Building consent and the clearing of the art gallery and servant's bedroom. Looking ahead, work will continue to turn the conference room back into a useable conference and activity room open to the public.
33. The project to launch a skills and job programme to promote future career pathways and provide a local skills pipeline to meet the needs of local enterprise continued over the quarter with the development of plans for National Apprentice Week in February 2024. National Apprentice Week will see the launch of a new apprenticeship grant and a series of events aimed towards businesses and residents of any age considering an apprenticeship. Work to develop relationships with partners such as Department of Work (DWP), Chorley Job Centre Plus and local training providers has continued to ensure a collaborative and holistic approach is taken to further support skills, development, and innovation across the borough. Looking to quarter four 2023/24, a liaison meeting will take place with schools and other stakeholders. There will also be the launch of the apprenticeship grant and a series of apprenticeship events will be delivered.
34. Before the government announced that Chorley would receive funding from its Levelling Up Fund bid, the council committed to improving local service centres and the town centre. Over quarter three, further site investigations have been undertaken to identify and cost a programme of works for the potential improvements that can be undertaken by the council. A report including the identified improvement works and options will be presented to Executive Cabinet in February 2024 for decision.

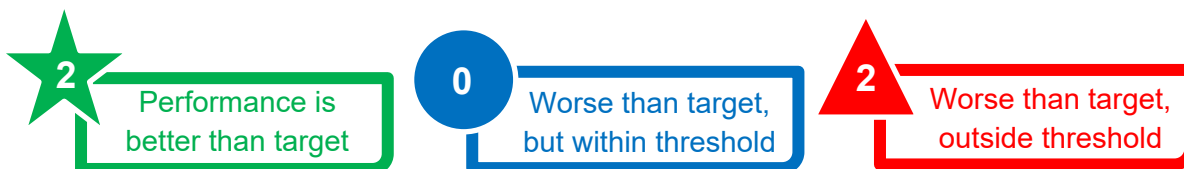
Performance of key projects



35. There are four projects included in the 2022 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is excellent.

- 36. One project was classified as completed previously in quarter four 2022/23, indicating that it has delivered its milestones:
 - Open Strawberry Meadows.
- 37. Three projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:
 - Continue development of Astley Hall,
 - Launch a skills and jobs programme,
 - Deliver improvements to local service centres.

Performance of corporate strategy measures



- 38. At the end of quarter three, four of the five corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
- 39. Two indicators are performing on or better than target:
 - The number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention,
 - Number of business engagements by the Council.
- 40. Two indicators are performing below target and outside the 5% threshold:
 - The number of people who participate in a volunteering opportunity (as a result of an intervention by the Employment Service)
 - The % of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Q3 2022/23	Q3 2023/24	Symbol	Trend
The number of people who participate in a volunteering opportunity (as a result of an intervention by the Employment Service)	Bigger is better	54	13	48	▲	Better than Q3 2022/23
Reason below target:	Central Government funding has led to a significant increase in employment sector resource and as such, while the Council’s employment service offer remains the same, engagement is largely signposting and referring individuals and partners into this existing provision.					
Action required:	Alongside the revised Volunteering Policy, the Community Volunteering Referral Partnership formalises the support offered to the VCFSE sector and volunteer organisations to recruit volunteers and supports them in offering a high-quality volunteering experience. Where funding for this support is now drawing to a close, a scoping exercise is proposed to establish the current level of resource available for Chorley’s residents and define a way to support these residents to move closer to employment. UKSPF funding exists in 2024/25 to support this function.					
Trend:	The indicator is performing better than the 13 reported in Q3 2022/23, which was also worse than target.					

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Q3 2022/23	Q3 2023/24	Symbol	Trend
The percentage of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	3.0%	2.4%	3.7%	▲	Worse than Q3 2022/23
Reason below target:	<p>The 3.7% reflects that there are 101 known NEET's at the end of quarter three (December 2023). This is an increase compared to the figure of 2.4% (63) at the same time last year (Q3 2022/23). The trend across other districts in the county suggests that this is not unique to Chorley and other districts are experiencing similar increases. There has been a significant increase in economic inactivity and a rise in mental health issues which could be contributing factors.</p> <p>Examining the detailed breakdown of the full 16 and 17 year cohort, the numbers in part time education and moving into employment without training as a destination have increased slightly when compared to the same time last year. The numbers in apprenticeships as a destination has declined, with 54 less than the same time last year.</p>					
Action required:	<p>Chorley Council will deliver events over Apprenticeship week (5th – 14th Feb) to support businesses and encourage residents of all ages to consider apprenticeships at all levels.</p> <p>The council works with local partners to support young people into work and training opportunities. This includes delivering programmes of work that support families and young people to address factors that contribute to young people at risk of being NEET. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Inspire Youth Zone to deliver targeted support which includes a mentoring programme for children with identified vulnerabilities including NEET young people. • Support the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) sector in Chorley to offer high quality volunteering opportunities and refer residents into these opportunities. • Deliver a range of support through the social prescribing service such as confidence courses to develop confidence and employability skills with those furthest away from employment. • The school speakers programme and a parenting programme which support parents with the tools to guide their families towards better outcomes. <p>Lancashire County Council (LCC) continue to work with the 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and signpost them to other partner agencies.</p>					
Trend:	This indicator is performing worse than the 2.4% reported in Q3 2022/23.					

Healthy, safe, and engaged communities



Our commitments:

- Support and encourage active lifestyles and health and wellbeing,
- Support development of leisure services and facilities meeting the needs of residents,
- Deliver events and places to go for everyone,
- Ensure all residents of all ages can access the services they need physically and digitally,
- Promote resilient, cohesive neighbourhoods by listening and responding,
- Work with partners to join up public services so that they make sense for everyone.

Delivering our Commitments in Quarter Three

41. The project to provide support for families and young people to start and live well continued with the strengthening of referral pathways and more community outreach from the new social prescribing role for families. Homestart have continued to expand the parenting programme delivering face to face sessions at Clayton Brook and Tatton. Following on from the success of the School Speaker's events, partners have committed to work towards developing an online resource for parents. Delivery of a Train the Trainer Money Management Programme has commenced with sessions being delivered to Homestart staff and volunteers. Over the next quarter, the parenting programme will be delivered in Coppull and Buttermere, alongside an online resource library and a social media peer support group. The Train the Trainer Money Management programme will continue and be delivered to social prescribing staff.
42. The Cost of Living Action Plan continues to deliver a range of activities that will support residents with the pressures of increasing food and energy prices. Over the quarter, significant progress has been made to deliver the Household Support Fund phase four (HSF4). The fund distributed a total of £511,882 which has supported 12,425 households with essential items such as, food, utilities and advice services. The winter warmth grant has seen an increase in referrals following audits from the home energy support programme. The grant has supported residents over the winter months with items such as boiler repairs and replacements, glazing improvements, loft insulation and other energy efficiency measures. All residents engaging with the service receive a comprehensive information pack signposting into a range of health, wellbeing, and energy support services. Over the next quarter, the council will continue to deliver HSF4 and distribute the affordable warmth grant over the winter months.
43. The project to deliver a health and wellbeing programme continued in the quarter delivering a number of activities to support and encourage active lifestyles and health and wellbeing. The adult health and wellbeing programme has engaged a diverse range of delivery providers across the borough to support residents to be more active. Activities include seated yoga, walking netball, walking football, boxing, arts and crafts, activity buddies, badminton, cheerleading, woodwork, photography, and drama. The

Weight Management and PASTA programmes have now been amalgamated into an LCC 'Healthy Weight' programme, with the most recent adult weight management programme attendance increasing compared to the same time last year. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) winter programme has been successfully delivered. Over the next quarter, the adult weight management programme will continue to be delivered and a report evaluating the scheme will be completed.

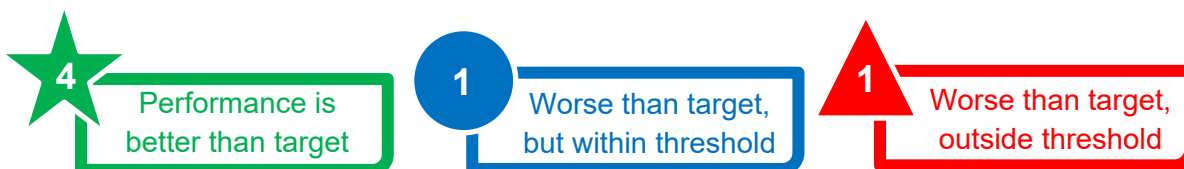
44. The council's ambitious transformation programme to support the delivery of high-quality services has made progress with continued work on the Property and Development plan. This quarter, the focus has been on agreeing templates and uploading them to a new property management system. The new system will drive efficiency within the service through automation and ensure there is a single source of information. The council has procured a new Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) and developed a payment strategy to simplify online payments and provide more payment options. Additionally, a print strategy has been developed to reduce paper usage and allow residents to sign up for paperless billing, supporting the council's commitment to becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Over the next quarter, the council will undertake work to implement the new CRM system, print and payment strategies.
45. Following the launch of the Rural England Prosperity Fund grant scheme in September 2023 to support rural businesses to make capital improvements to their operations, a review of expressions of interest has been undertaken and eligible businesses have been invited to submit a full grant application. A business planning workshop was undertaken in October 2023, where one to one business support was provided to all applicants. The closing date for applications was 12 January 2024, followed by a robust appraisal process with the aim to recommend grant approvals to a designated grant panel by March 2024.

Performance of key projects



46. There are five key projects included in the 2022 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three overall performance is excellent.
47. All five projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:
- Increase digital connectivity in rural areas,
 - Provide support for families and young people to start and live well,
 - Deliver the Cost of Living Action Plan,
 - Deliver the health and wellbeing programme,
 - Deliver high quality, responsive council services.

Performance of corporate strategy measures

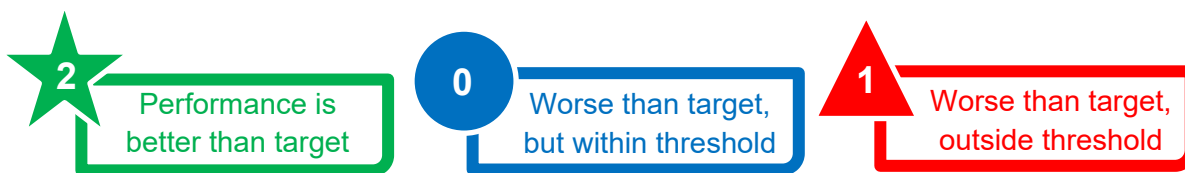


- 48. At the end of quarter three, all six of the corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
- 49. Five indicators are performing on or above target or within the 5% threshold:
 - The number of referrals to the Social Prescribing service,
 - The percentage of service requests received online,
 - The percentage of customers dissatisfied with the service they received from the Council.
 - No. of volunteer community groups supported to improve by the Council,
 - The percentage increase in visitor numbers to Chorley
- 50. One indicator is performing below target and outside the 5% threshold:
 - Number of visits to council leisure centres

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Q3 2022/23	Q3 2023/24	Symbol	Trend
The number of visits to Council leisure centres	Bigger is better	351,000	243,149	255,446	▲	Better than Q3 2022/23
Reason below target:	Participation for quarter three has increased year on year based on the data from 2022-23, showing the leisure company's actions are having a positive impact on the levels of participation across the leisure centres. Quarter three has seen an increase in usage with particular improvements in group exercise, and a 54% growth in the swim programme. The target for 2023/24 was based on data from the previous operator, and so within the refresh of the corporate strategy in November 2023, the target has been changed to reflect current visits with a target to increase the usage of the centres by 15,000 per year.					
Action required:	The following actions have been identified to improve the number of visitors to the Council's leisure facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commercial Activity Manager is in post and is having a positive impact as reflected in these figures. Work will continue to improve participation over the coming months. • A range of new classes was launched from September 2023 and includes Yoga at West Way Hub, and Spin Shred at Clayton Green which have all been well attended. • From January, All Seasons Leisure Centre is opening later at weekends, with the slide and inflatable swim sessions taking place. • Extra capacity for swimming lessons has been created, which has resulted in swim lesson participation increasing by 28% between quarter two and quarter three. • One studio refurbishment is now complete, with another pending refurbishment. 					
Trend:	The indicator is performing better than Q3 2022/23.					

Performance of National and Regional Comparators

51. In addition to delivery indicators under each of the key priorities, the Council also measures outcomes compared to national and regional performance indicators within the Corporate Strategy.



52. At the end of quarter three, three of the six corporate performance indicators under this category are due to be reported, and the full outturn information is available at appendix A.

53. Two indicators are performing on or above target:

- Town Centre vacancy rate,
- The number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the area aged 16-64.

54. One indicator is performing below target and outside the 5% threshold.

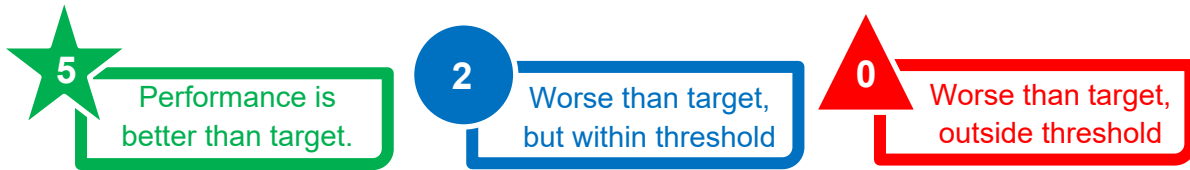
- Overall employment rate.

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Previous Reported Period	Q3 2023/24	Symbol	Trend
Overall employment rate	Bigger is Better	74.4% (Regional Average)	64.1% (Q2 2023/24)	67.9%	▲	Worse than Q3 2022/23
Reason below target:	<p>Chorley’s employment rate has slightly increased when compared to the previous quarter. Of the population aged 16-64 in Chorley, 68.5% are considered economically active (i.e. able to work), and 67.9% of these are employed. This is a relatively high percentage when compared to other areas and the North West and nationally.</p> <p>On the other hand, the unemployment rate in Chorley is at 2.9% is below the Northwest (3.6%) and national average (3.7%). However, the benefit claimant rate for Chorley is relatively low compared to other areas and is one of only four Lancashire districts (Fylde, South Ribble, Chorley, and Ribble Valley) with a lower than average proportion of working-age residents claiming key inactive Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits. Chorley has 9.2% of the working-age population claiming DWP incapacity/sickness benefits, which is just below the national average of 9.3% and Lancashire at 11.2%.</p> <p>The key economic legacy of Covid-19 on the UK economy has not been high unemployment, rather there has instead been a dramatic increase in economic inactivity of over 800,000 workers in the UK. Declining employment rates are a national issue and is not isolated to Chorley. The largest two categories within employment are employees and self-employed people; in recent years, these two categories have accounted for over 99% of all people in employment.</p> <p>Economic inactivity data provides a more detailed breakdown of employment rates. The recent increase in the UK’s level of economic inactivity is concentrated amongst older workers and those with long-term health conditions. Around 75% of the UK’s increased economic inactivity since the start of the pandemic is amongst older workers aged over 50 years. The main reasons for inactivity in Chorley are related to the lifestyle choices of the over 50’s to take retirement and the increasing older</p>					

	<p>population. Ill health and disabilities have also been key factors. However, the relatively low levels of benefit claimants in Chorley suggests that these reasons may not be a major contributor to economic inactivity in Chorley.</p>
<p>Action required:</p>	<p>Chorley Council is committed to encouraging businesses to create employment opportunities in the borough and will continue to monitor trends in the data. The council works with Lancashire County Council, LEP, Job Centre Plus, education, and other partners to ensure that residents can access opportunities available through funded or specialist programs, apprenticeships, training, and skills development.</p> <p>The council continues to work with delivery partners to support local businesses and encourage employment opportunities. The Choose Chorley inward investment grant is available for businesses relocating to Chorley and bringing job opportunities with them. The council is also working to ensure that Skills and Employment plans are implemented into any new developments to provide job opportunities</p>
<p>Trend:</p>	<p>This indicator is performing worse than the 75.4% reported in Q3 2022/23 and is performing below the Regional and National average (75.8%).</p>

Performance of Key Service Measures

55. There are some important indicators that are not included within the Corporate Strategy but are measured locally as indicators of service performance.



56. At the end of quarter three, all seven key service measures are due to be reported. The full outturn information for this is available at Appendix B.
57. All seven indicators are performing on or above target or within the 5% threshold:
- Percentage of minor planning applications decided within 8 weeks or agreed time extension,
 - Percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 (16 for EIA) weeks or agreed time extension,
 - Average working days per employee (FTE) per year lost through sickness absence,
 - Percentage of Council Tax collected,
 - Percentage of Business Rates (NNDR) collected,
 - Contact Centre inbound calls answered within wait time of less than 5 minutes,
 - Percentage of inbound calls to the Contact Centre answered within 90 seconds.

Climate change and air quality

58. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda: net carbon zero by 2030, reducing waste production, limiting non sustainable forms of transport, working with sustainable and green accredited companies, limiting, or improving air quality, limiting water waste, and flooding risks, improving green areas and biodiversity.

Equality and diversity

59. An Impact Assessment (IA) was completed in October 2022, which was considered as part of the approval process for the Corporate Strategy 2022. IAs have also been individually conducted for each corporate project as part of the planning and documentation process. This has ensured that the impact on equality, our communities, and the environment has been fully considered and addressed. The completed IA for the Corporate Strategy is available under background documents within this report.

Risk

60. Each corporate project has a risk register established on the GRACE risk management system to ensure the effective identification, monitoring, and mitigation of risks to the Corporate Strategy and its delivery. These will inform the wider risk assessment for the Corporate Strategy on an ongoing basis.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

61. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The impact of performance on the financial position of the council is reflected in the relevant revenue and capital quarterly financial monitoring reports.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

62. The report is for noting and discussion. There are no direct legal implications arising.

Background documents

63. The following documents are background items to this report:
- [Corporate Strategy 2022](#),
 - [Corporate Strategy 2022 Cover Report](#),
 - [Corporate Strategy 2022 Impact Assessment](#).


Appendices


64. The following appendices are included with the report:
- Appendix A – Performance of Corporate Strategy key measures,
 - Appendix B – Performance of key service delivery measures.


Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Michael Johnson, Louise Wingfield, Polly Patel, (Senior Policy and Performance Officer, Policy and Performance Advisor, Performance & Partnerships Manager)	Michael.johnson@chorley.gov.uk, louise.wingfield@chorley.gov.uk polly.patel@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	25/01/24








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.

Appendix A: Performance of Corporate Strategy key measures

 Performance is better than target

 Worse than target but within threshold

 Worse than target, outside threshold

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Previous Reported Period	Quarter 3 2023/24		Trend	
Housing where residents can live well							
Number of long-term empty properties in the borough	Smaller is better	150	121 (Q2 2023/24)	96		Better than Q3 2022/23	125
Percentage of households living in fuel poverty	Smaller is Better	National Average 14.6%	11.1% (Q1 2023/24)	To be reported Q1 2024/25		-	-
No. of affordable homes delivered	Bigger is Better	110	77 (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-
A green and sustainable borough							
Number of bus shelters improved	Bigger is better	5	Not previously reported	0		New for 2023/24	-
Number of Trees Planted	Bigger is better	93,500	117,142 (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-
Number of improvements to parks, open spaces and playing pitches linked to strategy delivery	Bigger is better	10	15 (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-
% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting (Q2 data)	Bigger is better	45.3%	46.2% (Q1 2023/24)	146.8%		Better than Q2 2022/23	45.3%
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas							
Number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention	Bigger is better	150	159 (Q2 2023/24)	237		Better than Q3 2022/23	220
The % of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	3.0%	1.9% (Q2 2023/24)	3.7%		Worse than Q3 2022/23	2.4%
Number of people who participate in a volunteering opportunity (as a result of an intervention by the Employment Service)	Bigger is better	54	29 (Q2 2023/24)	48		Better than Q3 2022/23	13
Number of Business Engagements by the Council	Bigger is better	675	527 (Q2 2023/24)	748		New for 2023/24	-
Growth in business rate base	Bigger is better	0.5%	-0.03% (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-

¹ This indicator is reported in arrears and reflects quarter two 2023/24 performance. Its previous performance relates to quarter one 2023/24.

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Previous Reported Period	Quarter 3 2023/24		Trend	
Healthy, safe, and engaged communities							
The number of visits to Council's leisure centres	Bigger is better	351,000	179,458 (Q2 2023/24)	255,446		Better than Q3 2022/23	243,149
Number of people referred to social prescribing, including Population Health Management	Bigger is better	525	499 (Q2 2023/24)	780		Worse than Q3 2022/23	1,501
Number of volunteer community groups supported to improve by the Council	Bigger is better	75	86 (Q2 2023/24)	129		Worse than Q3 2022/23	143
% of service requests received online	Bigger is better	50%	56.91% (Q2 2023/24)	54.69%		Worse than Q3 2022/23	60.65%
% of customers dissatisfied with the service they have received from the council	Smaller is better	17%	17.46% (Q2 2023/24)	17.38%		Better than Q3 2022/23	17.52%
% increase in visitor numbers to Chorley	Bigger is better	2%	113% (Q3 2022/23)	31.5%		Worse than Q3 2022/23	113%
National and Regional Comparators							
Overall employment rate	Bigger is Better	74.4% (Regional Average)	64.1% (Q2 2023/24)	67.9%		Worse than Q3 2022/23	75.4%
The number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the area aged 16-64	Smaller is Better	4.10% (Regional Average)	2.3% (Q2 2023/24)	2.4%		Better than Q3 2022/23	2.6%
Town Centre Vacancy Rate	Smaller is better	11.2% ² (National Average)	8.2% (Q2 2023/24)	8.22%		Better than Q3 2022/23	11.05%
Median Workplace Earnings better than the North West Average	Bigger is better	Regional average	£552.80 (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-
Earnings by place of residence (better than the North West average)	Bigger is better	Regional average	£645.10 (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-
Percentage of the population with NVQ level 3 and above	Bigger is better	Regional average	69.9% (Q4 2022/23)	To be reported Q4 2023/24		-	-

²This indicator tracks against the national average which is provided on a quarterly basis from an external source, the report has now been discontinued and an alternative is being sourced. Therefore, the latest available national average (Quarter Two 2023/24) has been used. At quarter three 2022/23 the national average was 10.2% and the average over the year was 10.8%.

Appendix B: Performance of key service delivery measures

★ Performance is better than target
 ● Worse than target but within threshold
 ▲ Worse than target, outside threshold

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Comparison (previous quarter)	Quarter 3 2023/24		Trend	
				Value	Performance	Comparison	Value
% MINOR planning applications decided within 8 weeks or agreed time extension	Bigger is Better	85%	96.23% (Q2 2023/24)	99.18%	★	Better than Q3 2022/23	98%
% MAJOR planning applications decided within 13 (16 for EIA) weeks or agreed time extension	Bigger is Better	80%	100% (Q2 2023/24)	100%	★	Same as Q3 2022/23	100%
Average working days per employee (FTE) per year lost through sickness absence	Smaller is Better	8.23 days	3.83 days (Q2 2023/24)	6.44 days	★	Better than Q3 2022/23	8.23
Percentage of Council Tax collected	Bigger is Better	82.11%	54.91% (Q2 2023/24)	81.60%	●	Worse than Q3 2022/23	82.11%
Percentage of Business Rates (NDR) collected	Bigger is Better	75.82%	50.16% (Q2 2023/24)	74.13%	●	Worse than Q3 2022/23	75.82%
Contact Centre inbound calls answered within wait time of <5 minutes	Bigger is Better	40%	84.29% (Q2 2023/24)	82.87%	★	New for 2023/24	-
Percentage of inbound calls to the Contact Centre answered within 90 seconds	Bigger is Better	40%	58.91% (Q2 2023/24)	50.50%	★	New for 2023/24	-

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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