

## **Executive Cabinet**

Thursday, 13th February 2025, 6.30 pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley, and YouTube

### Agenda

#### **Apologies for absence**

##### **1 Declarations of Any Interests**

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

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

##### **2 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 23 January 2025 of Executive Cabinet**

(Pages 5 - 10)

##### **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 Debra Platt)**

##### **4 Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Suicide Bereavement and Prevention**

(Pages 11 - 36)

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

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

##### **5 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q3**

(Pages 37 - 56)

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

6 **Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q3** (Pages 57 - 68)

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

7 **Chorley Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25** (Pages 69 - 90)

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 Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)  
(Introduced by Councillor Adrian Lowe)**

9 **Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Contract Approval** (Pages 91 - 94)

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

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](http://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, 23 January 2025**

**Members present:** Councillor Alistair Bradley, (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Howarth, Alistair Morwood, Margaret France and Adrian Lowe

**Officers:** Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Sarah Bullock (Deputy Chief Executive), Tasneem Safdar (Head of Legal and Procurement), Neil Halton (Director of Finance), Caroline Wolfenden (Director of Change and Delivery), Gayle Wootton (Director of Planning and Property), Kieran Leonard (Policy Officer) and Nina Neisser-Burke (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Other Members:** Councillors Irene Amahwe, Michelle Beach, Aaron Beaver, Julia Berry, Gordon France, Danny Gee, Hasina Khan and June Molyneaux

#### 51 **Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of any interests.

#### 52 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 12 December 2024 of Executive Cabinet**

**Resolved: that the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 12 December 2024 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Executive Leader.**

#### 53 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

#### 54 **Draft 25/26 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 2025/26 and the forecast for 2026/27, reflecting the information contained within the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement announced on 18 December 2024, which will be finalised in early February 2025.

In summary, the council would continue to deliver services outlined within the report, address the needs of its residents and achieve its corporate priorities through a

mixture of external funding, revenue and capital budgets. Members recognised that although a balanced budget position could be achieved for 2025/26, this was subject to increasing council tax by 2.99%.

It was acknowledged that there was a budget gap of £1.932m for the year 2026/27 and plans would be refined and developed over coming months to address this. Members recognised the challenges faced and the uncertainty around the council's future funding streams beyond 2025/26 and therefore the projection and assumptions underpinning the MTFS for 2026/27 would be kept under review. It was hoped that the government will deliver a multi-year settlement for 2026/27 to help with forward planning.

Consultation on the proposed budget for 2025/26 would commence following approval of the proposals by the Executive Cabinet.

**Decision:**

**That Members agree the contents of this report in order to start the budget consultation process as follows:**

- **A proposed 2.99% increase in council tax in 2025/26;**
- **A forecast balanced budget for 2025/26 (based on a 2.99% increase in council tax, as noted above);**
- **A forecast budget shortfall for 2026/27 of £1.932mill, to be addressed through the development and delivery of the council's Fit for the Future transformation programme, although it is acknowledged that a significant level of uncertainty prevails around this figure following publication of the 'Local Authority Funding Reform: Objectives and Principles' consultation paper, which outlines the government's intent to redistribute funding through a fair funding review and business rates reset;**
- **To note the proposals in the report for investment in the Administration's priority areas.**

**Reasons for recommendations**

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

**Other options considered and rejected**

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

**55 Fees and Charges 25/26**

Councillor 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 proposals for 2025/26. If agreed, the increases would be implemented from 1 April 2025, or the most suitable date after.

Members considered the report which set out the key fees and charges budgets and the income generated from each. It also set out an estimate of the financial impact in 2025/26 of the proposals made, if they were to be adopted.

Members recognised the need to increase the majority of fees and charges in line with inflation rates to avoid them falling below the cost of providing that service. This would allow the council to continue to strive to achieve value for money for residents.

With regards to cemetery fees, Members commended the proposal to not charge for burials of a stillborn baby or a child under the age of 16, and recognised Chorley was the only borough in Lancashire to do this.

**Decision:**

1. To note the current levels of individual 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 31.
3. To approve an increase in Leisure fees and charges of 1.7% in line with September CPI (rounded up to nearest 5p) as per point 26.
4. To approve an uplift in the rents of all Council owned housing (including Extra Care properties but excluding Cotswold House) of 2.7%. This is the approach agreed by Executive Cabinet in July 2022 of increasing these rents by CPI plus 1%, with CPI based on the published rate for September each year. Service charges were not increased in 2024/25 but a review of the costs incurred has resulted in a recommendation to increase these by £2.60 per week from 2025/26.
5. To approve an increase in the rent charged at Cotswold House of 2.7%, plus an increase in service charge of 0.96% and an increase in personal charge of 4.39% as detailed in point 30.
6. To approve an increase in garden waste collection charges of £2.50 as per point 33.
7. To approve the changes in Astley Hall fees and charges as per point 34.
8. To approve an increase in Legal Charges as per point 32.
9. To approve a general increase of up to 1.7% in the fees for 2025/26 (limited to the services listed in Table 3 of Appendix 1) based on the rate of CPI in September 2024. An increase in costs may necessitate an increase in excess of 1.7% where these relate directly to the cost of products e.g. tea / coffee charges. These will be limited to a maximum increase of £1 per unit.
10. To approve an increase in Market fees of 10% for Covered Market, Cabins and Permanent Street traders as per point 35. A £5 increase is proposed for temporary street traders.
11. To approve increases and changes to car parking charges as per point 36. The proposals around Hallgate and Yarrow to be approved in principle subject to further consideration of any potential displacement of vehicles and action required.
12. To approve the basis for new charging in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain and S.106 Monitoring fee as per point 37.
13. To approve an increase in cemetery fees as per point 38.
14. To approve the full list of fees and charges for upload onto the Council website.

**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.

**56 Equality Objectives and Equality Strategy**

Councillor Margaret France, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships presented the report of the Director of Change and Delivery which sought approval of the proposed equality objectives, Equality Strategy and action plan.

The council's equality objectives required a refresh in line with the Equality Act 2010. The new Equality Strategy would help to ensure that equality is considered within decision-making, policy and service delivery. This would help strengthen the council's commitment to addressing inequalities and ensure that its Public Sector Equality Duty is met. Members considered the five proposed equality objectives for 2025 – 2029 as outlined in the report.

Members welcomed the creation of a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board, the reinvigoration of the Equality Forum and the relaunch of the staff Equality Champions Network to help promote a diverse, supportive and inclusive workplace. Mandatory training for staff and councillors, as well as the inclusion of health inequalities in the Equality Action Plan for 2025/26 was also supported. Members thanked officers for their work in producing this Strategy.

**Decision:**

- 1. To review and approve the proposed equality objectives for 2025 – 2029.**
- 2. To review and approve the Equality Strategy 2025 – 2029 and action plan.**

**Reasons for recommendations**

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to publish equality objectives every 4 years. The equality objectives were last agreed in 2020, so now require refreshing.
2. The Equality Strategy and action plan will help to provide structure to demonstrate how the Council will achieve the objectives.

**Other options considered and rejected**

1. No other options have been considered as the Council has a legal duty to undertake the publishing of its objectives.
2. The Equality Strategy and action plan will provide structure that articulates how the Council will ensure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty which is a legal requirement.

**57 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.**

**58 Chorley Town Hall Improvement Works – Procurement Strategy**

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform presented the confidential report of the Director of Property and Planning. The report sought approval of the procurement strategy to procure a contractor to undertake Chorley Town Hall improvement works.

Members recognised the need for the improvement works outlined in the report, following the results of the condition survey on the Town Hall.



**Decision:**

1. To approve the procurement strategy to procure a contractor to undertake Chorley Town Hall improvement works.
2. To delegate the contract award to the Executive Member of Economic Development and Public Service Reform for sign off.
3. To note, further reports will come forward as part of Town Hall improvements programme.

**Reasons for recommendations:**

To undertake critical works in line with the condition survey recommendations.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

Do Nothing – lead to further deterioration of the building's fabric and services including deterioration of materials, structural issues, energy efficiency, increased repair costs and compliance issues.

Chair

Date

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# **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Suicide Bereavement and Prevention May – October 2024**



**Contents**

Contents..... 2

Introduction..... 3

Summary  
Recommendations..... 4-5

Membership of the Task  
Group..... 6

Scoping the  
Review..... 6-7

The Desired  
outcomes..... 7

Terms of Reference..... 8

Witnesses..... 8

Meetings..... 8

Background and context  
..... 9

Findings / Evidence  
presented..... 9-21

Conclusions and  
Recommendations..... 21-24

Appendices..... 25

## Introduction

### **From the Chair of the Task Group Councillor Samantha Martin and Vice Chair Councillor Arjun Singh**

Following an initial open invitation to a discussion meeting in March 2024, this Task Group was set up in May 2024.

The background to this topic was the concern of members regarding the area of Chorley being a particularly high risk for suicide, as reflected in official statistics.

The aim was to identify any underlying issues relating to this trend and if so, to address them ensuring the Council and its partners are doing what everything they can for residents at risk of suicide, and / or have been bereaved by suicide.

One of the key points made during this review was that providing support for both those at risk of suicide (i.e. prevention) and those bereaved by suicide were closely linked: suicide bereavement is also a strong indicator of increased suicide risk.

The Task Group met on several occasions over the course of five months from May to October, gathering evidence from a range of witnesses and sources including the Council's Social Prescribing Team, local support groups, Lancashire MIND, AMPARO, and Lancashire Constabulary. Two Cabinet Members were also interviewed.

We would like to thank all the Members involved with this Task Group and to the officers, including Liz Jones, Head of Communities and Housing, Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader and her colleagues, 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 Samantha Martin,  
Chair



Councillor Arjun Singh, 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.

### Recommendations

1. That the Council liaise with its partners to provide information about suicide prevention more widely in Chorley e.g. libraries, gyms, local businesses (barbers, hairdressers, nail bars, Cuerden Valley Café, park wardens, licensed taxi services / drivers);
2. a) To liaise with mental health organisations such as Lancashire MIND and Samaritans to provide training to local employers/businesses that request it, and  
  
b) That the Council consults with taxi drivers regarding training provision on suicide prevention delivered by these mental health organisations.
3. That the Member Development Working Group consider the inclusion of voluntary training open to all councillors on suicide prevention and suicide bereavement in the Council's Member Development Programme (e.g. Orange Button training); and  
that information be placed in the Members' Room so they know where to seek support and are able to sign post residents
4. That LCC Public Health be requested to provide:
  - a) death by suicide data for Chorley i.e. locations most associated with suicide risk, geographical locations ("hotspots") and other contributory factors as part of their full audit being currently carried out; and
  - b) Lancashire wide trends in relation to suicide and self harm;  
to inform a more targeted approach between the Council and its partners
5. That Lancashire Constabulary consider reviewing their process for offering support to people bereaved by suicide, such as:
  - to consider the reintroduction of handing out Bags for Strife in the future;
  - signposting to the website where Bags for Strife can be requested online;
  - an information leaflet providing information and signposting support.
  - explore the possibility of providing information about a wider range of support groups particularly local groups that specialise in suicide bereavement; and
  - to work with statutory and VCFS partners going forward on supporting and safeguarding individuals bereaved by suicide.
6. That Amparo and Lancashire Constabulary liaise to ensure that the right information is provided about what Amparo offer, and particularly that the website form can be filled out on behalf of the bereaved person.

7. That Amparo liaise closely with the Council's Social Prescribing Team to ensure its visibility and awareness locally by:
  - attendance at local events and meetings
  - face to face presentations in the local area, including a member learning session with Chorley councillors
8. That Amparo provide the Council with progress updates on their activities in the Chorley area, and time frame for receipt of ICB funding.
9. Request that Chorley Council's Revenues and Benefits team consider as part of an ongoing review if they could include information about accessing mental health / social prescribing services in council tax debt reminders as well as financial / debt advice.
10. That Chorley Council regularly review and update information relating to suicide support groups; include any additional support groups for signposting and partnership working; and explore possibilities of commissioning their services as appropriate.
11. If suicide support groups are discontinued for any reason, Chorley Council should seek a replacement venue/organisation.
12. Review and refresh the existing Suicide Working Group, including that data be obtained from Lancashire County Council Public Health on a regular basis (e.g. Annual Data Report).

### Membership of the Task Group

Councillor Samantha Martin (Chair)  
Councillor Arjun Singh (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Irene Amahwe  
Councillor Michelle Beach  
Councillor Russ Green  
Councillor Christine Heydon  
Councillor June Molyneaux  
Councillor Dedrah Moss  
Councillor Kim Snape  
Councillor Jenny Whiffen  
Councillor Neville Whittam  
Councillor Katie Wilkie

### Officer Support

Liz Jones, Head of Communities and Housing  
Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader  
Clare Gornall, Democratic and Member Services Officer

### Scoping the review

The objectives the Task Group were:

#### Objectives:

- To gain a better understanding of the scale of deaths by suicide in Chorley, by obtaining suicide rates and statistics – particularly from LCC Public Health, who can provide latest information
- Learn lessons from the Council's partners in the statutory / public sector about how families bereaved by suicide are supported, and what work is being carried out to prevent death by suicide locally.
- Agree what terminology is appropriate to use when talking about death by suicide – better understanding of terms used / language (e.g. not to use “commit” as “take their life” or “died by suicide” is less judgemental)
- To review this subject area with no moral judgment about suicide – seek to identify various reasons why residents chose to end their lives e.g. debt, cost of living, addiction etc.
- To identify actions which could result in a reduction in suicide rate locally. Task Group members agreed that this was an aspirational objective as many actions are not within the remit of the Council.
- To understand how the Council's own Social Prescribing Service can work with residents to prevent death by suicide and look at other social prescribing models to see if they are more effective at this.



- To consider Council's internal Bereavement Leave/general Leave policies in relation to staff who experience bereavement through suicide.
- To understand how the offer of continual support is made to people who have been bereaved by suicide.
- To see how council staff, Members and partners are confident and comfortable in having conversations with people about emotional wellbeing and suicidal thoughts.
- Understand the importance of using open questions, active listening and not just accepting the first response a person may give.
- To identify and improve support groups at particular risk e.g. LGBTQ+, neurodiverse people
- To identify potential funding streams which could support current or future projects to reduce deaths by suicide in Chorley.

The scoping document was treated as a "living" document which was reviewed regularly as the study progressed. It became clear during the early stages of the review that the Task Group needed to drill down to a more focussed approach in terms of its objectives and evidence gathering, to ensure the piece of work was able to produce effective outcomes.

#### The Initial Desired Outcomes Were:

- To formulate a directory of local services and contacts for people who have suicidal thoughts or who have been bereaved by suicide.
- To offer specialist training (e.g., Lancashire Mind Orange Button training) to councillors.
- Ensure that that councillors who may have mental health issues know where to seek support.
- Raise awareness of support services in public places (similar to "Ask Angela" posters in pub toilets / taxis (e.g. Samaritans posters).
- To ensure that relevant Council webpages include appropriate signposting to support services / signposting (mental health triage).
- To explore possibility of a dedicated council officer as single point of contact for residents who have been bereaved by suicide i.e. regarding the process, liaise with police, offer bereavement support etc.
- Discuss/explore how residents affected by suicide access service provision without the need for referral from another organisation.
- Promote Hub of Hope database as a good source of local, national and regional support for anyone worried about their own emotional wellbeing – if possible obtain QR code for app.

- Promote key contacts (e.g., Crisis Intervention Team) for residents who are suffering from mental ill health.
- Ensure that where appropriate local awareness raising events around the issue of suicide, mental health and emotional wellbeing are linked to national/international awareness raising campaigns.

### Terms of Reference

1. Identify the relevant background information – statistics and local suicide rate data, comparisons to other local areas, what the Council and other organisations already do. How different areas collect statistics (like for like) and the reasons why other some area rates have dramatically dropped.
2. Seek better understanding of the issues that might lead to someone dying by suicide and identify the reasons behind them
3. Seek to improve what the Council provides and we can work better with partners, such as signposting, raising awareness
4. Share best practice with other organisations

### Witnesses

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

**Bernie Heggarty and Chelsea Fisher – Social Prescribing Team**

**Lancashire MIND**

**LCC Public Health**

**Bags for Strife charity**

**Andy's Man Club**

**Beside you in Bereavement (BYIB) – Suicide Bereavement Support Group**

**Representative of Local Police**

**Amparo**

### Meetings

The agendas and minutes of each meeting can be found here

[Browse meetings - Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Suicide Bereavement and Prevention | Chorley](#)

## Background and Context

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was agreed on 1 August 2023. Suicide Bereavement and Prevention was agreed as one of the Task Group topics following a discussion which highlighted Chorley as high risk area in terms of suicide statistics.

The Task Group held its first meeting in May 2024 Councillor Samantha Martin was appointed Chair, and Councillor Arjun Singh was appointed Vice Chair.

## Meeting - 22 May 2024

### Scoping the Review

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group discussed the scope for the review, including the objectives, desired outcomes, and terms of reference.

They also had regard to the notes of the informal “brainstorming” meeting held on 28 March 2024 which identified a number of organisations that may be useful to speak to as part of the review.

The Task Group stressed it was important to keep the review focussed. Throughout this study members regularly reviewed all the organisations it wished to interview.

### Presentation by the Social Prescribing Team

Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader and Bernie Heggarty, Community Partnerships Manager gave a presentation outlining the Council’s Social Prescribing Service. Bernie explained that most of its clients were people with moderate mental health issues accompanied with, or related to, difficulties in circumstances e.g. social isolation, housing, or financial problems.

The Social Prescribing Service also provided signposting for people in crisis or with severe mental health issues.

They also presented the Council’s Suicide Prevention and Reduction Strategy Action Plan 2022-2025.

It outlined the actions which had the Council had already completed including:

Amparo - Share information with Chorley Central Primary Care Network Multi-Disciplinary Meeting to enable Amparo support to be offered to more residents.

Chorley Council website - Provide residents with up-to-date Mental Health/Suicide information and support details.

World Suicide Prevention Day 2023 - Increased awareness to residents of mental health support in Chorley.

It also included some forthcoming events:

World Suicide Prevention Event – September 2024

World Mental Health Day – October 2024

It also referred to the Chorley Suicide Working Group – which included a range of partner organisations including Chorley Women’s Centre, St Laurence’s Church, Lancashire Mind, Chorley Council Social Prescribing, Chorley Council Public Protection, Bereavement Team (LTHTR), United Reformed Church, All About People, Chorley Buddies, Citizen’s Advice, Amparo, Mindsmatter, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Library House Surgery, Cllr Samantha Martin, Cllr Aaron Beaver, and CAMHS.

**Meeting – 19 June 2024**

Liz Jones, Head of Communities and Housing presented a report with additional information to enable them to gain a broader understanding of the issues affecting suicide prevention in Chorley.

The report provided:

Real Time Surveillance Suspected Suicide data – Public Health LCC (May 2024)

Office for Health Improvement and Disparity (OHID) suicide and self-harm data (April 2023).

**Suicide and Self Harm data from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities From April 2023**

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower Ci	95% Upper Ci
England	-	15,415	10.3	10.2	10.5
North West region (statistical)	-	2,289	11.8	11.3	12.2
Preston	-	66	16.9	13.0	21.6
Blackpool	-	61	16.4	12.5	21.1
St. Helens	-	73	15.2	11.9	19.1
Chorley	-	45	14.8	10.8	19.9
Lancaster	-	51	14.2	10.6	18.8

**Your indicator lists - OHID (phe.org.uk)**

It was highlighted that on the table of statistics from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparity (OHID) suicide and self-harm data (April 2023) Chorley was the fourth highest in the north west region. The Task Group felt it was important to explore the data further and attempt to identify the reasons for this.

In addition to this data, Liz Jones explained that the Public Health Team at LCC can provide more detailed Real Time Surveillance (RTS) Data which is updated daily. However, the data sets are very small and there is a high risk of cases being identifiable. Therefore, they were happy to attend and share data with members in private session at the next meeting.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information was presented including the Suicide Action Plan provided by Rossendale Borough Council (this area did have high rates of death by suicide in the past but the rates are now much lower).

Chorley Borough Council's Suicide Action Plan compared favourably as many of the actions were already being done.

Bernie Heggarty suggested that it would be useful to extend information and awareness raising to more venues in the town centre.

It was also proposed that Chorley Council:

- Liaise with partners about providing an information more widely e.g. libraries, gyms, local businesses (barbers, hairdressers, nail bars, Cuerden Valley Café, park wardens); and
- Liaise with mental health organisations such as Lancashire MIND or the Samaritans to provide further training to local employers that request it
- Training for taxi drivers – to be raised at Licensing Liaison
- Strongly recommend to the Member Development Working Group that training be provided for all councillors.

### **Informal Interviews – Suicide Bereavement Support Group – Beside you in Bereavement – 23 July 2024**

Councillors from the Suicide Bereavement and Prevention Scrutiny Task Group invited three members of the Suicide Bereavement Support Group “Beside you in Bereavement” (BYIB) for an informal discussion.

Each member of the support group related their personal experiences of bereavement following the loss of a relative to suicide and the level of support they received both in the immediate aftermath and the long term.

They stressed that Suicide Bereavement Support Groups are important because they allow a safe space to discuss what has happened with others who have had the same experience and can offer understanding of that particular type of grief.

It was highlighted that health studies have shown that the likelihood of death by suicide increases amongst people bereaved by suicide. So the support provided for these individuals is very important and can prevent further deaths.

During the meeting, other factors as well as the mental health of the individual concerned in cases of suicide were discussed, such as:

- Social issues
- Lack of community
- Disconnection from the external world and from self in our modern society

Members of the support group stressed the importance of talking about suicide, reducing the stigma and offering support for people affected by bereavement by suicide as it is a very particular form of grief. Bereavement by suicide is often characterised by

- Guilt
- The suddenness of the bereavement making it difficult to process
- Unanswered questions
- Can cause family division

The Support Group stressed the importance of educating the public about suicide prevention and people bereaved by suicide. It would be particularly helpful to link support groups in Chorley together.

One of the key points made was that often bereaved individuals were not offered support and were in the position of having to reach out for support by themselves. Experiences of the organisation "Amparo" was that it provided some information, but did not have links to local support groups. Also, the online referral was lengthy and difficult to tackle for a person bereaved by suicide.

There were varying experiences of services by the police. One bereaved person was told the news by an officer in another police authority over the phone, and had to relate it to family members to themselves. They then did not hear from anyone until the coroner contacted the family.

It was noted that the coroner would read out the verdict in an impersonal way, and often places no restrictions on press reporting after the verdict (unless there is court case pending due to complex issues).

Councillors and members of the Support Group agreed upon the importance of

- training for police officers in these circumstances
- the need for support to be provided immediately.

It was suggested that arrangements should be made for a liaison officer to contact the person bereaved by suicide by telephone within 24 hours. It would then be up to the person to decide how to take that support forward. The person relating the news (e.g. police) could tell them a liaison officer would be in touch.

The Support Group indicated that its funding runs out next year. Liz Jones, Head of Communities and Housing indicated that small grants were available.

Councillor Samantha Martin thanked members of the Support Group for their attendance.

### **Meeting – 23 July 2024**

#### **Presentation by Lancashire MIND**

Karen Arrowsmith from Lancashire MIND attended the meeting. She gave details of the latest campaigns and projects they offer relating to suicide prevention, including:

- The orange button pledge – a regional trial is being carried out this year, in partnership with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Samaritans, with a view to rolling out in future years.
- Self harm safe kits (in partnership with Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB) – they include first aid kits, signposting information and “distraction strips” for children
- Free e-learning

She indicated that Lancashire MIND was connecting with organisations supporting a range of vulnerable groups (including the five target groups such as LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse people) to deliver training on self harm and access to information that will be free for all.

#### **Information provided by LCC Public Health**

Marie Demaine, Public Health Specialist at Lancashire County Council, gave a presentation regarding the latest position with regard to public health data on suicide.

She explained that a full audit was currently being carried out in Lancashire. Lancashire was in the top five highest suicide rates in the UK and as such had attracted funding.

The England average suicide rate was 2.5 per 100,000. Chorley’s suicide rate of 14.8 per 100,000 population was considerably higher.

In addition, suicide was one of the leading causes of death in men under 50, which was reflected in the Chorley figures as significantly higher for males.

She indicated that data for neurodiverse people was now recorded, but not yet publicly available.

She referred to the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023 – 2028 which cited LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse people as vulnerable target groups.

A localised Action Plan was being developed for Lancashire.

Responding to a query from the Task Group, Ms Demaine indicated that she could provide more detailed data for Chorley and hotspot maps that did not identify the actual addresses of where deaths by suicide took place in order to protect the identify of specific individuals.

**Update from Marie Demaine, LCC Public Health Specialist - 29 October 2024**

Marie Demaine shared the Office of National Statistics Data 2019 – 2023 which showed an increase in suicides for the Chorley area from 9 in 2022 to 13 in 2023.

	Population	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Burnley	96,435	11	13	8	11	24
Lancaster	145,559	16	11	12	12	21
Pendle	97,039	4	3	10	8	20
Hyndburn	84,261	7	13	11	8	19
Ribble Valley	64,469	9	12	6	8	17
Preston	156,411	12	12	16	15	13
Chorley	119,352	17	14	14	9	13
West Lancashire	120,703	10	7	13	7	12
South Ribble	113,552	8	7	11	8	12
Rosendale	71,541	20	14	8	10	8
Fylde	83,846	10	10	10	6	7
Wyre	116,994	16	8	10	14	6

Marie also referred to Real Time Surveillance Data (which monitored suspected deaths by suicide but which had yet to determined by the coroner). This data is not currently publicly available for reasons of sensitivity and confidentiality, however she confirmed that at time of writing Chorley is currently the highest rate in Lancashire and if it continues on the current trajectory 2024/25 rates will be higher than 2023/24.

Marie agreed to provide further information after 30 October for inclusion in the report including rates per 100,000 for Chorley and comparative data regarding factors connected to certain locations (e.g. areas of deprivation) and if there were any geographical locations which were a particular risk.

**Meeting – 20 August 2024**

**Interview with Angela Allen, Bags for Strife**

This charity was established in the aftermath of personal experiences with suicide and as a response to the gap between the support available, and the support that was needed at such a devastating time.

The name and concept was born out of the four feelings those affected by suicide most commonly experience, Blame, Anger, Guilt and Sadness (BAGS). It was a very simple concept of a bag full of practical information, guidance on local services and



other symbolic items such as tea bags, chocolate and self-care products as reminders to talk to others, eat and take time to look after yourself.

The bags were provided to other organisations and partners to distribute to families and loved ones affected by suicide. Lancashire Police had been integral to this when responding to instances of suicide and delivering the news to family and friends, or subsequently when Family Liaison Officers provided further support. The charity also worked with other police forces, universities, Coroner's Offices and other local groups to distribute the bags.

The charity operates nationally and has recently delivered it's 2,000<sup>th</sup> bag with future plans including developing a bag specifically targeted to younger people.

A number of questions were asked by members with responses summarised below:

Information provided in the bags do vary and will include guidance on localised services and support groups that are available. Every bag includes a 'Little Book of Help' which contains experiences and stories of others affected by suicide so people don't feel as alone in their grief.

It was vitally important to reach out and widen the circle of support, those closest to you will be experiencing their own grief and it can be overwhelming to offer support and care to others when experiencing it themselves. Everyone deals with things differently so it is about finding your own person able to support you.

It was disappointing that Lancashire Police ceased distributing the bags when responding to a suicide around six months ago with members supportive of urging this decision to be re-considered. The bags support officers delivering tragic news so they can provide better help/signposting to the affected loved ones.

As it is often specialised and trained officers who visit families of suicide victims, including the bags as standard in all police vehicles was unlikely to be implemented.

Aside from the Police, faith leaders, funeral directors, coroners and other local charities across the country helped to distribute the bags to those in need. On whether the council could play a role in the delivery of bags, it was noted that officers and councillors would likely not be sufficiently equipped or trained to provide specialist mental health support that may arise.

A barrier to organisations working more collaboratively on projects such as this centred around sharing of information and data protection.

Suicide support services commissioned by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and provided by AMPARO in Lancashire were discussed and questions raised about the extent of and effectiveness of the service. Members expressed a desire to explore this further.

In relation to the support police officers provide to families and loved ones, it was suggested that groups such as Andy's Man Club, BAGS for Strife and others could facilitate training for officers to better equip them to deal with these distressing situations.

### **Interview with Luke Tetlow-Cross – Andy's Man Club**

Luke Tetlow-Cross from the charity organisation Andy's Man Club attended the meeting and explained the background to the organisation.

The charity was established in 2016 by relatives of Andy Roberts who died by suicide. Suicide was and still is a leading cause of death in men, with around 4,500 male suicides in 2023. The club centres around weekly support groups where men are encouraged to talk about their feelings and support each other over a brew and biscuits, breaking down cultural stigmas around doing so.

There were now 23 clubs established across the North West of England and over 200 nationally with 4,500 men attending meetings.

A key part of Luke's role is raising awareness of the club and promoting men's mental health more widely, this is achieved through social media, attending conferences and events and fundraising endeavours.

Arising from the discussion, the following key points were made:

- There are currently around 60 men attending meetings held weekly at Chorley Football Club. There is enough space at the venue but this is regularly reviewed. Aim for any new clubs to be at least five miles apart – currently looking at venues in Leigh and Wigan that may be suitable to host a club.
- Although the Women's Wellbeing Club offer a similar service, there was no plans for Andy's Man Club to establish a female division.
- The only criteria to attend a club meeting is that you must permanently identify as a man. Clubs welcome men of all ages, sexuality, religion or race to their meetings.
- The charity is entirely donation led and is driven by range of fundraising activities. There is funding that could apply for but decision made not to as often are limitations and restrictions as to how funding is spent.
- Clubs offer a number of different activities that club facilitators organise, these can be hikes, walks, pool nights or other sports.
- The Club delivers extensive in-house training for all of its facilitators and covers safeguarding, scenarios, how and where to signpost people too. The Club acknowledge facilitators have a challenging role in supporting others while managing their own mental health. Offer a lot of support to facilitators, they can access counselling and other support funded by the Club and Head Office will make a decision to stand facilitators down if they think it is in their best interests.
- The Club benefits from extensive advertising support from a number of organisations free of charge. Notable companies include Network Rail which displays Andy's Man Club adverts at train stations, and Clear Channel which

display adverts at bus stops and other locations across towns and cities across the country.

### **Meeting – 26 September 2024 – Interviews with Cabinet Members**

Councillor Beverley Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention), attended the meeting to discuss some of the issues highlighted in the review which related to her Cabinet portfolio.

She praised the work of the Scrutiny Task Group which had highlighted important issues. However, she indicated that it was likely much of work should be undertaken by partners and agencies outside the Council.

Members of the Task Group stressed the importance of joint working and letting agencies know where improvements can be made. Councillor Murray suggested that liaison between the police and MPs office for example, could be beneficial. Further to this, Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader indicated that she had met with the mental health lead for the Primary Care Network who was keen to create that sort of dialogue.

The Chair referred to previous discussions and evidence gathering of the Task Group which had identified some concerns in relation to one of the main referral organisations, AMPARO, which was used by several agencies including the police, (for example having to complete a lengthy online form on the website).

Chelsea Fisher also related feedback from speaking to community support groups, i.e. that AMPARO had not always been receiving referrals made and this was a concern. In addition, Liz Jones, Head of Communities and Housing, also gave feedback on an online session she had recently attended with AMPARO. Some of that information was at variance with what the Council had been told. It was agreed that clarification was needed.

Councillor Margaret France, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships, attended the meeting. She envisioned GPs playing key role in supporting people considering suicide or who are bereaved by suicide – as they would often be seen on a one basis. She suggested that key public sector partners who come into direct contact with people affected would be:

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust - Mental health services (especially GPs)

Police – call outs – can take someone at risk to a place of safety / give news of suicide to relatives

Council (especially social prescribing).

The Task Group also stressed the importance of prevention, e.g. by identifying people at risk, e.g. arising from social isolation.

The Chair thanked Councillors Beverley Murray and Margaret France for their attendance.

## **21 October 2024 – Interviews with Lancashire Constabulary and Amparo**

### **Interview with James Neale, Chief Inspector Local Policing and Partnerships 5.30pm**

Chief Inspector James Neale explained there were two main situations in which the police would become involved in a case of suicide:

1. Going directly to the scene – acting on behalf of the coroner
2. Visiting the next of kin to deliver the sad news of death by suicide.

James indicated that he had been speaking to colleagues in the mental health team earlier that day and all police referrals for support were to AMPARO. He explained that would sometimes be via the coroner's office who liaise with relatives.

He confirmed that previously officers did hand out Bags for Strife.

As regards passing on contact details of those bereaved by suicide, the process of referral by the police for vulnerable persons would require consent, other than in very exceptional circumstances e.g. safeguarding scenario. The procedure was on an "opt-in" basis rather than "opt-out".

The Chair referred to the experiences related by some service users about AMPARO, some of which were a concern. For example, there were some instances when the referrals had not been passed on.

James said that he had been reassured by the coroner's office that they do pass on support information when people are receptive; but he agreed to chase this matter up.

He later provided feedback from the coroner's office as follows:

"All families that suffer a death by suicide are offered a referral to AMPARO by the Coroners Officers. If families don't wish to take this offer up they are aware that we can refer at a later date and time.

Coroners Officers always offer Bags for Strife to families, we found that some families weren't being offered the bags by attending officers, this way we can ensure they have had every opportunity to receive one. If families agree to a bag this is taken to the mortuary and the funeral director will collect it when they collect the deceased and pass on to the families. Or families can come and collect from the Coroners Officers based in the hospitals."

As regards no longer handing out Bags for Strife, James indicated that there was a force-wide new deployment method introduced in May 2024, which involved

restrictions on what front line officers could do. He said that the reasons behind the decision were as follows:

Mixed feedback from officers – sometimes bereaved persons didn't want officers to come back after the first visit.

Resourcing issues – front line officers offering support may end up putting a time limit on interaction with the bereaved, which could make the situation worse. The police do not want to promise more than they can realistically do.

He did say that Lancashire Constabulary were looking at the feasibility of what support they can offer, but stressed it would need to be a process that they could be committed to fully and able to deliver a consistent service to all members of the public.

He said that it was probably not possible for officers to do this at the same time as the “death notice”, i.e. relaying news to relatives. This is because the police deliver the closest local resource to where needed. The arrangements as regards the deployment of police vehicles is such that it would not be possible to collect a bag from another location enroute, and it would not be possible to store them in vehicles as they may get damaged, causing distress and appearing unprofessional.

Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader noted that you can request bags via a website. James agreed that this would be something the police could investigate, as well as an information leaflet that maybe can be passed at the point of the death notice.

James agreed that he would explore the possibility of police referrals to other groups e.g. suicide bereavement support groups to offer a greater range of options.

James confirmed that all police officers receive basic training on mental health awareness, relevant legislation and suicide prevention. He stressed the primary role of the police in respect of legislative powers related to section 136 of the mental health act and this is only for people out in public. Other situations would be covered by safeguarding responsibilities.

The Chair referred to a distressing experience related to the Task Group by a person bereaved by suicide, in which police from Greater Manchester has contacted them (as next of kin) to relay the news over the telephone. No support was offered at the time. James stressed that that would not happen in Lancashire, no one would be contacted over the phone to receive the news.

The Chair requested that he feedback on the reintroduction of delivering Bags for Strife, even if just in Chorley, given it being a high risk area.

James later provided the feedback on this point:

Following on from the meeting on Monday I took away an action to look at

recommencing the distribution of Bags for Strife. I have explored the feasibility of this both locally and Force wide, but unfortunately at the moment we are unable to commit to the resourcing that this would require. I know this will be disappointing. We share a commitment to supporting and safeguarding I would be more than happy to discuss other opportunities to work together in this area, or to discuss the provision we have in place as a force in more depth.

### **Interview with Jennifer Harper – AMPARO – 6.00pm**

Jennifer Harper indicated that AMPARO had been running for nine years, initially starting in Cheshire and Merseyside and now covering wider areas including Lancashire. She was based in South Yorkshire and worked remotely.

The organisation is based on an approach of early intervention and counselling. Jennifer indicated that in 2023-24, AMPARO supported 78 people in Lancashire, 4 in the Chorley area.

Most referrals are through the coroner's office, however there are also a lot of self-referrals too. She estimated that 1 or 2 referrals had come from Chorley police. In 9 years, Amparo had lost only 1 person to suicide.

As regards the AMPARO website referral form, Jennifer stressed that another person could fill it out on the person's behalf e.g. from the coroner's office.

Once a referral / self referral had been submitted, that referral would go to the head office in Merseyside, then assigned to a Lancashire lead and a liaison worker would contact the person directly within 48 hours – 7 days of referral by their preferred method e.g. phone. The liaison worker would explain the process following death by suicide, i.e. coroner's role, funeral. It was a bespoke service.

Jennifer explained that AMPARO were seeking to challenge the stigma of death by suicide, making it normal to discuss in the public domain and thus increasing the chances of people seeking help and support.

Chelsea Fisher referred to a recent event in which a representative from AMPARO stated that they couldn't remember the last time they were in Chorley, which was a concern as Chorley was one of the areas at highest risk, e.g. this year 12 people had died by suicide.

Jennifer agreed that she would be happy to attend events and working groups being held in Chorley.

Jennifer suggested that sometimes uptake of the service depends on how it is offered and that it is explained clearly what they do. She indicated that they offer weekly 35-40minute online sessions via Event Brite which seeks to improve people's knowledge of the service offered.

She stressed that support is offered from day one and there was no time limit on accessing the service. A link to the website was put in the Teams chat:

[Amparo.org.uk](https://www.amparo.org.uk)

Chelsea Fisher explained that the council has links to the voluntary and community support groups such as Beside you in Bereavement (BYIB), which works well as meetings are held face to face and everyone knows each other.

Jennifer said she was happy to do face to face presentations in Chorley, including Member Learning Sessions at Chorley Council (Jennifer to liaise with Clare Gornall re this).

Jennifer also agreed to provide feedback on progress as they already do so quarterly for the Integrated Care Board. (However, information provided to commissioners is covered by confidentiality guidelines).

Jennifer agreed to provide information on the time frame for ICB funding.

Jennifer indicated that AMPARO also offer training to professional groups/organisations e.g. for acute stress.

The Chair thanked Jennifer for her time.

### **Discussion and Analysis after Interviews**

Members expressed concern about the lack of referrals from Chorley (only 4 referrals in 2024 when the Real Time Surveillance Data indicated much higher). ).

It was important to establish what support was offered at the coroner's office – e.g. offering to help complete an online form on someone's behalf was different to just telling people about the website. (It was later confirmed that coroner's officers do offer Bags for Strife and a referral to Amparo).

In respect of Amparo, Chelsea Fisher stressed the importance of knowledge of the Chorley area – it was important to offer an interpersonal service because people may need to be asked if they need support more than once.

Members were also concerned about the wide area Jennifer Harper covered as a local representative for Amparo – i.e. not just Lancashire – and that she was based in South Yorkshire so not easily accessible in person.

### **Conclusions**

**Members reviewed their desired outcomes from the start of the Task Group and made the following observations and updates:**

- To formulate a directory of services and contacts – this was a desired outcome from the group but we discussed how difficult and resource intensive this is as the support being offered locally and regionally changes. Also, because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter we would need to quality control any support services to make sure they were reputable etc. Unfortunately, there is currently no resource to do this.
- An alternative would be ensure that the Council's website is up to date and well signposted to include national support services and health services.
- To offer orange button training to councillors – this is now being offered; The Task Group felt this could be broader – to offer a range of appropriate training to councillors to help them understand suicide and what steps can be taken to prevent it.
- Ensure that that councillors who may have mental health issues know where to seek support – this is a recommendation
- Raise awareness of support services in public places (similar to “Ask Angela” posters in pub toilets / taxis (e.g. Samaritans posters) - this ties in to the recommendation for promoting awareness and training in local businesses.
- Explore possibility of a dedicated council officer as point of contact for bereaved residents i.e. regarding the process, liaise with police, offer bereavement support – This was a desired outcome, but unfortunately it will not be achievable. The remit for Social Prescribing is not to deliver this function. There are many practical problems in terms of recruitment, job descriptions etc. All SPs have appropriate training so can offer support to clients in this area if it's something the client needs.  
The Social Prescribing Team continues to work well with local provision and hopefully will establish greater links with Amparo and the police following this review.
- Discuss/explore access to service provision without need for referral - The information on the website can include details if referrals are needed to access particular support services.
- National Hub of Hope database – if possible obtain QR code for app. A search on IOS or Android App stores for “Hub of Hope” brings this up as the first or second result. The Council can explore the creation of a Hub of Hope QR Code to promote on its website.
- For information / awareness - A and E Crisis team – (source of referral 0800 number IRS)
- Chelsea Fisher (Social Prescribing Team Leader) – link to Annual Event in Chorley to coincide with national / world events – **this took place in September 2024.**



## Recommendations

1. That the Council liaise with its partners to provide information about suicide prevention more widely in Chorley e.g. libraries, gyms, local businesses (barbers, hairdressers, nail bars, Cuerden Valley Café, park wardens, licensed taxi services / drivers);
2. a) To liaise with mental health organisations such as Lancashire MIND and Samaritans to provide training to local employers/businesses that request it, and  
  
b) That the Council consults with taxi drivers regarding training provision on suicide prevention delivered by these mental health organisations.
3. That the Member Development Working Group consider the inclusion of voluntary training open to all councillors on suicide prevention and suicide bereavement in the Council's Member Development Programme (e.g. Orange Button training); and  
that information be placed in the Members' Room so they know where to seek support and are able to sign post residents
4. That LCC Public Health be requested to provide:
  - a) death by suicide data for Chorley i.e. locations most associated with suicide risk, geographical locations ("hotspots") and other contributory factors as part of their full audit being currently carried out; and
  - b) Lancashire wide trends in relation to suicide and self harm;  
to inform a more targeted approach between the Council and its partners
5. That Lancashire Constabulary consider reviewing their process for offering support to people bereaved by suicide, such as:
  - to consider the reintroduction of handing out Bags for Strife in the future;
  - signposting to the website where Bags for Strife can be requested online;
  - an information leaflet providing information and signposting support.
  - explore the possibility of providing information about a wider range of support groups particularly local groups that specialise in suicide bereavement; and
  - to work with statutory and VCFS partners going forward on supporting and safeguarding individuals bereaved by suicide.
6. That Amparo and Lancashire Constabulary liaise to ensure that the right information is provided about what Amparo offer, and particularly that the website form can be filled out on behalf of the bereaved person.
7. That Amparo liaise closely with the Council's Social Prescribing Team to ensure its visibility and awareness locally by:
  - attendance at local events and meetings
  - face to face presentations in the local area, including a member learning session with Chorley councillors

8. That Amparo provide the Council with progress updates on their activities in the Chorley area, and time frame for receipt of ICB funding.
9. Request that Chorley Council's Revenues and Benefits team consider as part of an ongoing review if they could include information about accessing mental health / social prescribing services in council tax debt reminders as well as financial / debt advice.
10. That Chorley Council regularly review and update information relating to suicide support groups; include any additional support groups for signposting and partnership working; and explore possibilities of commissioning their services as appropriate.
11. If suicide support groups are discontinued for any reason, Chorley Council should seek a replacement venue/organisation.
12. Review and refresh the existing Suicide Working Group, including that data be obtained from Lancashire County Council Public Health on a regular basis (e.g. Annual Data Report).

**Appendices****Web Links to Meetings**

[Wednesday, 22 May 2024 6.30pm](#)

[Wednesday, 19 June 2024 6.30pm](#)

[Tuesday, 23 July 2024 6.30pm](#)

[Tuesday, 20 August 2024 6.30pm](#)

[Thursday, 26 September 2024 6.30pm](#)

[Wednesday, 30 October 2024 6.30pm](#)

**Data Links**

[OHID Data April 2023](#)

[Real Time Surveillance Suspected Suicide data – Public Health LCC \(May 2024\)](#)

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) and S151 Officer (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	13/02/2025

**2024/25 Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and Reserves for the 9 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

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 provisional outturn for revenue and reserves forecast for 2024/25 for the Council, based on the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

**Recommendations to Executive Cabinet**

2. To note the 2024/25 forecast outturn for revenue and reserves, based on the position at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.
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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, the forecast outturn is for an overspend of £32k (Month 6 overspend of £209k), as detailed in **Appendix 1**. The most significant factor within this overspend is related to the ongoing income pressures at Market Walk and Property Services which will be monitored for the remainder of the year. This has been offset by significant underspends around the pay award and treasury management.
7. The Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved in February 2024, 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.

8. Based on the above forecast outturn overspend, the level of General Fund balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 will be £4.060m, however we will monitor the position during the year and report to members accordingly.

**Corporate priorities**

9. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

**Background to the report**

10. The current net revenue budget for 2024/25 is £16.839m.
11. **Appendix 3** provides further information about the specific earmarked reserves that the Council holds at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

**Current Outturn Position – Revenue**

12. The forecast revenue outturn, based on the position at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, shows a provisional overspend against the Council’s budgets of £32k. 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 2024/25 £'000	Forecast Outturn 2024/25 at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
Property	906	1,208	302
Communities and Leisure	2,944	2,620	(324)
Customer and Digital	8,114	7,883	(231)
Planning	809	907	98
Policy and Governance	6,380	6,226	(154)
Major Projects	(5,356)	(4,798)	558
Financing and Other Budgets	3,042	2,825	(217)
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>16,839</b>	<b>16,871</b>	<b>32</b>
Funding	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Forecast Outturn 2024/25 at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
Council Tax	(8,058)	(8,058)	0
Business Rates	(6,870)	(6,870)	0
Funding Guarantee	(1,624)	(1,623)	1
New Homes Bonus	(141)	(141)	0
Revenue Support Grant	(127)	(127)	0
Services Grant	(19)	(20)	(1)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(16,839)</b>	<b>(16,839)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Outturn</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>

14. The National Employers pay offer of £1,290 on all NJC points and above for the period 01<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 was accepted and payment (including arrears) made in November 2024. The overall implications of the pay award for 2024/25 compared to the provision of 5% included in the based budget is a savings of £178,330 which has been reflected in the staffing forecast and variances explained below across all directorates.

15. Explanation of key variances by Directorate are as follows:

16. **Property – forecast £302k overspend (Month 6 - £4k underspend)**

The key variances to note are:

- £90k net overspend on staffing costs across the directorate. The overspend is mainly due to use of agency staff within Property Services and increased staffing cost within Major Projects Team, including shared services recharges (£90k), increased staffing cost within Markets including overtime and enhanced rates (£33k) offset by vacant posts within CCTV (£12k) and Cotswold Supported Housing (£25k). The figure also reflects a reduction in the level of Service Level Agreement income from Chorley Leisure Ltd and South Ribble Leisure Ltd (£17k combined) given the reduction in services requested.
- £94k overspend on utilities costs across the directorate. This is mainly due to increased electricity cost within Car Parks (£43k), some vacant units on the Markets (£9k) and Investment Properties (£18k). Work has been completed to replace the

current EV chargers, resulting in the EV charging points now being chargeable, and the increased cost of electricity will be offset by the income received from the charging points. As a result the net impact of utility costs may be reduced by outturn.

- £124k increase in income in relation to overachieved car parking income targets. This reflects a return to some pre-pandemic levels since when budgets had been comparatively reduced. This is partially offset by a £66k overspend on external contractors which includes £50k processing costs for car park income and enforcement activity.
- £58k under achievement of rental income across the directorate. This includes £93k decrease in income for Investment Properties compared to budget, offset by increase in income for Facilities Management compared to budget, within Astley Village Community Centre (£21K) and Lancaster Way Community Centre (£22k).
- £21k forecast overspend on Repairs and Maintenance across the directorate on all Council assets.
- £71k overspend on non-domestic rates within Property Services, mainly due to increase for the Market areas and Investment Properties compared to budget following revaluations by the Valuation office.
- £26k net overspend relating to various small variances within the directorate.
- Bus Station – A payment of £650k was received from LCC as part of the handover of the bus station. This £650k has been retained within ear-marked reserves to be utilised on improvement and maintenance work. £78,244 of this reserve has been utilised during 2023/24 on this work and a further £238,874 is forecast to be utilised in 2024/25 leaving the remaining reserves balance of £332,882. Work is ongoing to develop the budget model and understand costs and income streams.

**17. Communities and Leisure – forecast £324k underspend (Month 6 - £103k underspend)**

The key variances to note are:

- £156k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate compared to budget. The underspend is mainly due to various vacant posts within Housing, reduction in staffing cost within Home Improvement Team and the timing of the vacant post filled within Communities and Public Protection Team including shared services recharges.
- £58k overspend on temporary accommodation compared to budget due to the increase in number of homelessness representation, being offset by £89k increase in Homelessness Prevention Grant funding.
- £32k of unbudgeted Housing Benefit income relating to claims made by service users following support provided by the Housing Team.
- £38k underspend due to a contribution from the Household Support Fund towards the cost of core funding and commissioning grants.
- £26k increase in Licence fees and Housing Enforcement income.



- £23k increase in pest control shared services contract income.
- £18k reduction in External Contractors cost and IT Software licence, including recharges within Housing Options.
- £6k unbudgeted income within Community Partnership Team from FCC.
- £6k overspend relating to various other smaller variances across the directorate.
- The Communities and Leisure directorate carried forward various significant grants into 2024/25, and including grants received in year, totalling £1,185k (Homes for Ukraine £392k, Asylum Dispersal £554k and UKRSP/Syrian Refugee £239k). The actual grants utilised to date in 2024/25 amounts to £435k, leaving grant balances of £750k to be spent in the current and future financial years.

**18. Customer and Digital – forecast £231k underspend (Month 6 - £150k underspend)**

The key variances to note are:

- £390k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate. This is mainly due to the savings achieved from Shared Head of Service post, timing of vacant posts being filled within Waste and Streetscene Services following the approved Phase 2 structure (£134k), timing of Apprentices and other vacant post being filled within Customer Services Team (£176k) and Digital Services staff vacancies (£70k).
- £232k overspend on non-staffing Digital Services expenditure due to various IT costs such as computer software purchases, annual licences, maintenance, security and support services. The majority of the overspend reflects inflationary pressures following retender exercises, as contracts have expired. These costs are to be addressed as part of budget setting for 2025/26.
- £60k underspend compared to budget across waste and recycling contracts. This is as a result of reduction in inflationary pressures and the performance of the waste contracts.
- £10k overspend on hired vehicles used for household waste bin deliveries. In view of the ongoing need for this type of vehicle options are being explored for future procurement.
- £5k forecast overspend on LCC clinical waste collection costs.
- £22k forecast additional income for Land Charges as the Land Registry Office has put back their collection of the Local Land Charges element to 2026/27 and therefore Chorley Council can continue to collect this element for 2024/25.
- £14k forecasted overspend on postage cost, however it is anticipated that this cost will reduce in the future years with the promotion of Council Tax e-billing
- £34k additional forecasted income compared to budget for Cemetery fees. The costs of this service are still in excess of income received.

- £30k forecasted overspend within Streetscene in relation to external contractors and general supplies.
- £9k additional income forecasted for Bulky Waste collections.
- £7k underspend relating to various other smaller variances across the directorate.

#### 19. Planning – forecast £98k overspend (Month 6 - £131k overspend)

The key variances to note are:

- £44k net underspend on staffing costs across the directorate compared to the budget for 2024/25. This is mainly due to staffing vacancies within Enforcement Services and Building Control and Planning Services offset by the use of agency staff (£172k).
- £13k forecast overspend on statutory notices, and refunds applied within the Planning Services budget.
- £100k reduction in planning application income compared to budget based on the current level of income and assumed similar trend forecast for the rest of the year.
- £45k increase in one-off Planning Performance Agreement income offsetting some of the staffing cost noted above.
- £10k reduction in the level of income compared to budget on pre-plan applications, which has shown a slight improvement in the collection of income in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, however the total target income level has yet to recover.
- £12k reduction in external contractors cost compared to budget for Allotments and Nature Reserves.
- £62k reduction in Building Control plan fees and Inspection income partly due to a vacant post within Building Control, as noted above, which is having an impact on income; the position should improve as staff are in place.
- £13k net reduction in income within Licencing Services.
- £1k net underspend relating to various smaller variances within the directorate.

#### 20. Policy and Governance – forecast £154k underspend (Month 6 - £26k overspend)

The key variances to note are:

- £351k net underspend on staffing across the directorate compared to the budget for 2024/25. The underspend is primarily due to vacant posts within Corporate Admin Team (£37k) and Corporate Policy & Partnership Team (£193k) and the timing of vacant posts being filled within Shared Financial Services (£76k) including shared services recharges. These underspends are offset by agency staff costs within the Legal (£46k) and Procurement team (£29k). There are also multiple savings across various teams achieved as a result of agreed pay award compared to the 5% included in the base budget.
- £13k forecasted overspend in relation to the members allowance salary uplift, as agreed by the Council for the percentage increase in 2024/25 of 3.56%.

- £37k net overspend forecasted for utilities in Council buildings. The overspend is significantly less compared to that in 2023/24 due to the reduction in prices as of April 2024. This cost is partly offset by the increase in the costs recovered from the Astley Park Coach House tenant.
- £14k forecast increase in non-domestic rates compared to budget for Chorley Town Hall and Union Street offices. These increase in costs are to be addressed as part of budget setting for 2025/26.
- £20k forecasted net overspend relating to Chorley Flower show against a budget provision of £73k. The forecasted level of income is similar to 2023/24.
- £15k forecasted overspend relating to Chorley Events, based on a forecast of expenditure for various events including the Winter Wonderland event.
- £39k net increase in costs over the amount budgeted within Human Resources due to the PAYE settlement agreement paid over to HMRC for the tax on employee benefits, together with additional IT software annual licence costs and general subscriptions.
- £10k overspend relating to subsidised bus services, partly due to the under accrual of the final quarter in 2023/24.
- £30k underspend relating to the unused consultancy and events budget within Business Engagement Teams as UKSPF funds are being utilised.
- £9k forecasted overspend within Civic Services due to the increase cost of refuse collection for all Council sites.
- £10k forecasted overspend within the Procurement Team due to consultancy costs associated with reviewing our Contract Procedure Rules and Contract Terms and Conditions to bring them in line with the new Procurement Act 2003.
- £40k overspend on non-staffing costs compared to budget within the Finance Team partly due to an increase in Apprentice Levy costs (£9k), consultant's fees for the retender of Merchant acquiring services and Treasury brokerage charges.
- £48k overspend following finalisation of the 22/23 External Audit fees over and above the scale fee charge of £42k, offset by £11k increase in income compared to budget due to support provided by central government towards the increase in external audit fee following the Redmond Review.
- £57k underspend due to a required decrease in the Bad Debt Provision in line with the council's accounting policy for bad debts.
- £19k reduction in forecasted income compared to budget within Union Street offices due to a lease coming to an end and reduction in admissions fee income within Astley Hall.
- £21k net overspend relating to various other small variances within the directorate.

**21. Major Projects – forecast £558k overspend (Month 6 - £313k 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:

- £418k forecast overspend on the Market Walk investment (Month 6 - £301k overspend) - this includes;
  - £4k net underspend on staffing due to a vacant post within market walk, including overtime;
  - £7k forecast increase in electricity costs;
  - £12k forecast increase in repairs and maintenance costs.
  - £16k increase in non-domestic rates due to the timing of two vacant units being occupied.
  - £375k net under-recovery of rent, service charge income and insurance recharges, including provision of bad debts for rental income compared to budget. This figure includes an under-recovery of rental income of £243k, due to vacant units, zero forecast for a tenant, as well as a £143k under recovery of service charge income due to management fee caps, temporarily void units and, following negotiation on some tenancies, the exclusion of some elements of service charges from the agreed tenancy agreements, such as seasonal decorations;
  - £4k underspend for window cleaning, refuse collection and pest control compared to budget;
  - £9k overspend on security costs for Market Walk.
  - £7k overspend on various small variances;
- £40k forecast overspend for Primrose Retirement Living (Month 6 - £24k overspend) - this includes;
  - £23k overspend on staffing, mainly due to an additional part-time post over and above the budgeted establishment.
  - £55k overspend on repairs and maintenance, largely due to security repair work and general reactive repairs and maintenance;
  - £14k overspend on non-domestic rates for vacant retail units and for Primrose dance hall.
  - £4k overspend on security services;
  - £53k net increase in service charge, rental income and hire of rooms and commercial tenants;
  - £3k underspend on various small variances;
- £98k forecast overspend for Strawberry Meadows (Month 6 - £52k overspend) - this includes;
  - £41k reduced rental income and management fee due to a vacant unit and agreement of stepped rents compared to budget;
  - £6k overspend on electricity (related to vacant units) and water costs including salting and gritting expenses;
  - £6k forecast increase in repairs and maintenance costs.
  - £37k overspend on security cost, this is due to making the building secure following a break in;
  - £5k overspend on non-domestic rates for the units which are currently vacant;
  - £3k overspend on various small variances;
- £40k forecast over recovery of income from Chorley BC Property Ltd in respect in of Logistics House.

- £1k forecast underspend for Tatton Gardens (Month 6 - £60k underspend) - this includes;
  - £19k forecast underspend on staffing due to a vacant post;
  - £64k forecast increase in electricity costs;
  - £14k forecast increase in repairs and maintenance costs.
  - £7k overspend on non-domestic rates due to empty units and some council tax voids.
  - £63k over-recovery of rent and service charge income on the residential properties compared to budget;
  - £4k net underspend relating to various small variances across several budget lines;
- £43k forecast overspend for Strawberry Fields (Month 6 - £38k overspend) - this includes;
  - £11k overspend on staffing due to the provision of staff cover;
  - £28k forecast overspend on reactive and planned maintenance;
  - £7k Settlement payment for a tenant;
  - £7k overspend on cleaning and catering costs;
  - £12k net increase in rental income from offices, meeting rooms, hot desks, pods, and from service charges, compared to budget. 90% of the offices are occupied and this equates to 93% of the floor space;
  - £2k net overspend relating to various small variances across several budget lines;

**22. Financing and Other Budgets – forecast £217k underspend (Month 6 - £4k underspend)**

- This includes a £66k overspend on interest payable due to interest rates being higher than anticipated.
- Interest receivable is over-recovered against the budget by £330k due to interest rates higher than anticipated.
- £43k overspend on the Minimum Revenue Provision as a result of changes made after the budget was set for the mix of funding used to finance some capital schemes in 2023/24, and also to reflect the slippage in the capital programme in 2023/24 as reported to Executive Cabinet in the 2023/24 Revenue Outturn Report in June 2024.
- There is a small overspend of £4k due to Council Tax overpayment income not being achieved.
- £25k increase in compensatory added years pension payment compared to budget due to the inflationary uplift paid on pensions.
- £25k underspend for DWP (Department for Works and Pensions) payments in relation to New Burdens funding within Housing Benefit.

**Other supporting information**

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

**Appendix 4 – Property - Major Projects**

**24. Planned Reserves movement**

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

**General Fund Resources and Balances**

25. 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.
26. The forecast level of general fund balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 based on the detail covered in this report will be £4.060m, however we will monitor the position during the year and report to members accordingly.
27. As detailed at **Appendix 3**, as at 1 April 2024 the Council held a £4.092m in General Fund reserves to manage budget risks not covered by earmarked reserves or provisions within the budget. The forecast outturn for 2024/25 identifies that the General Fund closing balance will be £4.060m as detailed below:

**Movement in General Fund Reserve**

<b>Summary of Movement in General Reserves</b>	<b>£’m</b>
General Fund Reserves at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024	(4.092)
Forecast 2024/25 outturn revenue budget (surplus) / deficit	0.032
<b>General Fund Reserve Closing Balance at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>(4.060)</b>

28. **Appendix 3** provides further information about the specific earmarked reserves and provisions available for use throughout 2024/25.

**Movement in Earmarked Reserves**

29. Taking account of the adjustments highlighted in **Appendix 3**, the level of Earmarked reserves held for discretionary use by the Council at 31 March 2025 is £4.915m compared to a balance of £6.091m at 31 March 2024.

<b>Summary of Movement in Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>£’m</b>
Earmarked Reserves at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024	(6.091)
<b>Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves</b>	
Use of revenue reserves for Capital Financing	0.323
Use of other specific Earmarked Reserves	0.878
Transfers to Ear-Marked Reserves	(0.025)
<b>Earmarked Reserves Closing Balance at 31st March 2025</b>	<b>(4.915)</b>

30. The £878k use of other specific Earmarked Reserves shown in the table above includes the following items:

- £31k use of delivery of the Transformation and Savings Programme reserves.
- £15k use of Climate Change reserves.

- £28k use of Apprentices and Graduates reserves.
- £19k use of Investment in Play & Open Space reserves.
- £113k use of Budget Equalisation reserves.
- £233k use of Business Investment for Growth (BIG) Grants reserves.
- £30k use of Civica Property Management reserves.
- £74k use of Refugee/Asylum Seekers Funding reserves.
- £41k use of Planning Appeals reserves.
- £239k use of Bus Station – Transition of service reserves.
- £36k use of Handyman reserves.
- The remainder of the movements are various, smaller adjustments related to revenue spending.

31. The transfer into ear-marked reserves comprises of £20k of Local Plan reserves and £5k of Edward Mcknight Memorial Fund Account closure.

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

### **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. Equality and diversity implications are considered within the budgets approved by the Council as at 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

### **Risk**

35. The report refers to the monitoring and refinement of the 2024/25 revenue budget forecast over the course of the year. Inflation, uncertainty around funding and interest rates changes have all contributed to the risk and volatility in the forecasting over the 12 month period. The risks have been and will continue to be managed through budget monitoring and reporting going forward.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

36. The financial implications are contained within this report.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

37. 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 2024/25 - position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Appendix 2 – Revenue Budget Movements at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Appendix 3 – 2024/25 Reserves Programme position at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Appendix 4 – 2024/25 Major Projects position at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Hemangini Chevli (Senior Management Accountant),	Hemangini.Chevli@chorley.gov.uk, gail.halton@chorley.gov.uk, Neil.Halton@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	22/01/25



# APPENDIX 1

## Revenue 2024/25 - Forecast based on position as at 31st December 2024

Directorate	Department / Section	Original Budget £'000	Budget at 31st December 2024 £'000	Forecast Outturn based on position at 31st December 2024 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
Property	Facilities Management	240	240	204	(36)
	Income Generation	-	-	-	-
	Markets & Town Centre	229	229	233	4
	Property Services	453	391	695	304
	Housing Accommodation	(30)	(30)	(15)	15
	Major Projects Team	76	76	91	15
<b>Property Total</b>		<b>967</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>302</b>
Communities and Leisure	Communities	855	771	647	(124)
	Director - Communities	173	221	205	(17)
	Housing & Public Protection	1,148	1,183	1,000	(184)
	Leisure	768	768	768	-
<b>Communities and Leisure Total</b>		<b>2,944</b>	<b>2,944</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>(324)</b>
Customer & Digital	Customer Transformation	1,853	1,898	1,678	(220)
	Digital Services	1,518	1,518	1,680	162
	Waste & Streetscene Services	4,550	4,698	4,525	(173)
<b>Customer &amp; Digital Total</b>		<b>7,921</b>	<b>8,114</b>	<b>7,883</b>	<b>(231)</b>
Planning	Enforcement Services	480	128	153	25
	Planning Services	10	125	233	108
	Spatial Planning	557	557	521	(36)
<b>Planning Total</b>		<b>1,046</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>98</b>
Policy and Governance	Chief Executives Office	540	540	535	(5)
	Communications & Events	826	826	864	38
	Director - Governance	92	92	92	0
	Economic Growth	242	242	203	(39)
	Legal and Governance	2,678	2,678	2,747	69

Directorate	Department / Section	Original Budget £'000	Budget at 31st December 2024 £'000	Forecast Outturn based on position at 31st December 2024 £'000	Variance (Under)/ Overspend £'000
	Performance & Partnerships	884	884	704	(180)
	Shared Financial Services	992	992	937	(55)
	Transformation Management	41	41	48	7
	Transition Fund	85	85	95	10
<b>Policy and Governance Total</b>		<b>6,380</b>	<b>6,380</b>	<b>6,226</b>	<b>(154)</b>
<b>Major Projects</b>	Investment Properties	(53)	-	-	-
	Market Walk	(1,853)	(1,853)	(1,435)	418
	Primrose Gardens Retirement Living	(360)	(360)	(320)	40
	Strawberry Fields	(347)	(347)	(303)	43
	Strawberry Meadows	(700)	(700)	(602)	98
	Tatton Gardens	(302)	(302)	(303)	(1)
	Chorley BC Property Ltd (TVS)	(1,794)	(1,794)	(1,834)	(40)
<b>Major Projects Total</b>		<b>(5,408)</b>	<b>(5,356)</b>	<b>(4,798)</b>	<b>558</b>
<b>Financing and Other Budgets</b>	Customer Transformation	(576)	(523)	(548)	(25)
	Financing	3,950	3,950	3,729	(221)
	Pensions Account	218	218	243	25
	Corporate	(603)	(603)	(599)	4
<b>Financing and Other Budgets Total</b>		<b>2,988</b>	<b>3,042</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>(217)</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Collection Fund	(14,928)	(14,928)	(14,928)	-
	New Homes Bonus	(141)	(141)	(141)	-
	Government Grants	(146)	(146)	(147)	(1)
	Funding Guarantee	(1,624)	(1,624)	(1,623)	1
<b>Funding Total</b>		<b>(16,839)</b>	<b>(16,839)</b>	<b>(16,839)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net (Surplus) / Deficit</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### Revenue 2024/25 - Position as at 31st December 2024

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 27th Feb 2024	967	2,944	7,921	1,046	6,380	(5,408)	2,988	(16,839)	0
<b>Transfers between directorates</b>									
Realignment of budgets following Terms and Conditions review			139	(139)					0
Transfer of rental income budget to Property Services	(8)		8						0
Streetscene and Waste Terms and Conditions review			98	(98)					0
Transfer of Housing Benefit External Audit Budget			(53)				53		0
Realignment of Investment Properties Budget	(53)					53			0
<b>Realignment of budgets following Management changes</b>									
									0
									0
<b>Transfers (to)/from Earmarked reserves</b>									
									0
									0
									0
<b>Transfers (to)/from General Fund reserves</b>									
									0
									0
									0
Revised Budget as at 31st December 2024	906	2,944	8,114	809	6,380	(5,355)	3,041	(16,839)	0

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## APPENDIX 3

### 2024/25 Forecast Reserves position as at 31st December 2024

Reserves	Opening Balance 1st April 2024 £000s	Forecasted Movements				Forecast Balance 31st March 2025 £000s	Future Years Commitment £000s	Uncommitted Reserves 31st March 2025 £000s
		Capital Financing £000s	Movement between Reserves £000s	Transfers from Reserves £000s	Transfers to Reserves £000s			
<b>General Fund Balance</b>	<b>(4,092)</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>32</b>		<b>(4,060)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,060)</b>
<b>Corporate Reserves</b>								
Delivery of the Transformation and Savings Programme Reserve	(424)			31		(393)	-	(393)
Capital and Repairs and Maintenance Reserves	(336)	(8)				(344)	344	-
Climate Change Reserves	(498)	331		15		(153)	153	-
Support for Apprentices, Graduates, Training Posts	(142)			28		(114)		(114)
Investment in Play & Open Space Across the Borough	(77)			19		(57)	57	-
Budget Equalisation Reserve	(951)			113		(838)		(838)
Market Walk - Asset Management	(11)					(11)		(11)
Income Generation Reserve	(125)			9		(116)	116	-
Business Investment for Growth (BIG) Grants	(262)			233		(30)		(30)
Choose Chorley Grants	(148)					(148)		(148)
Retail Grants Programme	(154)					(154)		(154)
Civica Property Management	(65)			30		(34)	34	-
Social Prescribing	(78)			5		(73)	73	-
What's Your Story Event Reserves					(5)	(5)	5	-
Refugees/Asylum Seekers Funding	(662)			74		(587)	587	-
Customer & Digital	(246)					(246)		(246)
Planning Appeal Costs	(163)			41		(122)		(122)
Elections	(97)					(97)	97	-
Bus Station - Transition of service	(572)			239		(333)	333	-
Logistics House Income Equalisation Reserve	(450)					(450)		(450)
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit Adjustment Reserve	(500)					(500)		(500)
Local Plan Reserve	(85)			-	(20)	(104)	104	-
Handyman Reserve	(41)			36		(5)	5	-
<b>Reserves used in Year</b>								
Mayoral Charities	(6)			6		-		-
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(6,091)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>(4,915)</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>(3,005)</b>
<b>Total Reserves - General and Earmarked</b>	<b>(10,183)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>(8,975)</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>(7,065)</b>

Agenda Page 53

Agenda Item 5

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## APPENDIX 4

### Major Projects 2024/25 - Forecast based on the position as at 31st December 2024

#### Market Walk

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(1,800)	(1,568)	232
Service Charge Operational budget	485	528	44
Service Charge Income	(538)	(395)	142
<b>Net Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(1,853)</b>	<b>(1,435)</b>	<b>418</b>
Financing Costs	915	915	-
<b>Net Income (including financing)</b>	<b>(939)</b>	<b>(520)</b>	<b>418</b>

#### Strawberry Meadows

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(750)	(709)	41
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	50	107	57
<b>Net Budget/Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(700)</b>	<b>(602)</b>	<b>98</b>
Financing Costs	390	390	-
<b>Net Budget (including financing)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(212)</b>	<b>98</b>

#### Strawberry Fields

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(816)	(833)	(17)
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	469	529	60
<b>Net Budget/Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(347)</b>	<b>(304)</b>	<b>43</b>
Financing Costs	168	168	-
<b>Net Budget (including financing)</b>	<b>(178)</b>	<b>(135)</b>	<b>43</b>

#### Primrose

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(775)	(829)	(54)
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	416	509	94
<b>Net Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>(320)</b>	<b>40</b>
Financing Costs	-	-	-
<b>Net Income (including financing)</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>(320)</b>	<b>40</b>

#### Tatton Gardens

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(767)	(830)	(63)
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	465	527	62
<b>Net Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(302)</b>	<b>(303)</b>	<b>(1)</b>
Financing Costs	247	247	-
<b>Net Income (including financing)</b>	<b>(55)</b>	<b>(56)</b>	<b>(1)</b>

#### Chorley BC Property Ltd

	2024/25 Budget £000s	2024/25 Forecast £000s	2024/25 Variance £000s
Rental Income	(1,794)	(1,834)	(40)
Operational Costs (excluding financing)	-	-	-
<b>Net Income (excluding financing)</b>	<b>(1,794)</b>	<b>(1,834)</b>	<b>(40)</b>
Financing Costs	1,211	1,211	-
<b>Net Income (including financing)</b>	<b>(583)</b>	<b>(623)</b>	<b>(40)</b>

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) and S151 Officer (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	13/02/2025

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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## 2024/25 Corporate Capital Programme and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Outturn Position as at 31st December 2024

### Purpose of the Report

1. This report outlines the financial position of the Council in respect of the Capital Programme as at 31st December 2024, highlighting key issues and explaining key variances, and to provide an overview of various elements of the Council's Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

### Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To approve the revised Capital Programme, as attached at **Appendix A**, which includes approved amendments to the programme of £0.070m decrease as detailed at point 12 of this report.
3. To consider 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 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

### Reasons for recommendations

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

### Other options considered and rejected

6. None, as it is good practice to report regularly on the Capital Programme and the monitoring of the Balance Sheet.

### Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

**Background to the report**

- 8. The Capital Programme for 2024/25 was set at £19.448m in February 2024. This was decreased to £15.253m following approval of the 2024/25 outturn position, and then increased to £16.152m following Executive Cabinet approval in October 2024. The Executive Cabinet approved in November 2024 to decrease the Capital Programme to £13.343m.
- 9. Following the changes detailed in this report, the total programme for 2024/25 now stands at **£11.192m**, the details of which are shown in **Appendix B**.

**Section A: Capital Programme**

**Key issues**

- 10. The total cost of the Council’s Capital Programme for 2024/25 has decreased since the last report was approved by Executive Cabinet, **from £13.343m to £11.192m**. A summary of the total costs of the programme, and the funding of these, is detailed at **Appendix A**.
- 11. The breakdown of the net decrease in the programme of **£2.151m** is detailed in **Appendix B**. The net variation includes those variations approved since the previous monitoring report, together with variations in respect of the re-profiling of budgets within the existing programme.
- 12. Budget variations approved since the last Capital Monitoring report have resulted in a total decrease of £0.806m in the programme. The table below details the changes across the years.

Scheme Name	Increase / (Reduction) 2024/25 £'000	Increase / (Reduction) 2025/26 and future years £'000	Approved by	Date approved
<b>An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Rural Areas</b>				
Chorley Borough Service Centres = REPF (Rural England Prosperity Fund)	(100)		This report	13/02/2025
<b>Housing Where Residents Live Well</b>				
Chorley Adaptation Grant (Formerly DFG)	30		This report	13/02/2025
Play, Recreation and Open Space Projects		1,264	Council	19/11/2024
Purchase of affordable Housing		(2,000)	This report	13/02/2025
<b>Total</b>	<b>(70)</b>	<b>(736)</b>		

13. A review and re-profiling of budgets between years has been undertaken. The total movement of budgets from 2024/25 into 2025/26 and future years amounts to £2.082m. The movements are shown in **Appendix B** and explanations are contained in the major variations section of the report that follows.

Scheme Name	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years £'000
<b>An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Local Areas</b>	
Euxton Private development - retail units	(25)
Town Hall and White Hart Works	(300)
Public Realm Town Centre	(369)
<b>Green And Sustainable Borough</b>	
Town Hall Decarbonation	(338)
<b>Housing where residents live well</b>	
Chorley Lodge	(330)
Play, Recreation and Open Space Projects (Majority is The Gillet Playing Fields) £697k	(720)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(2,082)</b>

As at 31st December 2024 the actual capital expenditure across the programme was £3.008m.

**Major variations in the 2024/25 Capital Programme since the previous report**

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

14. Euxton Private Developments (retail units) –£25k has been slipped into 2025/26, discussions are still trying to take place with the private developer as to how the money can be best utilised to meet their requirement.
15. Chorley Borough Service Centres (Rural England Prosperity Fund) – £100k has be reduced from the scheme reflecting the value of the grant, leaving a budget of £400k which is forecasted to be spent before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
16. Town Hall and White Hart Works- Work is due to commence on The Town Hall in 2025. £300k was expected to be spent in 2025/26 this has now been slipped to 2026/27. Resulting in a budget of £1m to be spent in 2026/27.
17. Public Realm Town Centre- £369k has been slipped from the 2024/25 budget to reflect the likely timing of any works..

### **A Green and Sustainable Borough**

18. Town Hall Decarbonisation- £338k has been slipped from 2024/25 into 2025/26. A bit for further grant funding around decarbonisation is currently awaiting an outcome.

### **Housing Where Residents Live Well**

19. Chorley Adaptation Grant (Formerly DFG). An £30k increase in the 2024/25 budget from £929k to £959k due to more funding being received than budgeted.
20. Play, recreation and open space projects- An Open Space Recreation Strategy Programme update was approved at Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Council approved numerous new projects to be funded at a cost of £1.264m. The highest value projects comprise of Astley Park Playing Pitches £400k, Astley Park Play Area £300k, Plock Wood, Eaves Green £225k, Orchard Gardens, Charnock Richard £111k, Buckshaw Village AGP £61k and Buckshaw Village Article Grass £59k., the other seven projects have a combined total of £107k.
21. £720k has been reprofiled into 2025/2026, the majority of this budget, £697k, relates to The Gillet Playing Fields.
22. Purchase of Affordable Housing. £2m has been removed from budget, discussions with developers have been unsuccessful.
23. Chorley Lodge- A £330k budget has been reprofiled into 2025/26, which is when work is now due to commence.

### **Overview**

24. Strong Balance Sheet management assists in the effective use and 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, his staff and the Council's Independent Treasury Consultants, MUFG Corporate Markets, 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

rate of 5.25%. The current rate of interest is 4.75% which is higher than that assumed in the budget for both interest payable and interest receivable on investment and cash balances. The key variances compared to budget are a £66k forecast overspend on debt interest payable, offset by a forecast over-recovery on investment income of £330k. There is also an overspend on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) budget of £43k due to the mix of funding used to fund the Capital Programme in 2023/24.

	<b>Original Budget 2024/25 £000s</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 £000s</b>
Interest and Investment Income	(170)	(500)
Debt Interest Payable	2,476	2,542
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,644	1,687
<b>Total Net Borrowing Costs</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>3,729</b>

28. The current borrowing and investment position, compared to the position at the same point last year, is as per the table below.

	<b>As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024</b>	<b>As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b>
Short term borrowing	£21.770m	£10.000m
Long term borrowing	£63.539m	£66.502m
<b>Total Borrowing</b>	<b>£85.309m</b>	<b>£76.502m</b>
Investments made by the Council	£6.250m	£5.450m
Cash Balances Held	£3.183m	£8.382m

### Debtors

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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The table also shows the corresponding level of debt at the same point in the last financial year.

	<b>Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 £000s</b>	<b>Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 £000s</b>
<b>Council Tax</b>		
Expected Council Tax Collectable in 24/25 (23/24)	87,188	82,679
Current year balance outstanding	16,354	12,194
Previous years balance outstanding	5,073	4,671
<b>Total Council Tax balance outstanding</b>	<b>21,427</b>	<b>16,865</b>
Collection Rates Current Year	81.24%	81.6%
<b>Business Rates</b>		
Expected Business Rates Collectable in 24/25 (23/24)	28,758	25,961
Current year balance outstanding	6,712	4,331
Previous years balance outstanding	1,446	1,185
<b>Total Business Rates balance outstanding</b>	<b>8,158</b>	<b>5,516</b>
Collection Rates Current Year	76.66%	74.13%
<b>Housing Benefit</b>		
Overpayment balances outstanding	768	849
<b>Sundry Debtors</b>		
Balance Outstanding – General	201	459
Balance Outstanding – Commercial	1,055	1,164

30. Collection rates for Council Tax are broadly in line with the previous year whereas business rates collection is currently in advance of this time last year.
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 increases the longer that debt is outstanding. In 2023/24 there were significant increases to the bad provision to ensure that all potential bad debts were covered. There is a proposed decrease in the bad debt provision at quarter three of £57k.

#### **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. Equality and diversity implications are considered within the budgets approved by Council as at February 2024.

**Risk**

- 35. Risks are broadly addressed in the body of the report however it is important to note that although the headline rate of inflation has decreased, we need to continue to closely monitor the impact of this on an individual project basis and any budget changes reported when necessary.
- 36. As noted in point 31 above, the risks around non-payment of debt can be significant. As a general policy, the accounts include a provision for bad debts that is calculated based upon the age of the debt. However, where additional information is available on specific debts, the policy is adapted accordingly.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

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

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

- 38. 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:
Gail Halton (Senior Management Accountant)	Gail.Halton@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515617	20.01.2025

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Table 1 - Forecast Capital Expenditure	Budget 2024/25 Approved at Council Feb 2024	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2024	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years	Quarter 3 2024/25 Variations	Revised Budget 2024/25 as at 31st December 2024	Budget 2025/26 and Future Years Approved at Council Feb 2024	Budget 2023/24 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2024	Slippage and reprofiling of budgets (to)/from 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25 Variations	Revised Budget 2025/26 and Future Years as at 31st December 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

**COSTS**

An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Local Areas	12,180	6,246	(694)	(100)	5,452	1,252	47,467	694	-	48,161
Green And Sustainable Borough	1,788	916	(338)	-	578	-	3,743	338	-	4,081
Housing Where Residents Live Well	5,480	6,074	(1,050)	30	5,054	1,750	4,035	1,050	(736)	4,349
Healthy, Safe and Engaged Communities	-	107	-	-	107	-	208	-	-	208
<b>Total Forecast Expenditure</b>	<b>19,448</b>	<b>13,343</b>	<b>(2,082)</b>	<b>(70)</b>	<b>11,191</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>55,453</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>(736)</b>	<b>56,799</b>

**RESOURCES**

Disabled Facilities Grants	975	929	-	30	959	1,549	1,550	-	-	1,550
Brownfield Release Fund	900	1,077			1,077	-	650	-		650
Levelling Up	-	1,350	(471)		879	-	18,650	471		19,121
Rural Prosperity Fund	400	400			400	-	-	-		-
UK Shared Prosperity Fund		534	-	-	534	-	-	-		-
Defra Food Waste		-			-		1,184			1,184
Other Grants	285	942	58		1,000	-	-	(58)		(58)
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>5,233</b>	<b>(413)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4,850</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>22,034</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,447</b>
External Contributions		-	1		1	-	-	(1)		(1)
Capital Receipts	7,400	45	(18)		27	-	25,236	18		25,254
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	1,127	1,521	(107)		1,414	-	250	107		357
Reserves and Revenue	70	321	2		323	-	-	(2)		(2)
Section 106	829	1,457	(598)		859	-	731	598	1,264	2,593
Unsupported Borrowing	7,462	4,766	(949)	(100)	3,718	1,452	7,201	949	(2,000)	6,150
<b>Total Forecast Resources</b>	<b>19,448</b>	<b>13,343</b>	<b>(2,082)</b>	<b>(70)</b>	<b>11,191</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>55,453</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>(736)</b>	<b>56,799</b>

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2024/25 Capital Programme - Scheme Variations as 31 December 2024

APPENDIX B

Scheme Name	Budget 2024/25 Approved at Council Feb 2024	Budget 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2024	Slippage and reprofiling of budget (to)/from future years	Quarter 3 2024/25 Variations	Revised Budget 2024/25 as at 31st December 2024	Budget 2025/26 and Future Years Approved at Council Feb 2024	Budget 2025/26 Approved by Cabinet for the 6 months to September 2024	Slippage and reprofiling of budgets (to)/from 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25 Variations	Revised Budget 2025/26 and Future Years as at 31st December 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Local Areas

Strawberry Meadows Development	100	225			225
Asset Improvements	300	569			569
Buckshaw Village Rail Station	696	-			-
Chapel St and Surrounding Public Realm	2,697	-			-
Chorley Bus Station	-	420			420
Chapel Street		132			132
Euxton Private development - retail units		26	(25)		1
Astley Village Nursery and Retail Units		149			149
Chorley Borough Service Centres	500	500		(100)	400
Strawberry Fields	-	50			50
Market Walk Extension	70	70			70
Public Realm Town Centre	2,869	369	(369)		(0)
Town Hall and White Hart Works	1,110	443	(300)		143
Levelling up	2,650	1,956			1,956
Queens Road Car Park		82			82
Unit Above Iceland	70	94			94
Woodlands Development Site	1,118	1,161			1,161
An Enterprising Economy With Vibrant Local Centres In Urban and Lo	12,180	6,246	(694)	(100)	5,452

	652	652	-	-	652
	600	350	-	-	350
	-	696	-	-	696
	-	2,797	-	-	2,797
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	25	-	25
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	1,629	369	-	1,998
	-	700	300	-	1,000
	-	40,643	-	-	40,643
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	1,252	47,467	694	-	48,161

Green And Sustainable Borough

Chorley Health Centre	250	-			-
Delivering Green Agenda	-	331			331
Town Hall Decarbonisation	1,538	338	(338)		(0)
Health Hub - Whittle Surgery		-			-
Fleet Replacement		163			163
ICT Mobile Devices, Citrix, CCTV, Software and Clo	-	84			84
Food waste Collections - Vehilces		-			-
Food waste Collections - waste containers		-			-
Green And Sustainable Borough	1,788	916	(338)	-	578

	-	250	-	-	250
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	1,200	338	-	1,538
		-	-	-	-
		737	-	-	737
	-	-	-	-	-
		818	-	-	818
		738	-	-	738
	-	3,743	338	-	4,081

### Housing Where Residents Live Well

Chorley Adaptation Grant (Formerly DFG)	975	929		30	959
Land for Tree Planting	-	-			-
Leisure Centre Transfer	-	-			-
Leisure Centres - capital works and maintenance	180	228			228
Leisure Centres Improvements	1,650	1,653			1,653
Play, Recreation and Open Space Projects	-	1,433	(720)		712
Properties for Refugees	375	457			457
Purchase of Affordable Housing	2,000	-			-
Birkacre Reservoir		150			150
Chorley Lodge	300	338	(330)		8
Tatton	-	49			49
All seasons leisure centre -Installiations of PV Panels, add. Metering and software		182			182
Afghanistan Refugee Resettlement Programme		655			655
<b>Housing Where Residents Live Well</b>	<b>5,480</b>	<b>6,074</b>	<b>(1,050)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5,053</b>

### Healthy, Safe and Engaged Communitis

Astley/Astley Cottage	-	100			100
Westway Playing Fields Sports Campus	-	7			7
Healthy, Safe and Engaged Communitis	-	107	-	-	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,448</b>	<b>13,343</b>	<b>(2,082)</b>	<b>(70)</b>	<b>11,190</b>

1,550	1,549	-	-	1,549
-	(0)	-	-	(0)
-	-	-	-	-
200	200	-	-	200
-	-	-	-	-
-	36	720	1,264	2,020
-	2,000	-	-	2,000
-	-	-	(2,000)	(2,000)
-	250	-	-	250
-	-	330	-	330
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
<b>1,750</b>	<b>4,035</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>(736)</b>	<b>4,349</b>

-	208	-	-	208
-	-	-	-	-
-	208	-	-	208
<b>3,002</b>	<b>55,453</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>(736)</b>	<b>56,799</b>



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Change and Delivery) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet  Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel	13 February 2025  27 March 2025

**Chorley Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25**

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 during the third quarter of 2024/25, covering 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024.

**Recommendations to Executive Cabinet**

2. That the report be noted.

**Recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny**

3. The Committee is asked to challenge performance and make appropriate recommendations.

**Reasons for recommendations**

4. To ensure the effective performance monitoring of the Corporate Strategy and safeguard its delivery across 2024/25.

**Other options considered and rejected**

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

**Executive summary**

6. This quarter will be the final time the 2023 Corporate Strategy will be reported to Executive Cabinet. Projects that are not yet complete will either be completed in quarter four, be carried forward to be delivered as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy or will continue to be delivered as part of business-as-usual activity. A full list of these projects and their status can be found at Appendix C. The

indicators within this report reflect those agreed at Council as part of the refreshed 2024 Corporate Strategy.

7. This report provides an update on the progress achieved at the end of quarter three in the 2024/25 financial year and reflects delivery between 1 October and 31 December 2024.
8. Overall performance of the Corporate Strategy projects is good, with three projects (16%) complete and 15 projects (79%) rated green, meaning they are progressing according to schedule. One project (5%) has been rated amber, which provides an early warning sign of potential delays, and action plans for these projects are contained within the report.
9. Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures continue to be closely monitored, with 93% of Corporate Strategy measures and 100% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target or within the 5% threshold.

**Corporate priorities**

10. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

**Background to the report**

11. The Corporate Strategy is the key strategic document for the authority and includes performance indicators and projects that focus on delivering the Council’s four priorities.
12. The Corporate Strategy was approved by the Council in November 2023 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 ensure that Chorley is in the best possible position for the future.
13. 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.
14. A refreshed Corporate Strategy was approved by Council in November 2024. 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. 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

15. Over the quarter, progress has been made on the projects to refresh both the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy, and the Housing Strategy. The formal consultation ran for a period of six weeks with partners and stakeholders, including neighbouring councils, social housing providers, special interest groups e.g. Lancashire Mind and Help the Homeless, as well as local housing developers, and concluded at the end of quarter three. The results of the consultation will be collated and analysed with the findings being presented to Senior Management and Executive Members in January, with the aim of both the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Strategy being adopted for implementation from April 2025.
16. The project to deliver the home energy support scheme has made significant progress in quarter three, with the colder autumn/winter weather driving an increased interest in the scheme. The Council has attended 21 events across the borough in order to promote the service, engage with residents, offer home visits, and provide information on small measures to improve home energy efficiency. A total of 386 home visits have taken place, and a total of 9,164 small measures have been distributed. It is anticipated that the project will meet its target of 500 home visits and attend 25 community events by the end of quarter four.
17. The project to deliver the local plan has made significant progress over quarter three. The Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP) 2023-2041 has now been prepared including the 67 policies that support the plan development. The Council report for approval of the Publication Version of the Local Plan is expected to go to all three Councils in January 2025. Following this, the plan is scheduled to go out for public consultation in February 2025.

## Performance of key projects



18. There are five projects included in the 2023 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is good.

19. Four projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:

- Refresh the prevention of homelessness strategy,
- Deliver the home energy support scheme,
- Refresh the housing strategy,
- Deliver the Local Plan.

20. One project is rated as Amber:

- Develop and deliver a plan to improve housing standards across the borough.

Project Title:	Project Status:
Develop and deliver a plan to improve housing standards across the borough	<b>Amber</b>
<b>Explanation:</b>	<p>Although the project has been rated amber in order to highlight delays that are beyond the original approved plan completion dates, the reactive work that has been undertaken by the Council has had a positive impact on improving housing standards in the borough.</p> <p>This project is intended to be proactive, targeting privately rented properties with a low energy rating below E, as these accommodations are likely to be below standard quality. However, due to increased media attention nationally on housing standards, there has been a significant influx of public queries, particularly concerning mould and damp in privately rented accommodation.</p> <p>As a result, the Public Protection team has received an increase in the usual number of housing standards complaints about privately rented properties in 2024. In response, the team has prioritised these reactive queries to ensure the safety of residents, issuing legal notices for poor-quality homes. This necessary shift to reactive work has impacted the initial stages of the project.</p> <p>In quarter three, a total of 190 premises were identified and contacted by letter to inform and advise Landlords of their obligations with a timescale to respond, informing of the potential enforcement sanctions for non-compliance and guidance on how to comply. However, the milestones to deliver a second letter and the inspection programme have been delayed</p>
<b>Action required:</b>	<p>To improve the energy efficiency of housing stock across the borough and to bring the project back on track, following the initial letters, a second letter will be sent to those private rented landlords where no response has been received, or compliance has not been achieved</p> <p>At the start of quarter four, these second letters will be sent out, and property inspections are scheduled to begin in February 2025. It is anticipated that this will bring the project back on track for completion by the end of quarter four 2024/25, with enforcement notices and/or fixed penalties issued to non-compliant landlords.</p>



**Performance of corporate strategy measures**

21. At the end of quarter three, two of the three corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
22. Two indicators are performing on or better than target:
  - Number of long-term empty properties in the borough,
  - Percentage of homelessness cases prevented.



## 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

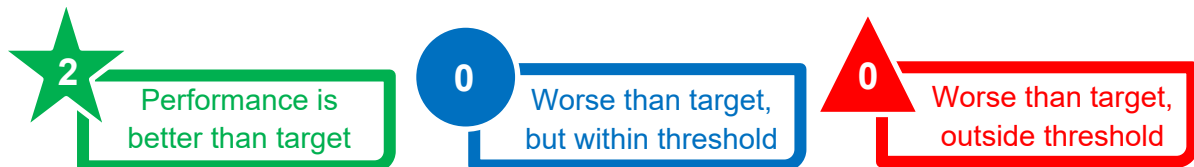
23. The Council has continued to support businesses in quarter three through the Business Energy Support scheme, which aims to promote sustainability by supporting businesses to reduce their energy costs. Fifty businesses have made enquiries about energy audits and business energy grants. A total of ten business energy audits have been conducted, with those businesses interested in progressing with the grant. One grant application has been completed and paid, with another one awarded, enabling these businesses to implement the energy efficiency measures identified in their energy audits. Promotion of the scheme continues through the Council website, social media channels, newsletters, events and at business engagement meetings. The energy audits will continue until March 2025 and the Council will continue to support businesses through their applications.
24. The project to maintain and improve council buildings has continued to progress in quarter three. Internal decoration works at the Town Hall have been ongoing, and the procurement strategy for the wider external works was presented to Senior Management Team in December. Improvements at the One Stop Shop on Union Street include better access through the installation of a new secure door lock, a clear-out of the space and the wider Union Street offices, and the addition of computer screens to the hotdesking area, which will be completed in quarter four. The tender exercise for the refurbishment of All Seasons was completed in quarter three, and the contract has been awarded. Plans will be finalised with the contractor in quarter four, with refurbishment works set to begin shortly after.
25. The project to improve Chorley Bus Station has made progress this quarter following the completion of aesthetic internal improvements to the Bus Station, such as digital information screens, internal redecoration, a toilet refurbishment, and powder coating of the seats and bins, quarter three has primarily focussed on the external improvements. The external cladding has been ordered from the agreed contractor, with works scheduled to start in February 2025. The contract to install a green wall has been awarded, with work set to commence in February and expected to be complete in March 2025. Additionally, the external illuminated signage has been procured, and will be installed in quarter four, following the completion of all external works.

**Performance of key projects**



26. There are six projects included in the 2023 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is excellent.
27. Three projects have been classified as completed, meaning that they have delivered the milestones planned for this year:
  - Continue to deliver improvements to Chorley’s bus shelter network (completed quarter two),
  - Increase the Number of Parks with a Green Flag Status (completed quarter two),
  - Deliver a Rural Business support and grant scheme (completed quarter one).
28. Three projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:
  - Deliver the business energy support scheme to boost business across the borough,
  - Maintain and improve council buildings,
  - Develop and deliver a plan to improve Chorley bus station.

**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. Both indicators are performing on or better than target or within the 5% threshold:
  - Number of bus shelters improved,
  - Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting.

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



## Our commitments:

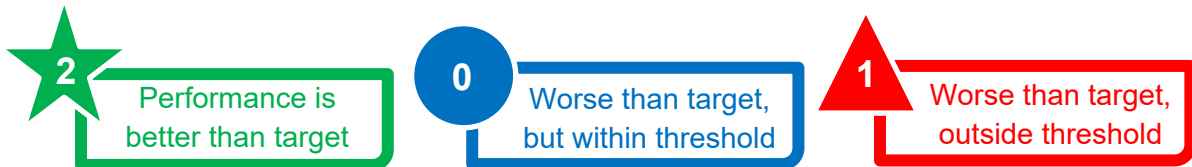
- Support business growth and expansion across the borough,
- Work with partners to support skills, development, and innovation,
- Work with partners to promote the district as a visitor destination and attract investment in our local service centres,
- Promote the green economy.

## Delivering our Commitments in Quarter Three

31. The project to develop a destination management plan for the borough has progressed well over quarter three. The draft destination management plan and suggestions for future branding was presented to Senior Management Team and Members, and all feedback and amendments have been incorporated into the final plan. This final destination management plan is now scheduled to be presented for approval and adopted by the Council in January 2025. The first meeting of the tourism network is scheduled for February 2025, where the new destination management plan will be launched.
32. The jobs and skills programme to upskill residents across the borough has progressed during the quarter. The Employment and Skills Strategic Framework, outlining the strategic priorities for the borough, has been developed for consultation. This consultation with external stakeholders will take place during quarter four, to co-develop key actions to deliver the objectives and engage partners, gaining their support and commitment to the strategic framework objectives. The Chorley Careers Event, held in November, was attended by approximately 420 local students and residents. The event featured 28 local, regional, and national employers, along with further education, higher education, and training providers. This provided attendees with opportunities to discuss career paths and learn about various organisations and job roles. Building on the work undertaken in this project to develop an employment and skills framework for the borough, the focus for 2025/26 will be to deliver a targeted jobs and skills programme.
33. The refresh of the Economic Development strategy to promote growth across the borough has continued in quarter three with the completion of a review of the action plan, and consultation plans have been developed to commence in January 2025. These consultations will involve sessions with internal services and stakeholders to discuss a new or revised set of priorities and actions for the next five years. The draft revised Economic Development Strategy is expected to be finalised in February and be formally approved in March 2025.

**Performance of key projects**

34. There are three projects included in the 2023 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is excellent.
35. All three projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:
- Develop a destination management plan for the borough,
  - Deliver a jobs and skills programme to upskill residents across the borough,
  - Refresh of the Economic Development strategy to promote growth across the borough.

**Performance of corporate strategy measures**

36. At the end of quarter three, four of the five corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
37. One indicator is reported on an annual basis at quarter three, however the data will not be available from Marketing Lancashire until end-January, and was therefore not available at the time of report publication, this will be shared once received:
- Percentage increase in visitor numbers to Chorley
38. Two indicators are performing on or better than target:
- Number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention,
  - Number of business engagements by the Council
39. One indicator is performing below target and outside the 5% threshold:
- The percentage of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Q3 2023/24	Q3 2024/25	Symbol	Trend
The percentage of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	3.6% (Regional Average)	3.7%	4.3%	▲	Worse than Q3 2023/24
<b>Reason below target:</b>	<p>The number of 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the end of quarter three was below target at 4.3%, which reflects 121 NEETs. This is an increase from 3.7% (101 NEET) at the same time last year and is above Lancashire (3.6%). The NEETs' number have increased across most districts in Lancashire, and Lancashire County Council associate this to increased anxiety and mental health issues, as well as a reluctance among young people to engage in education or training.</p> <p>Lancashire County Council continue to face challenges in contacting NEET young people, with an increased number of "Unknown NEET" (106, 3.8%) in Chorley at the end of December. Additionally, there are 19 'Unavailable NEET' who may be facing specific challenges such as illness, mental health issues or responsibilities to support family preventing them from actively seeking work or participating in educational opportunities.</p> <p>The breakdown by ward indicates that the highest numbers of NEET young people are in Chorley North &amp; Astley, Clayton East, Brindle &amp; Hoghton, Chorley South West, Chorley East, Clayton West &amp; Cuerden, Chorley South East &amp; Heath Charnock, and Coppull.</p>					
<b>Action required:</b>	<p>Lancashire County Council (LCC) continue to work and engage with the 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET through the Youth Futures team with a focus of reducing the number of 'Not Known' and to develop a partnership approach to increase the number of young people accessing education, employment or training.</p> <p>The Council have formed an 'Increasing Education, Employment and Training (EET)' working group with LCC education improvement team and Inspire Youth Zone to identify opportunities to work more collaboratively to support NEET young people in the borough and encourage them into some sort of provision, as well as building networks with schools, colleges and training providers. Through a data sharing agreement, the Council are now able to better identify NEET young people in Chorley.</p> <p>The Council have been working with local partners to deliver a range of activity supporting young people, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital resources have been purchased to reboot the employability programme with Jigsaw, offering attendees a digital device and connectivity to enable job searching beyond the scope of the programme and incentivise attendance.</li> <li>• A training provider has been identified to deliver bespoke project management training sessions to NEET and at risk of NEET young people. These sessions will commence in February and complete in March, and will be delivered in Albany School, Inspire Youth Zone and Clayton Brook Village Hall.</li> <li>• The council have commissioned Inspire Youth Zone and UDevelop. The Inspire programme is aimed at NEET and those at risk of becoming NEET,</li> </ul>					

	<p>and UDevelop work with those furthest away from employment and includes mentoring of NEET young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employability support programmes have supported 337 individuals, with 244 engaging in job seeking activity by the end of quarter three. This programme supports all unemployed individuals and includes NEET young people.</li> <li>• The Chorley Careers Event took place in The Lancastrian at Chorley Town Hall on Thursday 7 November 2024. This event was focused on year 10 and year 11 students as they are considering their next steps and was attended by approximately 420 local students and residents. The event featured 28 local, regional, and national employers, along with further education, higher education, and training providers. This provided attendees with opportunities to discuss career paths and learn about various organisations and job roles. This event was promoted using social media and through local high schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Trend:</b></p>	<p>This indicator is performing worse than the 3.7% reported in Q3 2023/24 and is above Lancashire (3.6%).</p>

# 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

40. The project to launch an Enhanced Social Prescribing Service focussed on supporting family and early years continues to progress well, managing a full caseload with positive outcomes for families. Over the quarter, the service supported over 46 families referred into the service between October to November, bringing the total to 147 year to date. Additionally, 36 referrals were made to external partners for specific support, and 92 signposts were completed to further support family wellbeing. Social Prescribing Link Workers continue to build relationships with those supporting children and families, enhancing their ability to provide meaningful support. The Christmas Toy Appeal was delivered in partnership with St Laurence's Church and SVP Chorley Buddies, and more than 650 children who would not have received anything at Christmas received a present to open on Christmas Day. The Household Support Fund phase 6 (HSF 6) was launched in October 2024 and has supported the delivery of other projects supporting families including a holiday hunger initiative to be delivered over the February half term, parenting skills, healthy lifestyle sessions, cooking skills workshops, and support for young mothers.
41. The Cost of Living action plan continued to provide practical support and enhance community resilience over quarter three through a wide range of initiatives. The Christmas Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme has been successfully commissioned, offering 2,797 spaces over the week, supported by 10 providers. The Handy person scheme completed 374 jobs, exceeding the quarter three target of 360 jobs, helping Chorley residents who would otherwise struggle with small repairs or 'DIY' jobs. As part of the warm space's initiative, £17,654 was distributed to support a network of 55 warm spaces across the borough, offering residents a warm drink and hot meal. The Chorley Together Network met with Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners to discuss prevalent cost of living themes, key initiatives and external funding opportunities. As part of the 2024 Corporate Strategy, Chorley's ecosystem of voluntary and community sector organisations will be developed further to extend their reach and the available support in communities. Looking ahead to next quarter a review of the cost of living action plan will be undertaken, including the development of the 2025/26 priorities.
42. The project to deliver a health and wellbeing programme to support the needs of residents across the borough has progressed over quarter three. The social prescribing service has operated successfully, achieving positive outcomes over the year with a total of 765 referrals into the service, an average reduction in GP



appointments from four to two per patient, and 1,158 external referrals and signposts to additional wellbeing support. As part of the healthy weight initiative, three 10-week courses were successfully delivered, resulting in 460 attendances in quarter three. Additionally, 26 walking sessions were provided for current and past attendees to support behavioural change. Family weight management sessions were also delivered at Sacred Heart Primary School and Highfield Primary, with increased parental engagement fostering lasting improvements. The ongoing Health and Wellbeing training programme has delivered 15 sessions, including First Aid Lite, Andy's Man Club Presentation, Samaritans Sessions, and Orange Button training benefiting 127 residents. Looking ahead to next quarter, the suicide prevention action plan will be finalised, and the adult and child weight management programmes will be delivered.

- 43. The delivery of a Borough Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan continued in quarter three. Diversionary activities have been delivered during the October half term at Westway including football sessions by Preston North End (PNE) Community Trust, indoor arts and crafts, and baking sessions with attended by 105 young people. The Council collaborated with the Bright Sparks project, led by Lancashire Fire and Rescue, which engaged 25 young people with firework and fire safety demonstrations, followed by hotdogs and chips, and a trip to watch Preston North End Football Club play. The Guardian Hubs, which relaunched earlier in the year, have become a permanent meeting and include representatives from education, the Children and Family Wellbeing service, the Police, and housing, providing intelligence on at risk young people with the aim of diverting them from anti-social behaviour. The target hardening grant scheme to reduce anti-social behaviour which launched in quarter one, continued this quarter with 15 town centre and surrounding area businesses awarded funding and have begun implementing security measures such as CCTV and other prevention strategies. Over the next quarter, inspections of these works will take place and payments.
- 44. Over the quarter, progress has been made in developing the Transformation Programme to align with the Council's needs. The programme's oversight will be integrated into the broader Fit for the Future initiative, managed by a newly established Change and Delivery Board, which will support budget savings, identify and create growth opportunities. The Fit for the Future strategy has been drafted, and sessions have been held with Directors and support services to develop and scope the projects that will form part of the programme. Looking ahead to the next quarter, the transformation programme projects will be finalised and communicated more widely, and the Change and Delivery Board meetings will commence to monitor progress against the programme.

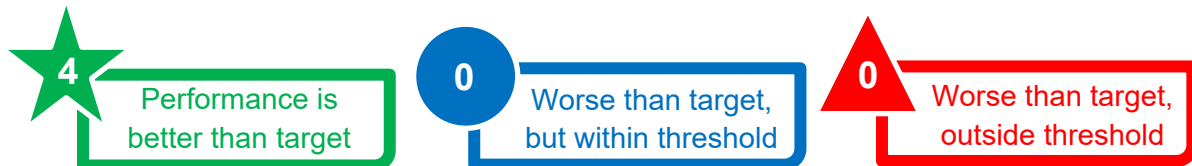
**Performance of key projects**



- 45. There are five projects included in the 2023 Corporate Strategy under this priority and at the end of quarter three, overall performance is excellent.
- 46. All five projects are rated as green, meaning they are progressing according to timescales and plan:

- Launch an enhanced social prescribing service focussed on supporting family and early years,
- Deliver the cost of living action plan,
- Deliver a health and wellbeing programme to support the needs of residents across the borough,
- Delivery of a borough anti-social behaviour action plan,
- Refresh and deliver the transformation programme.

### Performance of corporate strategy measures



47. At the end of quarter three, four of the five corporate performance indicators under this priority are due to be reported.
48. Four indicators are performing on or better than target:
  - The number of visits to Council's leisure centres,
  - Average improvement in wellbeing score following support from the council,
  - Percentage of service requests received online,
  - Percentage of customers satisfied with the service they received from the Council.

**Performance of National and Regional Comparators**

49. 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.

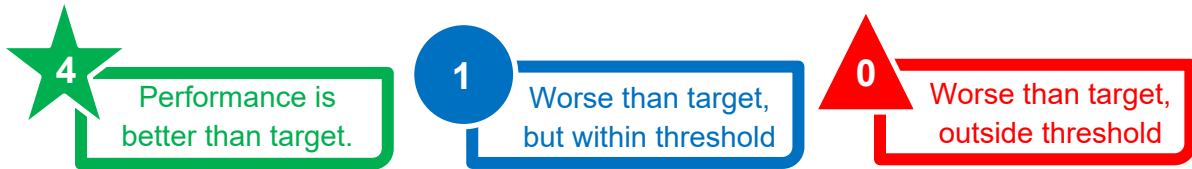


50. At the end of quarter three, three of the five corporate performance indicators under this category are due to be reported, and full outturn information is available at Appendix A.

51. All three indicators are performing on or above target or within the 5% threshold:
- The number of claimants as a proportion of the resident population of the area aged 16-64,
  - Town Centre vacancy rate,
  - Overall employment rate.

**Performance of Key Service Measures**

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



53. At the end of quarter three, all five key service measures are due to be reported. The full outturn information for this is available at Appendix B.

54. All five 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,

**Climate change and air quality**

- 55. 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**

- 56. An Impact Assessment (IA) was completed in October 2023, which was considered as part of the approval process for the Corporate Strategy 2023. Impact Assessments 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.

**Risk**

- 57. 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**

- 58. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The financial performance of the Council is captured in the quarterly financial reports to Executive Cabinet.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

- 59. No comments.

**Background documents**

The following documents are background items to this report:


- [Corporate Strategy 2024/25](#)
- [Corporate Strategy 2024 cover report](#)
- [Corporate Strategy 2023/24](#)
- [Corporate Strategy 2023 cover report](#)


**Appendices**


- 60. The following appendices are included with the report.
  - Appendix A – Performance of Corporate Strategy key measures,
  - Appendix B – Performance of key service delivery measures,
  - Appendix C – Status of the 2023 Corporate Strategy projects.



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### 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 2024/25		Trend (compared to same period last year Q3 2023/24)	
<b>Housing where residents can live well</b>							
Number of long-term empty properties in the borough	Smaller is better	150	132 (Q2 2024/25)	139		<b>Worse than Q3 2023/24</b>	120
No. of affordable homes delivered	Bigger is Better	75	37 (Q2 2024/25)	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>		-	-
% homelessness cases prevented	Bigger is better	60%	62% (Q2 2024/25)	66%		<b>NEW for 2024/25</b>	-

<b>A green and sustainable borough</b>							
Number of bus shelters improved	Bigger is better	45	59 (Q2 2024/25)	60		<b>Better than Q3 2023/24</b>	0
Number of improvements to parks, open spaces and playing pitches linked to strategy delivery	Bigger is better	6	12 (Q4 2023/24)	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>		-	-
% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting (Q2 data)	Bigger is better	43%	45.3% (Q1 2024/25)	45.9% <sup>1</sup>		<b>Worse than Q2 2023/24</b>	46.8%
Number of carbon pathways projects delivered	Bigger is better	Baseline	-	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>		-	-

<b>An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas</b>							
% increase in visitor numbers to Chorley	Bigger is better	2%	31.5% (Q3 2023/24)	<b>Data Unavailable<sup>2</sup></b>		-	-
Number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention	Bigger is better	150	145 (Q2 2024/25)	220		<b>Worse than Q3 2023/24</b>	237
The % of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	3.6% Lancashire Average	2.2% (Q2 2024/25)	4.3%		<b>Worse than Q3 2023/24</b>	3.7%
Number of Business Engagements by the Council	Bigger is better	450	646 (Q2 2024/25)	923		<b>Better than Q3 2023/24</b>	748
Growth in the business rate base	Bigger is better	0.5%	14.81% (Q4 2023/24)	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>		-	-

<sup>1</sup> This indicator is reported in arrears and reflects quarter two 2024/25 performance. Its previous performance relates to quarter one 2024/25.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage increase in visitor numbers is reported on an annual basis at quarter three, however the data will not be available from Marketing Lancashire until January 2025.

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Previous Reported Period	Quarter 3 2024/25	Trend (compared to same period last year Q3 2023/24)
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**Healthy, safe, and engaged communities**

The number of visits to Council's leisure centres	Bigger is better	255,000	187,560 (Q2 2024/25)	<b>270,849</b>	★	<b>Better than Q3 2023/24</b>	255,446
Average improvement in wellbeing score following support from the council	Bigger is Better	70%	81% <sup>3</sup> (Q2 2024/25)	<b>81%</b>	★	<b>NEW for 2024/25</b>	-
% of service requests received online	Bigger is better	50%	56.06% <sup>4</sup> (Q2 2024/25)	<b>55.22%</b>	★	<b>Better than Q3 2023/24</b>	54.69%
Percentage of customers satisfied with the service they received from the Council	Bigger is better	70%	69.07% (Q2 2024/25)	<b>70.48%</b>	★	<b>NEW for 2024/25</b>	-
Percentage of households living in fuel poverty	Smaller is Better	14.1% (National Average)	11.1% (Q1 2024/25)	<b>To be reported Q1 2025/26</b>	-	-	-

**National and Regional Comparators**

Overall employment rate	Bigger is Better	73.0% (Regional Average)	79.7% (Q2 2024/25)	<b>80.8%</b>	★	<b>Better than Q3 2023/24</b>	67.9%
The number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the area aged 16-64	Smaller is Better	4.5% (Regional Average)	2.8% (Q2 2023/24)	<b>2.7%</b>	★	<b>Worse than Q3 2023/24</b>	2.4%
Town Centre Vacancy Rate	Smaller is better	11.25%	8.26% (Q2 2024/25)	<b>8.26%</b>	★	<b>Worse than Q3 2023/24</b>	8.22%
Median Workplace Earnings better than the North West Average	Bigger is better	£646.30 (Regional Average)	£615.70 (Q4 2023/24)	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>	-	-	-
Earnings by place of residence (better than the North West average)	Bigger is better	£649.00 (Regional Average)	£668.50 (Q4 2022/23)	<b>To be reported Q4 2024/25</b>	-	-	-

<sup>3</sup>. This figure has been updated to reflect the year to date figure for quarter two.

<sup>4</sup>. As part of ensuring data quality, this figure has been amended following an error identified in the data collection for quarter two.

### 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 2024/25		Trend (compared to same period last year Q3 2023/24)	
				Value	Status	Value	Status
% MINOR planning applications decided within 8 weeks or agreed time extension	Bigger is Better	85%	99.4% (Q2 2024/25)	99.0%	★	Better than Q3 2023/24	97.8%
% MAJOR planning applications decided within 13 (16 for EIA) weeks or agreed time extension	Bigger is Better	80%	100% (Q2 2024/25)	89%	★	Worse than Q3 2023/24	100%
Average working days per employee (FTE) per year lost through sickness absence	Smaller is Better	6.44 days	3.51 days (Q2 2024/25)	6.25 Days	★	Better than Q3 2023/24	6.44 days
Percentage of Council Tax collected	Bigger is Better	81.60%	54.59% (Q2 2024/25)	81.24%	●	Worse than Q3 2023/24	81.60%
Percentage of Business Rates (NNDR) collected	Bigger is Better	74.13%	54.97% (Q2 2024/25)	76.66%	★	Better than Q3 2023/24	74.13%

## Appendix C – Status of the 2023 Corporate Strategy projects

Corporate Priority	Project Title	Position Status
<b>Housing where residents can live well</b>	<b>Refresh the prevention of homelessness strategy</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025 and delivery will commence from April 2025.
	<b>Develop and Deliver a Plan to Improve Housing Standards Across the Borough</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Deliver the home energy support scheme</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Refresh the housing strategy</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025 and delivery will commence from April 2025.
	<b>Deliver the Local Plan</b>	This project will be taken forward as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy to progress the delivery of the Central Lancashire Local Plan.
<b>A green and sustainable borough</b>	<b>Continue to deliver improvements to Chorley’s bus shelter network</b>	Year two of the five year programme completed in quarter two 2024/25 and year 3 will be taken forward as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy.
	<b>Increase the Number of Parks with a Green Flag Status</b>	This project completed in quarter two 2024/25.
	<b>Deliver the business energy support scheme to boost business across the borough</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Deliver a Rural Business support and grant scheme</b>	This project completed in quarter one 2024/25.
	<b>Maintain and improve council buildings</b>	This project will continue as part of the service 2025/26 business plan. The project to deliver All Seasons refurbishment is included in the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy.
	<b>Develop and deliver a plan to improve Chorley bus station</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.



Corporate Priority	Project Title	Position Status
<b>An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas</b>	<b>Develop a destination management plan for the borough</b>	This project will be taken forward as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy to implement the recommendations from the destination management plan.
	<b>Deliver a jobs and skills programme to upskill residents across the borough</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Refresh of the Economic Development strategy to promote growth across the borough</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
<b>Healthy, safe and engaged communities</b>	<b>Launch an enhanced social prescribing service focussed on supporting family and early years</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Deliver the cost of living action plan</b>	This project will be taken forward as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy to continue to deliver the cost of living action plan.
	<b>Deliver a health and wellbeing programme to support the needs of residents across the borough</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.
	<b>Delivery of a borough anti-social behaviour action plan</b>	This project will be taken forward as part of the 2024 refreshed Corporate Strategy to take action to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour.
	<b>Refresh and deliver the transformation programme</b>	This project will be complete in March 2025.

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

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