

## Council

Tuesday, 27th September 2022, 6.30 pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley and YouTube

### Agenda

**1 Minute's silence**

#### Apologies

**2 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 19 July 2022 of Council**

(Pages 5 - 14)

**3 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.

**4 Mayoral Announcements**

**5 Public Questions**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask question(s) on any item(s) on the agenda will have three minutes to put their question(s) to the relevant Councillor. Members of the public will be allowed to ask one short supplementary question.

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

**6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Groups**

(Pages 15 - 18)

To receive and consider the general report of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 27 July, 22 September (to follow) and Task Group update.

**7 Governance Committee**

(Pages 19 - 22)

To receive and consider the general report of the Governance Committee held on 3 August 2022.

<b>8</b>	<b>General Purposes Committee</b>	(Pages 23 - 24)
	To receive and consider the general report of the General Purposes Committee held on 7 September 2022.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Armed Forces Covenant Overview</b>	(Pages 25 - 36)
	To receive and consider the report of the Director of Communities.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Chorley Economic Strategy</b>	(Pages 37 - 76)
	To receive and consider the report of the Director of Change and Delivery.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Polling Station Review 2022</b>	(Pages 77 - 80)
	To receive and consider the report of the Director of Governance.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Questions Asked under Council Procedure Rule 8 (if any)</b>	
<b>13</b>	<b>To consider the Notices of Motion (if any) given in accordance with Council procedure Rule 10</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Public and Press</b>	
	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.	
	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).	
<b>15</b>	<b>Review of Management Capacity</b>	(Pages 81 - 120)
	To receive and consider the report of the Chief Executive.	

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**Minutes of Council**

**Meeting date Tuesday, 19 July 2022**

**Committee Members present:** Councillor Julia Berry (Mayor), Councillor Tommy Gray (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Aaron Beaver, Alistair Bradley, Sam Chapman, Mark Clifford, Alan Cullens, Magda Cullens, Karen Derbyshire, Gordon France, Margaret France, Danny Gee, Harold Heaton, Alex Hilton, Terry Howarth, Hasina Khan, Samir Khan, Zara Khan, Adrian Lowe, Matthew Lynch, Michelle Le Marinel, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood, Dedrah Moss, Beverley Murray, James Nevett, Alan Platt, Debra Platt, Aidy Riggott, Jean Sherwood, Arjun Singh, Kim Snape, Ryan Towers, John Walker, Jenny Whiffen, Neville Whitham, Alan Whittaker and Peter Wilson

**Committee Members present virtually (non-voting):** Councillors Martin Boardman and Keith Iddon

**Officers:** Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Director of Governance/Monitoring Officer), Rachel Salter (Strategic Lead (Future Investments)) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic Services Team Leader)

**Apologies:** Councillor Roy Lees

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

**15 Minute's silence**

The Mayor invited Members to observe a minute's silence in memory of former councillor Rosie Russell.

**16 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 17 May 2022 of Council**

**Resolved (unanimously) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 May 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.**

## 17 Declarations of Any Interests

Councillor Jenny Whiffen declared a personal interest in item 10: Levelling Up Funding Bid as her father is the Reverend at Chorley United Reformed Church.

Councillor Aidy Riggott declared a personal interest in item 10: Levelling Up Funding Bid in his capacity as the Lancashire County Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth.

## 18 Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor invited Members to attend a welcome event for Ukrainian guests arriving through the Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme in August.

The Mayor noted the Charity Ball had been scheduled for Friday, 10 March 2023.

The Mayor congratulated Gary Hall, Chief Executive, and his Senior Leadership Team on winning the Municipal Journal Local Government Achievement Award for the Senior Leadership Team 2022.

## 19 Public Questions

A question was received from Andy Hunter-Rossall, who attended the meeting virtually, and asked the question of the Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley.

**Question one** “The government have provided £2 billion of support for bus services across the country during the Pandemic to ensure services remained viable despite passenger numbers being down by as much as 80% at times. This support is due to come to an end in October. Are the Council aware of any bus services that may be threatened by the withdrawal of government support?”

Councillor Bradley responded and noted that Lancashire County Council (LCC) were the transport authority, but he was not aware of any bus services under threat. This was a question for LCC perhaps? However, Chorley Council had invested over £700,000 in bus services within Chorley since 2016. Councillor Bradley noted his hopes for a joined-up transport policy for Lancashire moving forwards.

**Question two** “Young people are required to stay in education or training until the age of 18, but the vast majority have to travel outside of Chorley for this provision. The cost of a bus pass to Runshaw College is £475, and to Cardinal Newman College is £409 per year. This is a cost of education which doesn't apply to young people living in towns and cities with colleges, and as the cost of living crisis bites, now is an ideal time to consider subsidising this bus travel, following in the footsteps of Scotland, where bus travel is free for under 21s. This takes cars off the road as more students choose to use the bus over other forms of transport, and puts cash back in the pockets of families. Free bus travel also allows more young people to access Chorley's centralised youth services at Inspire Youth Zone. Will the Council consider the feasibility of a free bus pass for young people?”

Councillor Bradley noted that college transport was a matter for colleges and central government. Colleges determine how the funding is distributed and suggested that the question be directed to LCC or Westminster? Chorley Council had worked with the Youth Zone and Stagecoach to implement a £1 fare and have worked with the Youth Zone on other potential transport and service delivery solutions.

**Question three** “I was very disappointed watching the Council's Licensing and Public Safety Committee meeting on 6th July, that an amendment to make one of Chorley's 36 Hackney Licences have a condition requiring an electric vehicle was rejected. The committee discussed the cost of purchase of an EV, but ignored the reduced running costs, maintenance costs and tax costs, ie the Total Cost of Ownership. The Council also failed to note the impact on air pollution of introducing clean vehicles to Chorley's town centre. The committee considered that the condition would be "unfair" as it applies to only one license, but given that license rights are "grandfathered", this will be true whenever a new conditions are introduced. Given that the licenses come up so rarely, it is likely that this license may still be in use in 2030, when the Council is hoping that the borough will be zero carbon. We need to make changes now, if we want to have such a massive impact by 2030. Will the Council review this decision, and will the Council consider the conditions required for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire cabs in order for all of this sector to reach net zero in Chorley by 2030?”

Councillor Bradley explained that there was a significant issue to be considered in terms of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, across a wider geographical area. The Council were lobbying the government on this issue for the whole fleet. Electric vehicles cost more to purchase and require infrastructure – a wider solution was required than to enforce this on one operator.

Councillor Bradley undertook to come back to Mr Hunter-Rossall regarding the air quality figures quoted as clarification was required regarding the topography of the M61 motorway.

## 20 **Annual Report 2021/22**

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley presented the Council's Annual Report which summarised the council's achievements during 2021/22.

The report detailed performance against each of the council's key priority areas, highlighting successful delivery of key projects.

Despite the challenging and uncertain period due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other emerging challenges in the economy, the council had continued to deliver against the Corporate Strategy whilst providing support to local residents and businesses that have been impacted.

Looking ahead, challenges for the council include continuing to support residents and businesses to recover following the pandemic, increased demand for local services and the need to maintain momentum in tackling climate change.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson, thanked officers of the council for their work on projects and their delivery of services for the residents of the Borough.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**21 Executive Cabinet**

Members considered a general report of the meetings of Executive Cabinet held on 16 June and 14 July.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**22 Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Groups**

Members considered a general report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 July.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor John Walker proposed and Councillor Sarah Ainsworth seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**23 Scrutiny Reporting Back: Chorley Council's Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny in 2021/22**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor John Walker, presented Scrutiny Reporting Back, a summary of the work of the Committee in 2021/22.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contributions to the work of the Committee and acknowledged that it had been a challenging year.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor John Walker proposed and Councillor Sarah Ainsworth seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**24 Governance Committee**

Members considered a general report of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 1 June.

The Chair of the Governance Committee, Councillor Debra Platt proposed and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Mark Clifford seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**25 Shared Services Future Development: Phase 3**

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, presented the report of the Director of Change and Delivery which outlined the proposed approach for the delivery and implementation of phase 3 of shared services.

In line with agreements made by the two partners, the scope of the shared services arrangement between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council had increased considerably in the last two years. From the longstanding shared financial and assurance services, shared services now included 47% of the workforce for the two councils.

It was proposed that the next phase of shared services consists of the Property and Asset functions. This had been determined by evaluating opportunities for sharing across the councils, alongside prioritising services for review based on the areas where sharing would have the most beneficial impact.

The report had been considered at Shared Services Joint Committee in June.

Members noted there had been challenges during the Shared Services journey, but that the benefits were clear. If the proposals went ahead around 50% of the staff would be part of Shared Services.

Members discussed the improvements for staff regarding terms and conditions within Shared Services and supported the approach taken.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously)**

- 1. Approval granted to commence the shared services review for the Property and Assets function including staff consultation and engagement in line with the process set out in the report.**
- 2. Approach to reviewing further opportunities for sharing following the phase 3 service reviews approved, with any proposals to be considered by Full Councils prior to service reviews taking place.**

## **26 Questions Asked under Council Procedure Rule 8**

A question has been received from the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Alan Cullens, for the Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley.

Following the recent fire at the Clayton Hall Landfill site could the relevant portfolio holder please advise the meeting of the following:

### **1 What items, which are described as Commercial Waste, are currently being tipped?**

Response: The Environment Agency (EA) regulate what can be accepted at the landfill site. This is set out in detail in the permit, which is publicly available here: [Environment Permit for Clayton Hall Landfill Site](#) There are around 10 pages of defined items all of which are classed as non-hazardous. A question will be requested of the the EA as part of their investigation to identify what has been tipped recently and any link to the fire and this information will be shared.

### **2 As a result of the fire was there any risk to residents of toxins within the smoke?**

Response: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) lead on this with the EA. The response as part of the incident was managed through an Air Quality Cell of suitably qualified people. Other members of the air quality cell were the Met Officer and other technical advisors. They initially categorised the incident as a level 2, which quickly reduced to a level 1, level 3 would mobilise air quality monitoring. Monitoring remained on standby in the event of changes. Environmental factors were favourable which encouraged smoke plumes to disperse and the black smoke reduced quickly.

**3 What is estimated to be the cost to Chorley Borough Council following actions that had to be undertaken and will efforts be made to recover these costs?**

Response: As the site is regulated by the county council in terms of planning and the EA for its operation, the involvement of Chorley Council is limited to support provided as part of the emergency response through the Lancashire Resilience Forum. The support was requested through the LRF by Lancashire Fire and Rescue. Approximately three days of officer time had been spent on the incident, primarily from Environmental Health who attended the site and subsequent update meetings to provide support and advice to Lancashire Fire and Rescue. There would also have been some communications and other support staff time spent although this would be hard to identify from other day to day and other duties. The council was also asked to provide sandbags to protect the Fire Service's equipment, at an estimated cost of £740. The council will work with partners to determine the best approach to recovering costs from the site operator. The costs to the council were estimated between £3 and £5 thousand pounds in total.

**4 What mitigation or plans will the site owners be putting in place to ensure that there is no repeat incident?**

Response: The EA have confirmed now the initial emergency response had reduced there would be a focus on an investigatory role and recovery phase to review and breaches of conditions and any actions/enforcement required. The EA will determine whether any additional controls should be required and lessons to be learned for the future. The council would work with partners to ensure lessons were learned.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, advised that the full response would be circulated to all members following the meeting.

**27 To consider the Notices of Motion given in accordance with Council procedure Rule 10**

No Notices of Motion were submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.

**28 Levelling Up Funding Bid**

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Alan Cullens, queried if the discussion on the item could be held in public, noting that commercially sensitive information would have to be considered in private session.

The Monitoring Officer, Chris Moister, advised this would be acceptable, but stressed the need for caution.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, gave a short presentation which set out the plans for the Levelling Up Funding bid (LUF), and noted that councils were invited to submit a bid no later than 6 July 2022.

The timescales for the funding bids were tight and therefore it was important that the schemes included were already partly progressed and/or the land was owned by the council. The schemes also needed to focus on the three key properties of the LUF, town centre regeneration, cultural and heritage and transport improvements.

Members considered the proposals relating to the Civic Square, Bengal Street and Hollinshead Health Hub.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Alan Cullens, queried when the council had been informed that it would be in the level one category. This information would be confirmed following the meeting, but was thought to be early May 2022. The need for consultation with the public and members as the schemes progressed was noted.

Councillor Bradley responded to a query regarding the timescales for planning applications to be determined and noted that conversations had already taken place with planning officers regarding the proposed schemes and the proposed timescales to submit an application was set out in the report.

The debate continued in private session.

## 29 Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously) That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act.**

## 30 Levelling Up Funding Bid

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, acknowledged the significant funding implication for the council, but stressed the opportunities to generate income from the proposed schemes.

The council had also submitted LUF schemes to Lancashire County Council.

Members debated the proposals and noted the option to submit smaller scale projects, the need for further detailed planning for the projects and the pressure of the deadline to submit the bid. It was suggested that the Wholly Owned Company Working Group be requested to monitor the progress of the projects to ensure members were kept informed.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Alan Cullens, proposed an amendment to the first recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Sam Chapman as follows "Approval granted for an estimated package to deliver the levelling up funding scheme, which will be supported by a levelling up funding bid. This is subject to review once any successful bid is announced".

The amendment was voted on and it was **Resolved (unanimously)**

- 1. Approval granted for an estimated package to deliver the levelling up funding scheme, which will be supported by a levelling up funding bid. This is subject to review once any successful bid is announced.**

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded the remaining recommendations and it was **Resolved (unanimously)**

2. **Acknowledged that the financial commitment from the Council will be off set through revenue returns from the scheme.**
3. **Acknowledged that costs are budget and subject to further detailed design.**
4. **Acknowledged that progression of the scheme development will be subject to successfully securing the levelling up funding.**
5. **Acknowledged that scheme design will have to progress at risk ahead of confirmation of funding to ensure the delivery programme can be achieved.**
6. **Approval granted that a budget of Progression of the design will require a financial commitment (approx 2% of project costs) prior to securing the Levelling up Funding.**

### 31 **Chorley Lodge, Bolton Road, Chorley**

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson, presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services.

The report sought instructions regarding the surrender of a long lease of Chorley Lodge Bolton Road Chorley, renovation of the property and marketing to bring back into economic use and occupation.

Members noted the Lodge was a Grade II listed building and that the entrance to Duxbury Park was also being affected and causing reputational damage to the Council.

Members debated the approach to resolving the issue and the risks associated with these. Details relating to the discussion with the current leaseholder would be confirmed following the meeting to Councillor Sam Chapman.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson proposed and the Executive Member (Early Intervention), Councillor Bev Murray seconded and it was **Resolved (by majority 31:7:1)**

1. **Noted that it is intended to buy back the Lease from the tenant.**
2. **Approval to the creation of a capital budget for the purchase and renovation of Chorley Lodge to bring the property back into occupation and economic use.**
3. **Noted that on completion of the renovation, to market The Lodge to bring it back into economic use and occupation, with terms agreed reported for approval by the Executive Member for Resources.**

### 32 **Approval of Budget Increase for Wigan Lane Archery Facility**

The Executive Member (Planning and Development), Councillor Alistair Morwood, presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services.

The report requested additional budget to implement the development scheme at Wigan Lane Playing Field and to award the contract.

Following receipt of tenders the value of the whole site works including pitch drainage and levelling led to an Executive Cabinet decision in June 2022 to allocate a further

amount to be funded from CIL. The increased costs were primarily due to the current volatility in the construction industry.

Councillor Sam Chapman queried how many 'Chorley Bowmen' there were and how many were residents of the Borough. This information would be confirmed following the meeting.

The Executive Member (Planning and Development), Councillor Alistair Morwood and the Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley seconded and it was **Resolved (unanimously)**

- 1. Approval to increase the budget for Wigan Lane.**
- 2. Approval to award the contract for the construction of Wigan Lane Archery Facility to Wade Group.**

Mayor

Date

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## Overview and Scrutiny

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Performance Panel held on 27 July 2022, and an update on the Task Group Review of Select Move.

### Performance Focus: Customer and Digital

2. We welcomed Executive Member for Customer, Streetscene and Environment, Councillor Adrian Lowe to present the Performance Focus: Customer and Digital Report which provides an overall summary of the Directorate, its budget position, key performance measures and an update on the corporate strategies relevant to the directorate.
3. We were updated that the directorate covers Neighbourhoods, Streetscene and Waste Services, and the shared services of ICT and Customer Services.
4. Three quarters of the corporate service level performance measures are performing at or above target at the end of quarter four.
5. Five of the eight business plan project have been completed. Three are amber, due to the challenges facing by ICT and customer services with the transition into shared services and the number of vacant positions.
6. High performing teams had their targets increase, which include street cleaning and ground maintenance.
7. Work is underway to rectify ongoing issues with customer services and the contact centre.
8. We heard that Covid-19 did not result in a decrease of staff posts, however, recruitment has been difficult. Customer Services also resolve additional requests as on behalf of central government such as the £150 Council Tax rebate. Residents are encouraged to complete the application online, but many followed up over the phone resulting in significantly more calls. So far, 90% of eligible residents received the rebate.
9. 12 apprenticeships have been created and recruitment is ongoing.
10. Financially, the directorate has a balanced budget.
11. The grey bin subscription service increased from £30 to £32.50 a year for 2022/23, with income at £812k for the year. The subscription income contributes towards the one-million- pound budget gap created by County Council. The income has avoided the need to make cuts to services.
12. Consideration to expand the implementation of the AV equipment in the Town Hall to include Committee Room 1 is underway.
13. 98% of grass cutting was completed on time for both May and June 2022, and litter bin collection is 98% for May and 99% for June 2022.
14. We noted the report.

**Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22**

15. We welcomed Howard Anthony, Interim Service Lead Performance and Partnerships to present the Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22.
16. Performance is considered to be good with 71% of corporate strategy projects green, with 67% of projects outside the corporate strategy green.
17. An update is to be provided to detail the off-target indicators in the Quarter 1 Report to Cabinet in September.
18. The Tatton Project is amber and further updates to the project will be in the Quarter 1 Report in addition to an Exception Report that will confirm the timescales to put the projects back on track.
19. We were informed that Tatton will factor into the targeted 100 affordable homes figure upon completion.
20. The employment figure is down, Covid-19 changed the circumstance of many which led to an increase in workers withdrawing from the employment market. Updated unemployment figures to be released in August 2022 and will feature in the Quarter 1 Report.
21. Both the annual business rates received, and Strawberry Fields improved performance from the previous year.
22. We expressed concern with the number of vacant shops in the town centre, however, the work refurbishing the market cabins is complete and formal offers have received. There is also interest in the return of pop up units to utilise the empty space.
23. We noted the update.

**Task Group Update**

24. The Task Group met four times since the last update. 25 July 2022, 17 August 2022, 18 August 2022 and 8 September 2022.
25. The Task Group engaged with Andy Gale, consultant working on updating the Select Move Allocations Policy. The results of the survey were presented by Jon-James Martin – Performance and Transformation Officer. Lisa McCormick explained her role as Select Move Coordinator. Sir Lindsay Hoyle shared his experience with Select Move with the Task Group and the Draft Final Report was shared with Members.
26. The updated Final Report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 6 October 2022, and Executive Cabinet 20 October 2022.

**Recommendations**

27. To note the report.

Councillor John Walker  
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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## **Governance Committee**

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 3 August 2022

### **External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update**

2. We welcomed Georgia Jones, Grant Thornton to present the Audit Progress Report for 2021/2022
3. The planning and interim work is complete, the financial statement audit will begin upon receipt of the Financial Statement. The deadline for the signed off audit is 30 November 2022
4. The value for money deadline has been extended and is required to be signed off within three months of the Audit Option, which is to be delivered at the same time as the Financial Statement.
5. Housing Benefit Claim work is underway. There is a good working relationship between Grant Thornton and key officers in the council.
6. We noted the report.

### **External Audit Annual Report 2020/21**

7. Georgia Jones presented the report.
8. The report was completed under the revised code of audit practice, issued by the National Audit Office, the report is a retrospective exploration into the arrangements that were in place at the council in 2021.
9. No significant weakness was identified in the areas of 'financial sustainability', 'governance' and 'improving economic efficiency and effectiveness'.
10. However, two improvement recommendations were made for 'financial sustainability' and one improvement recommendation was made for 'governance'.
11. We were informed that the recommendation to make a clear distinction between discretionary and non-discretionary spending is a common recommendation made and is noted that may not be standard practise for many to make the distinction however, to do so is considered good practice. However, the time and resources required is to be balanced against the benefit delivered.
12. A full opinion was not given due to the impact of Covid-19. Internal Audit did not have the capacity.
13. We noted the report.

**Treasury Management Outturn Report (2021/22) & Quarter 1 Monitoring Report (2022/23)**

14. Steve Kenyon, Deputy Director of Finance presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report (2021/22) and Quarter 1 Monitoring Report (2022/23)
15. The report summarised the treasury management activity over the 12 months of 2021/22 and the first three months of the current financial year. 2021/22 observed high cash balances because of Covid funds but a low yield on investments made due to global factors.
16. The council approached investment prioritising the security of public money, then the liquidity of funds and then interest generated. Interest is important but not at the expense of security or liquidity.
17. The average daily balance was £9.3 million, down on the previous year's figure of £13 million, which was due to the Covid funds.
18. Yield was 0.09% against a target of 0.1%. The council was not able to lend money to other councils due to the decrease in demand, with other councils also receiving Covid funding.
19. Cash return was £8,800 compared to £13,000 the year previous.
20. The capital programme is £24 million, the overall financing required is £14.7 million and a £10 million loan taken out at the end of 2021.
21. Interest rates increased for the first quarter of the financial year. Link Asset Services forecast increase rates to peak at 2.75%.
22. The first three months of the year observed the average daily cash balance reduce to £9 million, but the yield on investment increased to 0.58%, with a cash return of £13,700, which is greater than the 2021/22 figure.
23. No additional borrowing has been required in the first three months of 2022/23.
24. Uncertainty remains around the long term impact of Brexit, recovery of economies from the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine.
25. We noted the report.

**Draft Core Financial Statements 2021/22**

26. Tony Furber, Principal Financial Accountant presented the Draft Core Financial Statements 2021/22. The report highlights the process for the approval of the Statement of Accounts.
27. The draft was in an advance state and due to be completed and delivered imminently.
28. Clarity and explanation was given to the Business Rates Grant Exceptional Payment.
29. The pension deficit decreased from £55.5 million to under £44 million due to the £14.5 million surplus from the remeasurement of the pension fund asset.

30. We noted the report.

#### **CIPFA Resilience Index 2020/21**

31. Steve Kenyon, Deputy Director of Finance presented report and summarised the annual index compiled by CIPFA, the purpose is to provide an assurance of financial health.
32. Reports gathered throughout the year are used to group 12 councils that have similar social, demographic, and economic factors. Difficulty can exist with inconsistency in the way councils complete their statutory returns. However, Chorley is grouped with South Ribble and the shared finance service compile the reports for both allowing for accurate comparison.
33. The council scored 100 out of 100 for reserve sustainability. The council maintains 96.5% of its annual spend in reserve, placing the council 139<sup>th</sup> in the country and 10<sup>th</sup> in Lancashire.
34. All councils experienced an increase in reserves due to the receipt of Covid-19 funds.
35. The council's income stream from projects is healthy and can support the revenue budget, however, projects have been funded from borrowing and require interest payments.
36. The council was mid-table for external debt and scored high on fees and charges that relate to investment generated income. The council has a strong council tax base.
37. Business growth rate is healthy and demonstrates that Chorley is a place business' want to locate and grow.
38. The council is to continue monitoring business growth to support the annual budget, with more analysis to identify the top business' in the borough and which business' are migrating, developing, and growing.
39. The report provides independent assurance that the council is in a strong position and highlights the benefit of the council's investment.
40. We noted the report.

#### **Strategic Risk Review**

41. Rebecca Aziz-Brook, Transformation & Change Team Leader presented the report, and provided the annual update on the council's strategic risk register.
42. The greatest risks involve funding uncertainty due to the current economic situation, resource and capacity issues, skill shortages and cyber security.
43. To mitigate the risks, strong control measures and actions are in place which include the new People Strategy, the council's governance framework and the budget setting and monitoring process.
44. Since the last Strategic Risk Review, three risks have decreased and four increased. The decrease in risks is due to closer working relationships with partners. The

familiarity and adoption of digital and workplace strategies, and the reduction in risk from the Covid-19 pandemic.

45. The new People Strategy has been drafted and is to launch in September. Proposals are in place to launch the graduate and apprentice programme. Development days in September and October will enable staff to dedicate time towards skills and development.
46. We noted the report.

#### **RIPA Application Update**

47. Chris Moister, Director of Governance reported no RIPA applications have been made.
48. We noted the update

#### **Recommendations**

49. To note the report.

Councillor Debra Platt  
Chair of the Governance Committee

MP

**General Report of the meeting held on September 2022****Housing Statement of Common Ground**

1. The Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), Councillor Alistair Bradley, presented the report of the Director of Planning and Development.
2. The report provides an update on the evidence and strategic policies for housing for the new Central Lancashire Local Plan and considers the provision of robust highways assessments for planning applications.
3. Councillor Bradley reported that the three Councils of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble are committed to preparation of a joint local plan which will include both strategic and development management policies, for use when determining planning applications. Commissioning housing evidence and preparing an agreed approach to the distribution of housing need is a critical part of the plan-making process.
4. The existing Core Strategy for Central Lancashire includes a shared approach to the distribution of housing and this commitment is ongoing, with a clear expectation that the new Local Plan would redistribute the housing requirement in such a way to reflect local trends, market conditions and signals etc. This was important as it enabled the three Councils to prepare a Local Plan which would meet future local need and be tailored to Central Lancashire as opposed to England as a whole.
5. Housing numbers alone are not a sustainable way to plan and therefore it is important Chorley plans for what it needs and not what national policy dictates. Development in Chorley should be plan-led, informed by robust evidence and an annual requirement which meets local need and is transparent to the community.
6. We noted the impact of the Government 5 Year Housing Land Supply requirement and debated the Government standard method of calculating housing need. This has led to a number of planning consents being granted at appeal on Safeguarded land sites with Chorley Council being deemed by Planning Inspectors as not having a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land supply.
7. These decisions were based on using the Government Standard Method of housing need which for Chorley currently requires 542 new homes to be delivered each year. A 5% buffer is required in the 5 year supply calculation which takes the annual requirement to 569 dwellings. Chorley cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing using this figure.
8. However, if the figure for the emerging Local Plan is used as specified in the agreed Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) Chorley is able to demonstrate a supply of deliverable homes equivalent to at least 5.4 years including a 5% buffer.
9. We discussed the increase in working from home following the pandemic but noted the evidence base for the figures quoted.
10. Moving forwards it is considered that the existence of the SOCG should be a material consideration for making decisions on planning applications as a material consideration for decision making. The weight to be attached to the SOCG in making decisions on planning proposals will be for the Planning Committee on a case by case basis.

11. We debated the supplementary recommendation, with members, including the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Alan Cullens, and Councillor Alan Platt and Alex Hilton, noting
  - Discussions were needed with the new administration at Lancashire County Council (LCC) regarding highways evidence for Planning Committee
  - LCC have faced similar issues to other local authorities in retaining and recruiting staff
  - Chorley do submit a high number of requests for highways evidence to LCC in comparison with other authorities in Lancashire and would, potentially, will willing to pay for this enhanced service
  - LCC would need to be consulted in addition to any independent highways consultants commissioned
  - The need for robust evidence for Planning Committee from other partners was noted
  
12. Following the debate recommendation 6 was amended to read 'To agree the principle of fixing a budget to fund highways evidence to present to Planning Committee after consultation with LCC Highways'. We noted discussions would take place with LCC and an update would be provided to a future Council meeting.
  
13. We agreed the recommendations, as amended.
  - i. To note the contents of the Housing Land Monitoring report (Appendix One) including the delivery of 6,544 homes in Chorley during the existing Local Plan Period of 2012- 2026 (taking account of previous undersupply), which represents a surplus of 1,378 homes above the Core Strategy requirement.
  - ii. To note the continued absence of a new national methodology for determining housing need and continued application of the standard method for housing.
  - iii. To acknowledge the emerging local evidence for housing need and to agree the proposed annual and local plan period housing requirement and the distribution across the three Council areas.
  - iv. To endorse the Statement of Common Ground (Appendix Two) which has been signed by the portfolio holders responsible for the Local Plan across the three Councils specifically Councillor Alistair Bradley, Cllr James Flannery, and Cllr David Borrow following endorsement by the Joint Advisory Committee on 25th July 2022.
  - v. To agree that the Statement of Common Ground be agreed by members as the preferred strategic housing policy approach to be published and consulted upon in Preferred Options (which would proposed to replace Core Strategy Policy one) and (without fettering future planning decisions), should be taken into account as a material consideration in all future planning decision for housing proposals.
  - vi. To agree the principle of fixing a budget to fund highways evidence to present to Planning Committee after consultation with LCC Highways.

### **Recommendation**

14. To note the report.

Councillor Aaron Beaver  
Chair of the General Purposes Committee

RR

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities) (Introduced by the Armed Forces Champion)	Council	27 September 2022

### Armed Forces Covenant Overview

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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### Purpose of the Report

1. For Council to consider that Chorley Council continues with its commitment and support to the Armed Forces Community, via its Armed Forces Covenant work.

### Recommendations

2. Council are requested to reaffirm Chorley Council’s continued commitment and support to the Armed Forces Community via its Armed Forces Covenant work.
3. For Council to agree that Chorley Council should continue its pursuit of The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS), Gold Award in 2023.

### Reasons for recommendations

4. The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge from the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly; and it recognises the sacrifices they make on behalf of the country. Chief Executive, Gary Hall, recently signed the ‘Armed Forces Covenant’ at The Flag Raising Celebration Event during Armed Forces Week in June 2022.
5. Chorley Council provides excellent support to the Armed Forces Community and should capitalise on the current momentum by engaging with further opportunities to enhance the support.

### Other options considered and rejected

6. It was considered not to go for the ERS Gold Award Scheme, but this was rejected because, if we didn’t carry on this process, this could have an adverse impact for the Armed Forces Community, the Armed Forces Covenant Process and the upcoming statutory ‘Armed Forces Covenant Duty’. For example, it would lessen the opportunities to enhance services and support if we did not escalate from Silver to Gold. Furthermore, this would have a negative effect on Chorley Council’s ability to demonstrate their role as a community leader and its ongoing support to the Armed Forces Community.

**Corporate priorities**

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
Clean, safe and healthy communities	<b>An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area</b>

**Background to the report**

- 8. This report is a request for Chorley Council to reaffirm its commitment and support to the Armed Forces Community, via its Armed Forces Covenant work.
- 9. As previously mentioned, the Covenant is a pledge to the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly. Furthermore, the Covenant is not designed to give the armed forces, veterans and their families preferential treatment, but it should ensure that they are not placed at a disadvantage as a result of their service.
- 10. The Armed Forces Covenant work and in particular, the ERS Awards, demonstrate to the wider community our excellent work in support of the Covenant and to that of the Armed Forces Community at large. More information about the ERS is in the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>
- 11. Chorley Council already hold the ERS Bronze and Silver Awards, so it is important and achievable to gain the Gold Award in 2023, as is demonstrated in Appendices A and B, which highlight the criteria for the ERS Awards and also shows how Chorley Council achieved them. It also sets out what is needed to achieve the Gold Award in 2023.

**Overview of Armed Forces Covenant Activity**

- 12. Lancashire has its own Armed Forces Covenant Hub, which aims to improve the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant and does this by working with all the local authorities within Lancashire, ensuring the covenant is both understood and honoured. The Hub and its partners take on a coordination role, working closely with local authority armed forces champions and lead officers, as well as key stakeholders from the public and charity sectors.
- 13. Furthermore, the Hub delivers outputs across the following themes; education, employment, health, housing, wellbeing, and welfare support; and working to improve the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across Lancashire by the local authorities. The Hub aims to help improve the services provided to the armed forces community by charities and Community Interest Companies (CIC’s) helping them to access funding streams and improving their sustainability and governance structures. More information about the Hub can be found on the link <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/armed-forces/the-lancashire-hub/>
- 14. Chorley Council maintain a consistent and influential presence at the Lancashire Hub, to update about Chorley matters and to help shape the decision-making process concerning the Covenant. Councillor Aaron Beaver, Chorley Council’s Armed Forces Champion and his

supporting officer from the Communities Team, both regularly attend and actively contribute at these meetings.

### The Armed Forces Covenant Duty 2023

15. Soon, an extension of the Covenant will be introduced to the nation, called 'The Covenant Duty' which is currently going through parliament for ratification. This will be a statutory duty for specific bodies and organisations, specific to the areas of healthcare, housing and education.
16. The 'Duty' will also pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and stipulates that bodies and organisations subject to the 'Duty', are expected to **consciously consider** the Covenant, especially when developing, delivering and reviewing policies, corporate strategies, and when making decisions which may impact the Armed Forces Community. Information concerning 'Organisations in Scope' can be seen in the link [The New Armed Forces Covenant Duty: What organisations in scope will need to know - Armed Forces Covenant](#)
17. Aspects of new 'Duty' work, such as Education and Housing can be achieved through the Lancashire Armed Forces Hub and also through a more local hub, which we hope to set up in the coming months, in partnership with South Ribble Borough Council. When established, this new local hub will have a similar remit to the wider Lancashire Hub; and it will replace old 'Civil and Military Partnership' which last convened in 2017 and was chaired by Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

### Practical Examples of How Chorley Council Has Supported the Armed Forces Community (Including Veterans)

18. Below are some examples of how Chorley Council has supported the above:
  - We employ three veterans and our Armed Forces Champion is also a veteran
  - We also employ one Reservist and one Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV) and both are covered under our Reserve Forces Policy, which is based on the MOD template. This template supports mobilisation and demobilisation and means that we grant up to an additional two weeks leave with pay per year (**a maximum of 10 days pro rata**), to attend training sessions *over an annual two- week summer camp*. Both the Reservist and the CFAV, have benefitted from attending various training camps, whilst being employed at Chorley Council
  - Every year we organise the Chorley Remembrance Sunday Commemoration on behalf of the Royal British Legion and we also participate as a Council in Remembrance events and hold a company-wide two-minute silence on Armistice Day. Furthermore, we also support Merchant Navy Day and whenever required, hold service men and women celebration award events at the Town Hall services. On Armed Forces Day we raise the Union Flag above the Town Hall and have organised other types of military parades in the past
  - We support the Royal British Legion (RBL) and have worked collaboratively with them for several years, principally on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) cases. This included joint home visits to disabled ex-servicemen living in Chorley who required adaptations at their homes. As a result, the council were successful in receiving the RBL's 'Support to The Armed Forces Community Award 2019

19. Taking into consideration all of the above, the Armed Forces Covenant aligns well with Chorley Council's Corporate Strategy, and momentum should be maintained in this area of work. Capacity for furtherance of this work can be realised through the Communities Team, via the current Lead Officer for the Armed Forces Covenant Work, included within the locality Mental Health Thematic Action Plan.
20. Currently there should be no additional resource or cost implications to continue the Armed Forces Covenant Work. This may change as the scope of the Armed Forces Covenant work evolves and further information is released relating to implications of the Covenant Duty. Once this is known, decisions can be made on what actions need to be taken and where responsibility concerning this work sits within the Council.

### **Equality and Diversity**

21. The Armed Forces Community could be construed as a diverse isolated / disadvantaged group, consisting people with different genders, race and religions; also vulnerable individuals including serving officers and or their partner / spouses, children, or veterans; who have or suffer with various types of physical and mental characteristics / illnesses and disabilities, caused by their work. Furthermore, they are a group, that have generally struggled to access services relating to housing, healthcare, education and employment.
22. The council needs to recognise and address all of the above, especially when developing, delivering and reviewing future policies, corporate strategies, and when making decisions which may impact the Armed Forces Community. Policy may even have to change in the future, to the include Armed Force Covenant's and the Armed Forces Covenant Duty's values in them.
23. This ongoing work and any future changes in policy, will go a long way to opening up job and housing opportunities for the Armed Forces Community. It will also make services more accessible to them and could also help to improve the health and wellbeing and the quality of life for the Armed Forces Community; and also recognise the sacrifices that they make for this nation.

### **Risk**

24. The key risks **could be related to reputation for the Council and possible** issues to consider are;
  - Proving to local residents that we provide value for money
  - Informing and engaging with local residents
  - Building trust and confidence in Chorley Council
  - Improving customer satisfaction with council services
  - Chorley Council's role as a community leader

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

25. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Specific support, as described above, is within the current Council budget.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

26. No comments.

**Background documents**

27. There are no background papers to this report

**Appendices**

**Appendix A – ERS Criteria**

**Appendix B - What Chorley Council Has Achieved In Support of The Armed Forces Community and Future Aims & Objectives**

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
John Hill, Laura Hendi (Community Engagement Officer, Senior Community Engagement Officer)	John.Hill@chorley.gov.uk Laura.Hendi@chorley.gov.uk	(01257) 515806	August 2022

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**Council Report for Armed Forces Covenant - September 2022****Appendix A - Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Criteria**

1. The Armed Forces Covenant has associated with it, The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS), which encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the [Armed Forces Covenant](#).
2. The ERS is designed primarily to recognise private sector support although public sector organisations such as the emergency services, local authorities, NHS trusts and executive agencies are also eligible to be recognised. The accreditations below, demonstrate real commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant process and are held in high esteem nationally.

**Bronze Award**

- Are self-nominated employers who pledge to support the armed forces, including existing or prospective employees who are members of the community
- Must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant
- Promote being armed forces friendly and are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the injured and sick, cadet instructors and military spouses / partners
- Receive an electronic certificate and logos to display on their web-site stationary other collateral

**Silver Award**

- Must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant
- The employer must have already stated their intent to be supportive by using the ERS (Defence Employer Recognition Scheme) website to register at the Bronze Level
- The employer must proactively demonstrate that service personnel / armed forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruiting and selection processes
- Employers must employ at least one individual from the armed forces community category that the nomination emphasises. For example, an employer nominated the support to the Reserves must employ at least one Reservist
- The employer must actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards defence people issues. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must have an internally publicised and positive HR policy on Reserves
- Within the context of Reserves the employer must have demonstrated support to the mobilisations or have a framework in place. They must demonstrate support to training by providing at least 5 days additional unpaid / paid leave (wherever possible not to Reservists employees financial disadvantage)
- The employer must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity

### Gold Award

- Must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant
- Employers must have an existing relationship with their National Account Manager Armed Forces Covenant /REED Specialist Recruitment (appropriate defence representative)
- The employer must have already stated their intent to be supportive by using the ERS website to register at the Bronze level
- The employer must proactively demonstrate their forces-friendly credentials as part of their recruiting and selection processes. Where possible, they should be engaged with Career Transition Partnership (CTP) in the recruitment of service leavers
- Employers must employ at least one individual from the armed forces community category that the nomination emphasises. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must employ at least one Reservist
- The employer must actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards defence people issues. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must have an internally publicised and positive HR policy on Reserves
- The employer must be an exemplar within their market sector, advocating support to Defence People issues to partner organisations, suppliers and customers with tangible positive results
- Within the context of Reserves the employer must have demonstrated support to mobilisations or have a framework in place. They must provide at least 10 days' additional leave for training, fully paid, to the Reservist employee
- The employer must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity

**Council Report for Armed Forces Covenant Meeting September 2022****Appendix B****‘What Chorley Council Has Achieved In Support of The Armed Forces Community and Future Aims & Objectives**

1. **Chorley Council currently holds the Bronze and Silver Awards in The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS)**, which encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. This prestigious scheme is in place to officially recognise organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community; and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.
2. **Chorley Council aims to make an application for the ERS Gold Award in 2023. More information can be found about the ERS Awards here:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>
3. **The council achieved the ERS Bronze and Silver awards as a result of the following:**
  - By signing up to both the Armed Forces Community Covenant and the Armed Forces Covenant
  - By being part of the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub / Forum
  - Frontline Customer Services Staff attended UCLAN online Armed Forces Covenant Training sessions a couple of years ago - ***John Hill is currently working to make this mandatory training for staff as part of our e learning hub***
  - Offering support for military personnel and their spouses / partners, by signing up to the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Forces Families Jobs (FFJ). This raises awareness in the Armed Forces Community, about job opportunities at Chorley Council. Ex military personnel are guaranteed an interview for a job at Chorley Council, if they meet the criteria
  - Providing appropriate housing support for the Armed Forces Community, for example priority on Select Move for Social housing will be given if the applicant is serving in or has formerly served in the UK regular forces within the last 5 years. This will also override the usual local connection criteria. Their application will be placed in Band A-C as determined by the assessing Housing officer and assessed case by case and the banding assessment date will be backdated to equal their total period of service in the UK armed forces (or the service of spouse or civil partner).
  - Any Reservist and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, employed by Chorley Council, will be granted up to an additional two weeks per year (**a maximum of 10 days pro rata**) leave with pay to attend training sessions *over an* annual two week summer camp.
  - Through our Armed Forces Champion, we enjoy good links with C (64) Medical Squadron at the reservist centre in Chorley along with 3 Medical Regiment in Fulwood, who has Freedom of The Borough Status in Chorley. They both attend community

events throughout the year, such as Armed Forces Day and the Freedom Parade in June and VE and VJ and Remembrance Days respectively

- We support the Royal British Legion (RBL) and our HIA team have worked collaboratively with them for several years, principally on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) cases. This included joint home visits to disabled ex-servicemen living in Chorley who required adaptations at their homes. As a result, the council were successful in receiving the RBL's 'Support to The Armed Forces Community Award 2019
- By providing Health and Wellbeing support to veterans through via the Social Prescribing Service
- Due to Democratic Services arranging the annual Armed Forces Remembrance and other annual commemoration events in Chorley
- The following information covers Council Tax support for the Armed Forces Community

#### **Armed Forces Council Tax exemption**

- Living accommodation for UK armed forces which is owned by the Secretary of State for Defence is exempt whether occupied or not
- This includes barracks and other accommodation on military bases, together with married quarters and any other property, wherever located, provided the accommodation is held for the purposes of forces accommodation. Contributions in lieu of Council Tax are payable to local councils on such properties

#### **Ministry of Defence Council Tax relief**

- Armed forces personnel deployed on operations overseas, who normally pay Council Tax, can claim a tax-free payment on the cost of their Council Tax, which is paid directly by the Ministry of Defence.
- The relief scheme is funded and administered by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), not Chorley Council
- To claim the relief, military personnel need to contact your their department and will need to provide a copy of their Council Tax bill. The MOD will then calculate payment daily, and it will be paid as a lump sum in the persons salary at the end of their operational tour

- 4. Chorley Council are currently working towards the ERS Gold Award** which includes much of the above Silver Award Criteria, along with advocacy criteria, sharing information with partner agencies about the Armed Forces Covenant and encouraging them to sign up to it. To help us achieve this we are:

- Currently in the process of developing an Armed Forces Covenant webpage on Chorley Council website
- We have liaised with the Procurement Team who have included information about the Covenant in their social values toolkit – In which it highlights information about the covenant and informs services tendering for contracts, how they can advertise

employment opportunities to the Armed Forces Community via the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Forces Family Jobs (FFJ)

- Likewise, we hope to do the same with the Economic Development Team with a view to create a recognition award at the annual Economic Awards, for companies that have signed up the Armed Forces Covenant and or advertise jobs through the above mechanisms
- We have also contributed to the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Guide, which promotes Chorley as a great place to live, work, shop / visit and spend leisure time in as well as our affiliation with the Armed Forces Community
- Currently working to create an Armed Forces Covenant Awareness e learning training package on the Councils e learning hub for front line staff
- We also plan to develop a local Armed Forces Covenant Hub in partnership with South Ribble Council, with a similar remit to the Lancashire Hub. Once established, this new local hub, will replace old 'Civil and Military Partnership' which last convened in 2017 and was chaired by Sir Lindsay Hoyle

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery  (Introduced by Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Council	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2022

## Chorley Economic Strategy

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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### Purpose of the Report

- The report presents the Chorley Economic Strategy.

### Recommendations

- Members are asked to consider and approve the Chorley Economic Strategy for implementation (Appendix 1).

### Reasons for recommendations

- To define a clear vision, priorities and actions to ensure that Chorley has a strong local economy in line with the Corporate Strategy.

### Other options considered and rejected

- The other option would be not to have an Economic Strategy. However, this would mean the council does not have a clear plan to achieve economic growth, risking the future prosperity of the borough.

### Executive summary

- The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the economic environment and demonstrated that economic circumstances are intrinsically connected to overall wellbeing and potential. The council has great ambitions for the economy of Chorley, our businesses and people. Our economy continues to grow, and we must now drive forward plans to respond proactively by getting the most from new opportunities.
- This Economic Strategy aims to set out a clear ambition and vision for Chorley, considering the local, regional and national context. It sets out a new vision, priorities, objectives and action plan to provide direction and guide the allocation of resources.

**Corporate priorities**

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	<b>A strong local economy</b>
Clean, safe and healthy communities	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

**Background to the report**

8. Economically, the last few years have been about withstanding a recession and making progress in tough economic conditions. The council delivered critical support to businesses throughout the pandemic and Chorley has seen a strong recovery. However, the struggling global and national economy continues to present huge challenges including rising inflation, the cost of living crisis and increasing energy prices.
9. Chorley has a track record of taking direct action to address local inequalities through investment and initiatives to strengthen the local economy, including the reinvigoration of Chorley town centre and activity across the borough to encourage inward investment and local employment. However, significant pockets of deprivation remain with outcomes consistently below national averages and these inequalities will only be further exacerbated over the coming years. We now need to set clear priorities and mobilise action, together with businesses and partners, to realise the benefits of economic growth for all people in Chorley.

**Developing the strategy**

10. The strategy has been developed based on data relating to the local business demography, economic trends and national economic policy. A summary is included at Appendix 2, highlighting the following key points:
  - The majority of enterprises (overall businesses) and local units (individual work sites) in Chorley are micro businesses with 0-9 employees; there are 10 enterprises and 15 local units with a large employee base of over 250 employees.
  - Chorley has seen positive growth in enterprises from 4,360 in 2019 to 4,655 in 2022. This is a 6.77% increase compared to a 1.69% increase for the North West and a 1.55% increase nationally.
  - Chorley has a large number of new enterprises established each year with an average of 543 per year from 2015 – 2020. The borough also has a higher than average survival rate of new businesses. This suggests that whilst there may be slower growth in the number of active businesses in Chorley in comparison to national and regional levels, the enterprises which are established are more likely to survive with 90% of new businesses still active after 1 year and 60.6% after 3 years.
  - Figures indicate that growth in businesses, particularly for micro and small enterprises, has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic in Chorley, with an increase of 160 enterprises with an employee size band of 0-4 between March 2020 and March 2021.

- Furthermore, business 'births' per year from 2019 – 2020 increased by 60 for Chorley (an increase of 11.76%,) whereas new businesses across England decreased by 33,560 (an overall decrease of 10.27%.)
  - There has been the largest percentage increase in transport and storage industries at 63.4% which could reflect increased demands as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic with a greater need for transportation and delivery services during lockdown periods. There have also been significant increases in the accommodation and food services sector at 23.91%.
  - The largest decreases in numbers of enterprises have been for the public administration and defence sector, which has decreased from 15 to 10 enterprises, agriculture, forestry and fishing, which is down by 14.89%, and retail down by 4%. Professional, scientific and technical enterprises have also decreased by 2.82% despite having the largest total number of enterprises in Chorley.
  - Data from the 2011 Census shows that 39.1% of people aged 16 plus both live and work in the borough. This could be due to the number of jobs available or the types of roles given that Chorley residents generally have a higher level of qualification with 44.8% of resident's educated to NVQ level 3 compared to 38.5% across the North West.
11. Feedback from businesses and stakeholders was also gathered at the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership Economic Summit in November 2021 and recent business roundtable events. Key themes included: access to future skills in key growth areas; availability of space and land; and the ongoing costs of 'doing business' including rents, wages and utilities.
12. A number of 'big issues' and opportunities have been identified for Chorley:
- **Local centres** – building on the recovery by supporting traders across the borough and developing a clear plan for the future of the town centre
  - **Productivity** – supporting innovation and new technology to encourage further growth in enterprises
  - **Communities** – developing an inclusive local economy where residents play a meaningful role, reducing health inequalities
  - **Jobs and skills** – connecting industry and skills to ensure that we can harness local potential to meet the future labour market demand
  - **Land and assets** – enabling businesses to remain and grow within Chorley by making the best, and most sustainable, use of our land and assets
  - **National economic conditions and Levelling Up** – strong partnership collaboration and a dynamic approach that responds to changing conditions
13. Assessment of the context, issues and opportunities has resulted in four key principles to guide the strategy:
- Economic prosperity is a key enabler of life opportunities and determinant of overall wellbeing – this means that it's everyone's business
  - We will take a more collaborative approach with businesses, partners and communities all contributing to local economic outcomes
  - Climate change and the commitment to net zero 2030 will be a cross-cutting theme, with all objectives and actions designed to advance the green agenda
  - The council will innovate, facilitate and drive action – using policy levers, influence, assets and resources where needed

- Our plans will align to regional and national priorities where necessary to achieve the best outcome for Chorley

### **Vision and priorities**

14. The overall vision for the Economic Strategy is:

**By 2030, Chorley will benefit from more and better paid jobs as a prime location for sustainable growth and investment, driven by innovation, new technologies and supporting the move towards net zero 2030.**

15. The four strategic priorities are:

1. **Space for business** – making best use of land, assets and accommodation
2. **Jobs and skills** – for the future, co-managed by employers and skills providers
3. **Employability** – as a core public service, connecting all residents to opportunities
4. **Business support** – that is intelligence-led, proactive and versatile

16. Each priority is accompanied by a number of objectives and supporting actions set out in the strategy, along with a summary of delivery options such as business support, employability services and investment. Success measures have also been identified to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy; these are in addition to specific performance measures to track the impact of local delivery activity.

17. The strategy takes account of the wider Levelling Up agenda and recent allocation through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support delivery of the priorities, objectives and actions.

### **Climate change and air quality**

18. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council by encouraging a sustainable approach to business, efficient use of resources and future-proof development through the use of green technology.

### **Equality and diversity**

19. An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for the Strategy (Appendix 3). It shows that the Strategy will achieve a positive impact across many criteria with no negative implications identified.

### **Risk**

20. Appropriate risk registers will be developed to oversee the implementation of the Strategy and specific initiatives.

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

21. There are no direct financial implications of this report however it is clear there is a direct link between the local economy and Council finances. Monitoring is undertaken of business rates growth and changes and implications to other budgets in order to inform the Councils MTFS position.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

22. No comments.

**Background documents**

There are no background papers to this report.

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Chorley Economic Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Chorley Economic Summary
- Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Victoria Willett (Director of Change and Delivery)	victoria.willett@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515248	08.09.22

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# ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2022

## Chorley's Economic Strategy

**We are ambitious for the economy of Chorley, our businesses, and people. Our economy continues to grow and we must now drive forward our plans to respond proactively by optimising new opportunities. This Economic Strategy aims to set out a clear ambition and vision for Chorley, considering the local, regional and national context.**

### Background

The pandemic had a dramatic impact on the economic environment. It showed us that the economy is intrinsically connected to overall wellbeing and confirmed that people's economic circumstances including their income level, job quality, wealth and pay have a strong influence on their quality of life and potential.

We have taken time to review the position and to engage with local businesses and partners to understand what this means in terms of our future strategy and growth aspirations. The first Annual Partnership Summit hosted by the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership brought businesses and partners organisations together to:

- Understand the post Covid environment from an economic perspective and how this is likely to impact the residents of Chorley
- Establish a collective ambition to develop an inclusive economy, where there are opportunities for everybody, through partners working together as a system, supporting employers to invest in those furthest away from sustainable and prosperous employment based on the principles of inclusivity and social value
- Identify the regional and national opportunities and barriers, and provide an assessment of our local capability and capacity to achieve our ambition
- Consider key policy movements towards Levelling Up, building back better, opportunities linked to the green economy and climate change

Chorley has a track record of taking direct action to address local inequalities through investment and initiatives to strengthen the local economy, including reinvigoration of Chorley town centre and activity across the borough to encourage inward investment and local employment. However significant pockets of deprivation remain with outcomes consistently below national averages. We now need to set clear priorities and mobilise action, together with businesses and partners, to realise the benefits of economic growth for all stakeholders.

## Big Issues

### 1. Local centres

The borough appears to be recovering well post Covid, particularly Market Walk which has seen footfall increase from less than 100,000 per month in April 2020 to almost 220,000 in January 2022. Although vacancy rates are tracking around a similar level to average North West figures, there are some key outlets outside of market walk that remain vacant. A pre-Covid shift towards lifestyle and entertainment outlets has mitigated the worst of the retail decline with scope to now progress more conversion to residential use, incorporating a growing trend towards green/low carbon living. Economic centres outside of Chorley (e.g. Adlington and Ecclestone) are seeing increased footfall, reflecting possible behaviour changes as residents shop 'hyper-local'.



**Opportunity:** Continue to build on the recovery by supporting local traders, creating an attractive proposition and defining a clear plan for the future of the town centre that supports our wider economic development and growth aspirations.

### 2. Productivity

Chorley has seen positive growth in enterprises from 4360 in 2019 to 4655 in 2022, particularly micro businesses with fewer than 4 employees. This is a 6.77% increase compared to 1.69% for the North West and 1.55% nationally. Council-led business support focused on entrepreneurialism (marketing, HR for small businesses, social media) has been very popular over the last 12 months and will encourage new businesses sustainability. Chorley has a mixture of small, medium and larger businesses which will require a tailored approach to respond to specific needs and requirements; process automation and digital capability is a strong cross cutting theme from business feedback. Climate change remains a high priority for the borough with all businesses needing to reduce emissions and improve their environmental credentials by making best use of natural resources.



**Opportunity:** Align Council action and assistance to meet the new and emerging needs of businesses, working collaboratively with the sector and partners to achieve our ambition with a focus on innovation and new technology. Support businesses to adapt to climate change and maximise investment and jobs linked to the green economy.

### 3. Communities

Chorley is a relatively affluent borough however pockets of deprivation remain. Although overall deprivation is lower than 2015, it has become more concentrated to certain areas, further widening inequalities. The employment rate in Chorley has been maintained at the same level as last year and the number of people claiming out of work benefits has reduced compared to last year, although still higher than 2020 and aligned to areas of deprivation. The ongoing cost of living crisis will further widen the gap within our communities.



**Opportunity:** Work with our partners to take a more targeted approach to identifying and supporting key groups using our local intelligence and insight.

### 4. Jobs and skills

Residents of Chorley, particularly young people, are well qualified however job density stats suggest a lower number of jobs per resident than at the regional level (0.63 compared to 0.82 for the North West) and that residents working outside the borough earn significantly more. This has the potential to be exacerbated by agile working and 'brain drain'. Chorley has the highest forecast labour market growth in Lancashire but employers tell us that skills don't match business need, particularly in advanced manufacturing/green/technical sectors.



**Opportunity:** Proactively build clear links between job creation and future skills development in Chorley, working with our local education and training providers.

## 5. Land and assets

Inward investment activity in recent years has encouraged businesses to locate in Chorley. Businesses have told us that they want to remain and grow within Chorley so space to support existing businesses and further investment is now a critical issue. Large areas of Chorley are protected to maintain the borough as an attractive place to live. Looking ahead the emphasis will be on working with individual businesses to understand requirements and developing tailored solutions. At a regional level, the council will need to use policy levers, including the Local Plan, and county influence to maximise opportunities for business in Chorley.



**Opportunity:** Through the Local Plan, make the best use of existing land and assets to deliver high quality future-proof green spaces and places; be creative in developing new solutions and using our collective influence to create opportunities.

## 6. National economic conditions

Following the removal of Covid-19 restrictions, the UK experienced positive growth with high job vacancies and employment expansion. However recent forecasts suggest that a downturn may be imminent due to the cost of living crisis and high levels of inflation. Economic activity in Chorley is mainly related to service and professional industries although there has been substantial growth in transport, food and storage categories which may be more vulnerable to economic shocks. National and regional financial assistance may be subject to change in response to the wider context, therefore it's important that Chorley has a clear strategic direction that is flexible to changing conditions.

## 7. Levelling Up and Devolution

Although not identified in the Levelling Up White Paper, Lancashire continue to work on a single voice through the Greater Lancashire Plan which looks to link growth, infrastructure, communities and the environment. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is one of a number of funds supporting the Levelling Up agenda. The fund focuses on 3 key themes: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses, People and Skills. Funding of £4.2m over 3 years has been allocated to Chorley in line with an approved investment plan.



**Opportunity:** Be clear on our strategic priorities and regularly review our objectives and actions to address emerging issues.

## Economic Strategy Principles

Our strategy is set in a period of intense social and technological change. The strategy aims to define underlying principles and set a direction of travel, while enabling the council to react and respond to emerging trends.

Economic prosperity is a key enabler of life opportunities and determinant of overall wellbeing – this means that it is everyone’s business

We will take a more collaborative approach with businesses, partners and communities all contributing to local economic outcomes

Climate change and the commitment to net zero 2030 will be a cross-cutting theme, with all objectives and actions designed to advance the green agenda

The council will innovate, facilitate and drive action - using policy levers, influence, assets and resources where needed

Our plans will align to regional and national priorities where necessary to achieve the best outcome for Chorley

**Vision:** By 2030, Chorley will benefit from more and better paid jobs as a prime location for sustainable growth and investment, driven by innovation, new technologies and a commitment to net zero 2030

**Priorities**



 <p><b>Space for business</b> Making the best and most sustainable use of land, assets and accommodation</p>	<p><b>Jobs and skills</b> For the future, co-managed by employers and skills providers</p>	
 <p><b>Employability</b> As a core public service connecting all residents to opportunities</p>	<p><b>Business support</b> That is intelligence-led, proactive and versatile</p>	

Priority	Objectives
 <b>Space for business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit for purpose accommodation for key sectors that is green and sustainable including office, light industrial and advanced technologies</li> <li>• Unlocking land and assets to enable business growth</li> <li>• Excellent local infrastructure right across the borough – physical (housing, transport, leisure) and digital</li> <li>• Sustainable use of resources to minimise environmental impact</li> <li>• A masterplan for our town centre that supports our wider economic growth priorities</li> </ul>
 <b>Jobs and skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using partnerships with key local education providers to connect the curriculum and skills (e.g. the Runshaw Employer Partnership Board)</li> <li>• Establishing incentives for jobs and skills that respond to future industry demands e.g. digital, sustainability and the green agenda, automation</li> <li>• Increasing employment opportunities in high growth, high value sectors</li> </ul>
 <b>Employability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted intervention and training in key geographical areas across the borough to support access to work</li> <li>• Working with public service partners to ensure that employability is built into all service pathways</li> <li>• Schemes with employers and private businesses to invest in those furthest away from employment</li> </ul>
 <b>Business Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic approach to managing business needs throughout the lifecycle based on intelligence captured by the business support team</li> <li>• Engagement and events to cultivate and maintain a vibrant business culture</li> <li>• Help for entrepreneurs to survive and grow within the borough</li> <li>• Bespoke business support offer and approach tailored to needs and priorities</li> <li>• Continued assistance for independent traders to build resilience and sustainability with a hyper local focus</li> <li>• Cross-sector learning to share expertise and experience e.g. green operations</li> <li>• Support for businesses to adapt to meet net zero 2030 commitments</li> </ul>

Priority	Actions
 <b>Space for business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the sites available within the Local Plan and develop clear strategies for each in line with local priorities and ambitions.</li> <li>• Develop local investment propositions and consider new commercial investment partnerships</li> <li>• Cooperate across Chorley and South Ribble to make the most of limited accommodation and assets, retaining businesses in the local area.</li> <li>• Support green upgrades to commercial premises (including electric car charging points) to increase attractiveness</li> <li>• Review and refresh the town centre masterplan in line with UKSPF</li> </ul>
 <b>Jobs and skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively support employer-partnership forums linking industry and education</li> <li>• Develop career pathways for key skills and sectors working with local partners</li> <li>• Develop targeted career days with specialist partners e.g. digital, health innovation, green/environment</li> </ul>
 <b>Employability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider an incentive scheme to support employers to develop entry level schemes for key skills and sectors</li> <li>• Enhance the employability service with additional capacity to target specific areas and geographies with a bespoke offer</li> <li>• Develop schemes with employers and businesses to invest in key cohorts</li> </ul>
 <b>Business Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver a programme of business events with specialist partners. Review and evaluate to understand business preferences. Include climate change adaptations and green solutions to meet the net zero aspiration</li> <li>• Increase place branding and identity through visibility and attendance at high profile regional and national awards</li> <li>• Establish consistent business dialogue through roundtables, Council 'open-door' sessions</li> <li>• Trial B2B knowledge sharing partnerships, starting with green operations</li> <li>• Develop a business support package for new start-ups and entrepreneurs including advice and assistance</li> </ul>

## Delivery

The Council will drive the delivery of the strategy through a collaborative approach with partners that pulls everyone in the same direction and makes the most of shared resources. An action plan will accompany the strategy with a number of specific schemes that will be led, directed or facilitated by the Council to enhance delivery.

- **Innovation hubs** – council-directed thematic, intelligence-led forums where organisational leaders will come together around a specific agenda (e.g. skills and training) to commit to actions to be delivered collaboratively, with allocated funding/resource if needed.
- **Knowledge transfer partnerships** – council-facilitated business to business collaboration to share sector learning or best practice e.g. sustainable operations and the green agenda. Could be two large businesses working together or groups of businesses with a similar challenge.
- **Business events and awards** – in addition to networking and engagement forums and following a long period of limited activity due to Covid, there may be a desire to review and reinvigorate a focused programme of events that has clear objectives in line with the aspirations of the strategy. Given the impact of Covid on the business sector, consideration may be given to an awards or celebration type event.
- **Employability services** – council-led employability services that are integrated into public service pathways and targeted to support key areas of the borough. Supporting those furthest from the workplace and providing clear pathways to skills and employment through a range of council and partner services including advice, training and apprenticeships.
- **Business advice and engagement** – council-led structured business engagement and intelligence gathering to understand needs and inform tailored solutions. This could be direct support and advice to individual businesses, or sector wide interventions. Current grant schemes will be reviewed to fit with strategic objectives.
- **Investment** – UKSPF themes are common to those identified locally. The investment plan would complement priorities and delivery plans with an emphasis on working in partnership to achieve improved outcomes for the borough.

Given the changing nature of the economic climate and emerging challenges, this will be a 3 year strategy reviewed in 2025.

## Success Measures

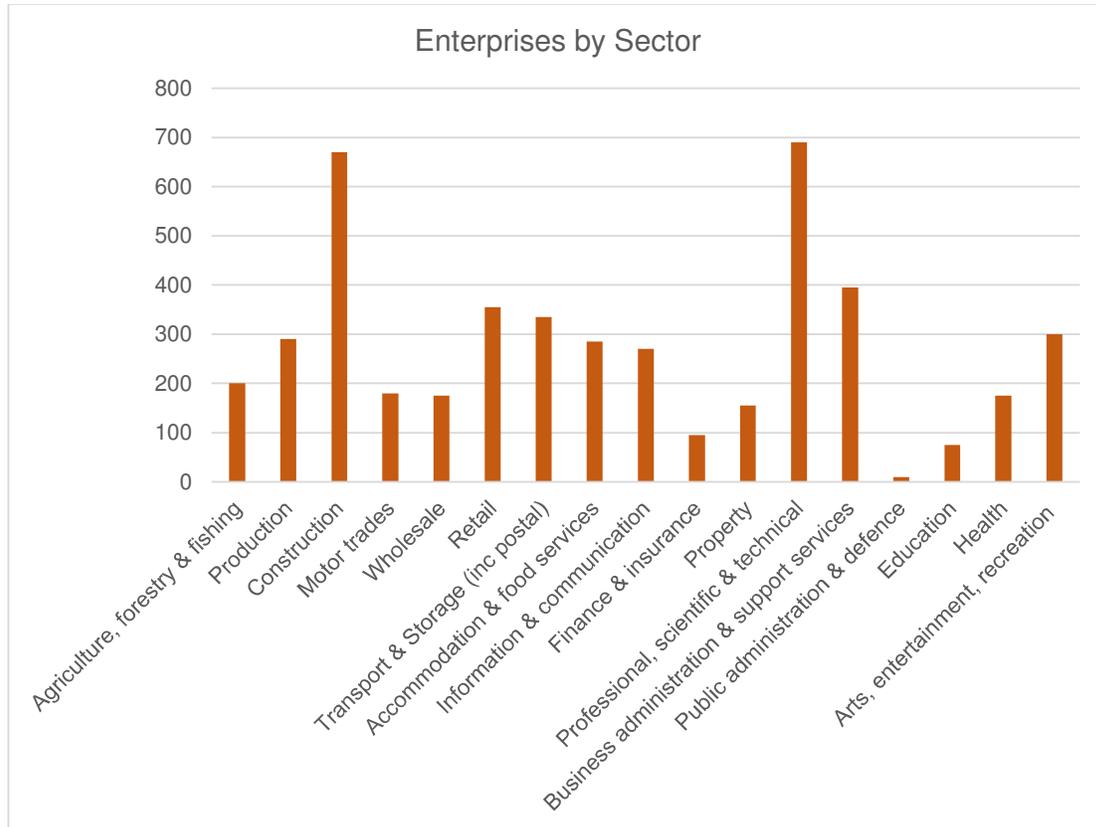
- Increase in the overall employment rate for the borough
- Reduction in the number of young people (16-17) who are not in education, employment or training
- More young people have recognised qualifications at a higher level
- Fewer vacant properties in the town centre
- More jobs created within the borough, particularly in key growth sectors
- Increased earnings for Chorley residents
- Increase in visitor numbers
- Increase in business growth rate for Chorley
- Increased business accommodation across the borough with supporting infrastructure
- Greater support for individual business needs including advice and support



## Chorley Business Demography

### Type of business by sector

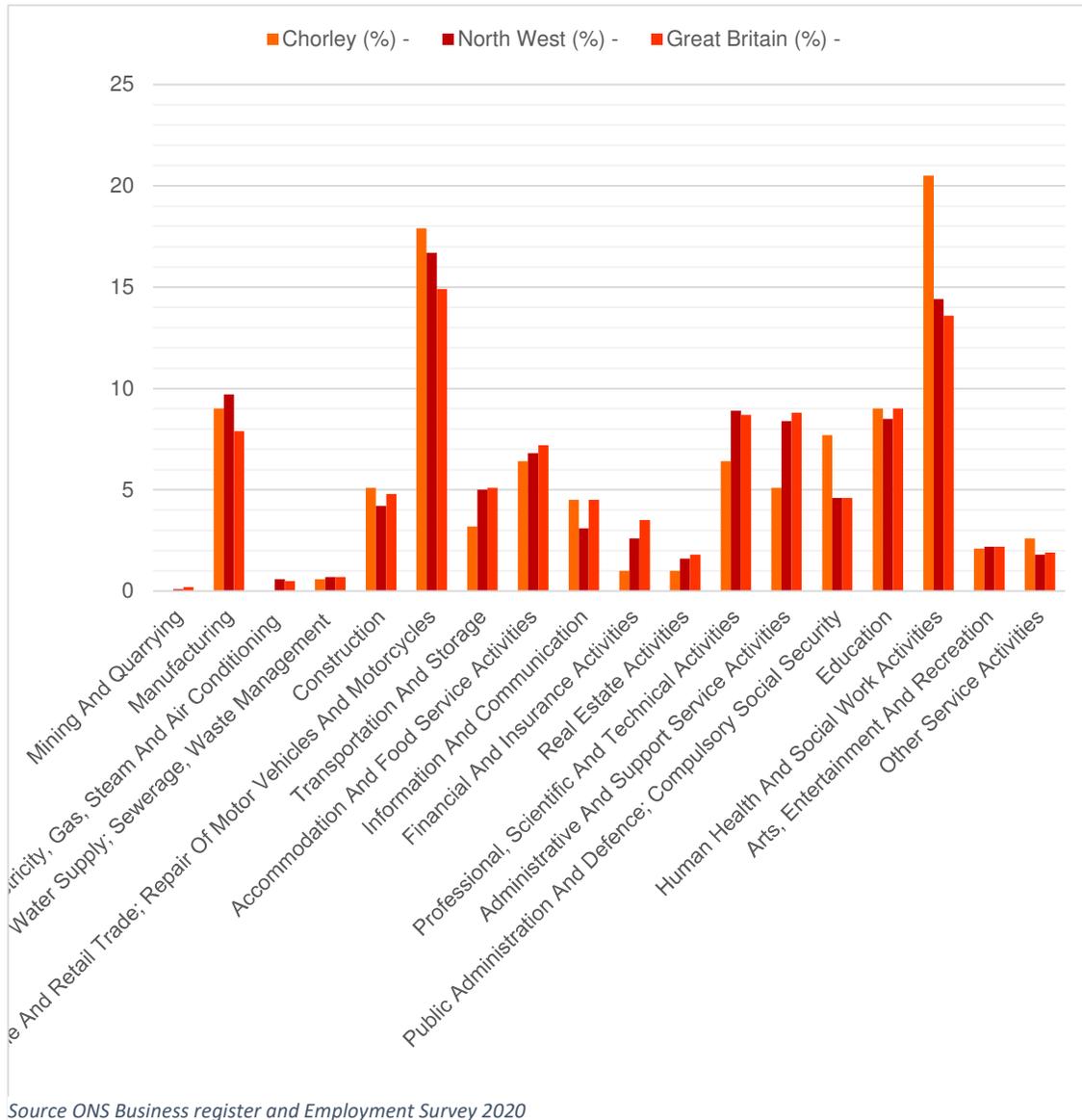
The Office for National Statistics analysis on the Inter Departmental Business Register for 2021 demonstrates that in Chorley there is the largest number of enterprises in the professional, scientific and technical sectors at 690, followed closely by construction at 670.



Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2021

However, when industry sectors are considered by number of jobs, the largest sectors are human health and social work activities followed by wholesale, retail trade and repair of motor vehicles. Chorley also has a larger percentage of jobs in these areas than across the North West and England on average alongside public administration, defence and social security.

Sectors where Chorley has a significantly lower percentage of jobs in comparison to regional and national averages include real estate, finance and insurance, and professional scientific and technical services.



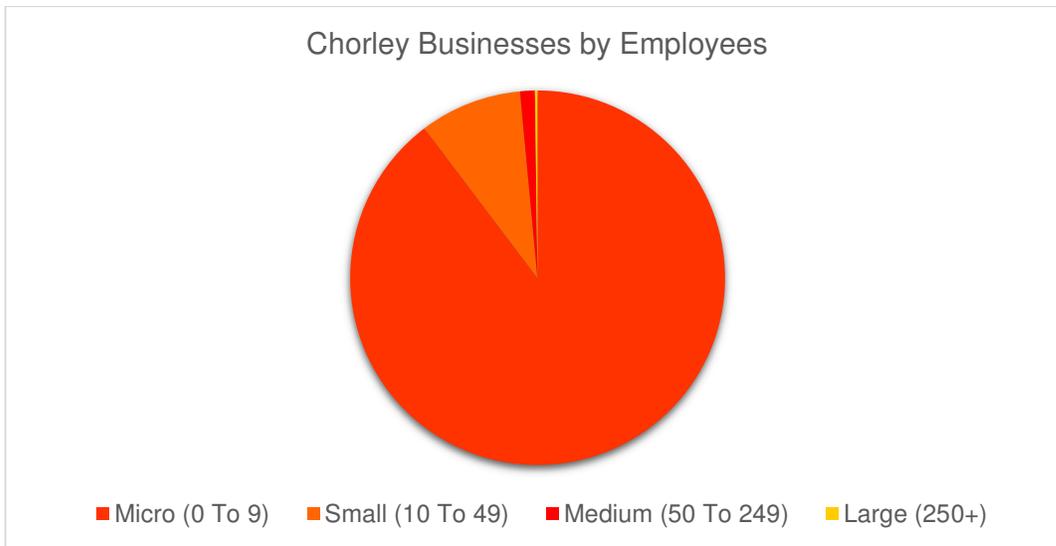
**Size of business by turnover/number of employees**

The majority of enterprises (overall businesses) and local units (individual work sites) in Chorley are micro businesses with 0-9 employees, and there are only 10 enterprises and 15 local units with a large employee base of over 250 employees. This mirrors regional trends as shown in the table below:

	Chorley	North West
Enterprises		
Micro (0 To 9)	4,175	241,185
Small (10 To 49)	410	24,345

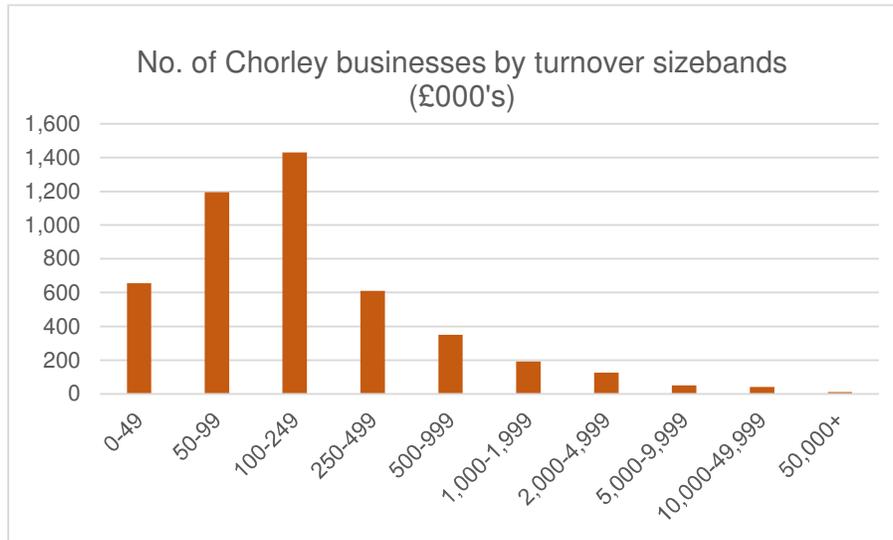
Medium (50 To 249)	60	4,375
Large (250+)	10	1,040
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,655</b>	<b>270,945</b>
<b>Local Units</b>		
Micro (0 To 9)	4,445	267,380
Small (10 To 49)	645	41,760
Medium (50 To 249)	100	8,930
Large (250+)	15	1,345
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>319,420</b>

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2021



Chorley closely follows regional and national trends in relation to the percentages of enterprises within each employment size band, however, the borough does have a significantly smaller percentage of enterprises with over 250 employees at just 0.21% of all businesses in comparison to 0.38% in the North West and 0.39% across England.

Chorley also mirrors national trends in relation to size of businesses by turnover. The largest number of businesses fall within the £100,000-£249,000 turnover range at 1,430 enterprises, followed by £50,000-£99,000 at 1,195.

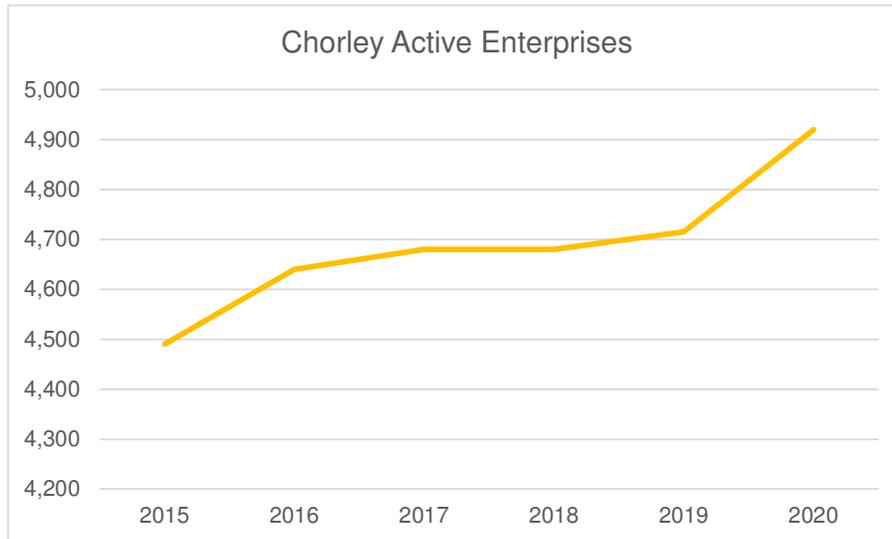


Turnover Size Bands (£000's)										
	0-49	50-99	100-249	250-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	2,000-4,999	5,000-9,999	10,000-49,999	50,000+
ENGLAND	366,820	539,075	785,825	307,945	176,295	100,320	70,045	26,970	24,550	8,120
NORTH WEST	40,880	63,645	86,465	34,380	19,720	11,290	7,915	3,075	2,730	845
Chorley	655	1,195	1,430	610	350	190	125	50	40	10

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2021

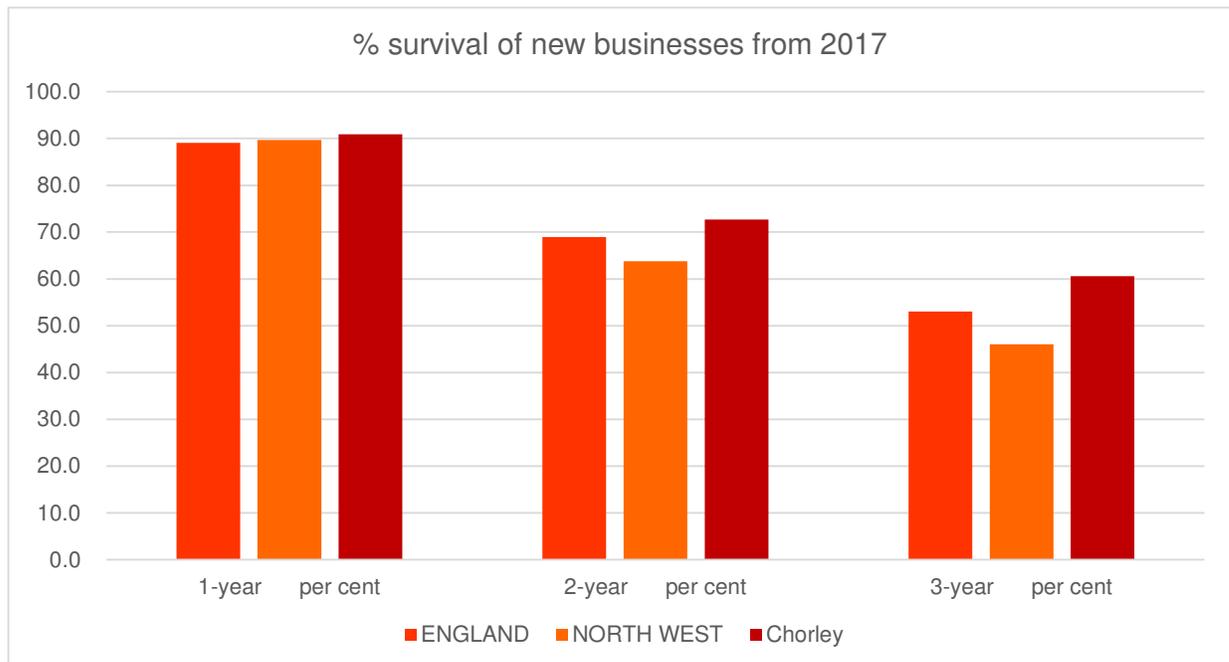
**Business growth**

Chorley has seen positive growth in enterprises from 4360 in 2019 to 4655 in 2022. This is a 6.77% increase compared to 1.69% for the North West and 1.55% nationally



Business demography (ONS) 2020

Chorley has a large number of new enterprises established each year with an average of 543 per year from 2015-2020. The borough also has a higher than average survival rate of new businesses, which suggests that whilst there may be slower growth in the number of active businesses in Chorley in comparison to national and regional levels, the enterprises which are established are more likely to survive with 90.0% of new businesses still active after 1 year and 60.6% after 3 years.



Business demography (ONS) 2021

Figures indicate that growth in businesses, particularly for micro and small enterprises, has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic in Chorley, with an increase of 160 enterprises with an employee size band of 0-4 between March 2020 and March 2021.

<b>No. of enterprises per employee size band</b>	<b>0-4</b>	<b>5-9</b>	<b>10-19</b>	<b>20-49</b>	<b>50-99</b>	<b>100-249</b>	<b>250+</b>
2021	3,615	560	280	130	35	25	10
2020	3,455	505	255	120	45	25	10
2019	3,390	505	260	130	40	25	10
2018	3,400	500	240	130	45	25	10

*Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2018-2021*

Furthermore, business ‘births’ per year from 2019-2020 increased by 60 for Chorley (an increase of 11.76%,) whereas new businesses across England decreased by 33,560 (an overall decrease of 10.27%.)

The Office for National Statistics identifies high growth enterprises by considering all enterprises which have an average annualised growth greater than 20% per annum over a three-year period by either number of employees or turnover. This excludes micro-businesses and only considers enterprises with over 10 employees to prevent skewing of data. Chorley demonstrates similar patterns for high growth enterprises in comparison to national and regional figures, with the largest number of high growth enterprises falling within 2016, 2017 and 2018 and reduced numbers in 2019 and 2020.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>ENGLAND</b>	10,650	11,910	11,535	12,225	11,070	10,620
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	1,280	1,400	1,380	1,445	1,325	1,300
Chorley	20	30	25	25	15	15

*Business demography (ONS) 2020*

From 2016 to 2020, Chorley had the 5<sup>th</sup> highest average number of high growth enterprises out of the 12 Lancashire district authorities with an average of 22 per year.

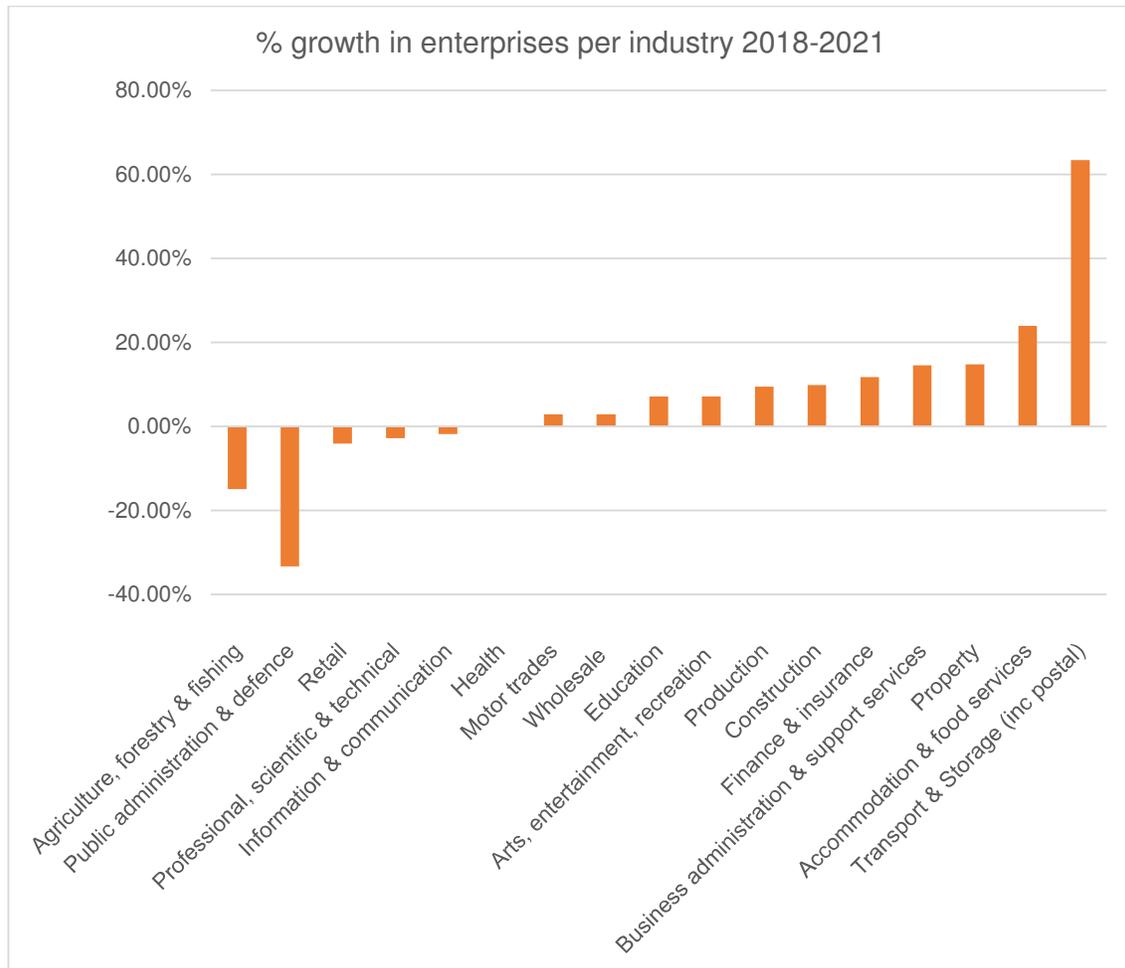
<b>District Authority</b>	<b>Average number of high growth enterprises 2016-2020</b>
Rossendale	12
Wyre	13
Ribble Valley	14
Burnley	17
Fylde	17
Hyndburn	18
Pendle	18
<b>Chorley</b>	<b>22</b>
West Lancashire	24
Lancaster	25
South Ribble	25
Preston	28

*Business demography (ONS) 2020*

**Growth sectors**

From 2018-2021, the number of enterprises per industry have remained relatively stable across Chorley. There has been the largest percentage increase in transport and storage industries at 63.4% which could reflect increased demands as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic with a greater need for transportation and delivery services during lockdown periods. There have also been significant increases in the accommodation and food services sector at 23.91%.

The largest decreases in numbers of enterprises have been for the public administration and defence sector which has decreased from 15 to 10 enterprises, agriculture, forestry and fishing which is down 14.89% and retail down 4 %. Professional, scientific and technical enterprises have also decreased by 2.82% despite having the largest total number of enterprises in Chorley.



Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2021

	<b>% growth in enterprises 2018-2021</b>	<b>Number of enterprises 2018</b>	<b>Number of enterprises 2021</b>
<b>Agriculture, forestry &amp; fishing</b>	-14.89%	235	200
<b>Public administration &amp; defence</b>	-33.33%	15	10
<b>Retail</b>	-4.05%	370	355
<b>Professional, scientific &amp; technical</b>	-2.82%	710	690
<b>Information &amp; communication</b>	-1.82%	275	270
<b>Health</b>	0.00%	175	175
<b>Motor trades</b>	2.86%	175	180
<b>Wholesale</b>	2.94%	170	175
<b>Education</b>	7.14%	70	75
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation</b>	7.14%	280	300
<b>Production</b>	9.43%	265	290
<b>Construction</b>	9.84%	610	670
<b>Finance &amp; insurance</b>	11.76%	85	95
<b>Business administration &amp; support services</b>	14.49%	345	395
<b>Property</b>	14.81%	135	155
<b>Accommodation &amp; food services</b>	23.91%	230	285
<b>Transport &amp; Storage (inc postal)</b>	63.41%	205	335

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) 2021

## **Policy Development**

### Central Lancashire Local Plan

A new Local Plan for the 3 Authorities of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble is being prepared to cover the period to 2036. The Local Plan will provide a robust strategy to attract new investment whilst continuing to protect the unique characteristics of the area, to deliver sustainable development. A key challenge of the Local Plan is to maximise the land available for employment while balancing the requirement for housing provision. The Central Lancashire Employment Land Study Update 2022 identified employment land needs of 76.34 ha to 2038. Against that need Chorley Borough has a realistic employment land supply of 56.28 ha, mostly comprising allocations in the Adopted Local Plan. This shows that Chorley has an undersupply of 20.06 ha against its needs to 2038. To meet projected demand, Chorley needs to protect its existing supply and identify additional employment land in other locations.

### Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The Lancashire LSIP is operating as one of eight Trailblazers led by the local Chambers of Commerce. The process aimed to engage with a wide range of employers and gain an understanding of the skills supply issues employers across different sectors are struggling with. Following a review and evidence gathering, the LSIP identifies key improvements for future skills provision including: clear points of contact for employers, clear dialogue with employers to inform course design, skills provider flexibility to respond to emerging needs, early engagement with young people and reskilling initiatives. The report concludes with a 'roadmap for change' to be delivered collaboratively with regional partners.

### Levelling Up

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out the government's approach to rebalancing opportunities across the UK through the redistribution of government powers and funding. The White Paper includes new detail on the approach to devolution, guidance on a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and underpinning policy, monitoring and metrics.

The Levelling Up approach is based around 12 'missions' to be achieved by 2030. These missions are based on four areas around boosting productivity and living standards by the private sector; improving public services; restoring community and local belonging; and empowering local leaders. Chorley has been allocated £4,212,901 over a three year period up to 2024/25 to be delivered in line with a government approved local investment plan.

## **Key trends/ future skills demand**

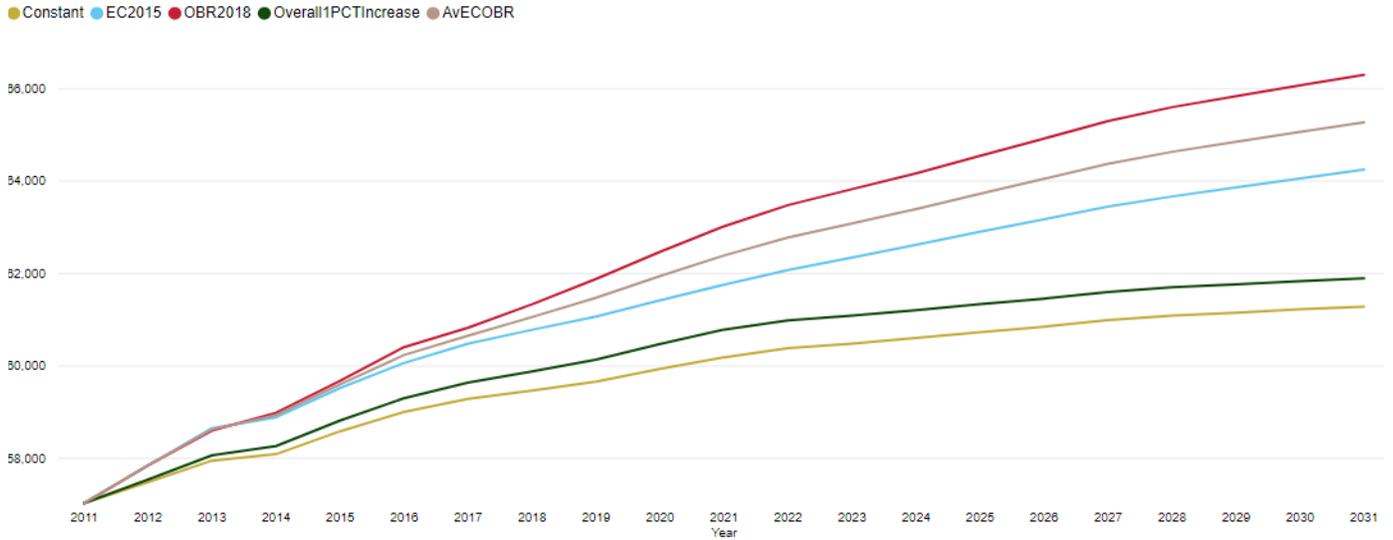
### Lancashire sectors and impact of Covid-19

Across Lancashire, there are several key sectors of growth and future opportunity. There are four universities across the county with a student population of over 55,000 which, alongside local colleges, produce the largest source of STEM graduates in the UK. The region also holds the greatest concentration of aerospace production in the UK, 85,000 specialists in manufacturing and engineering, and 400 creative and digital businesses.

It will be important to consider the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on these industries given changing population behaviours and economic shifts which may impact on demand and supply chains. Similarly, there is an above average percentage of employees in the food and drink industries, with 12,000 people across the county which may be more vulnerable to economic challenges, alongside a higher than average rate of self-employment.

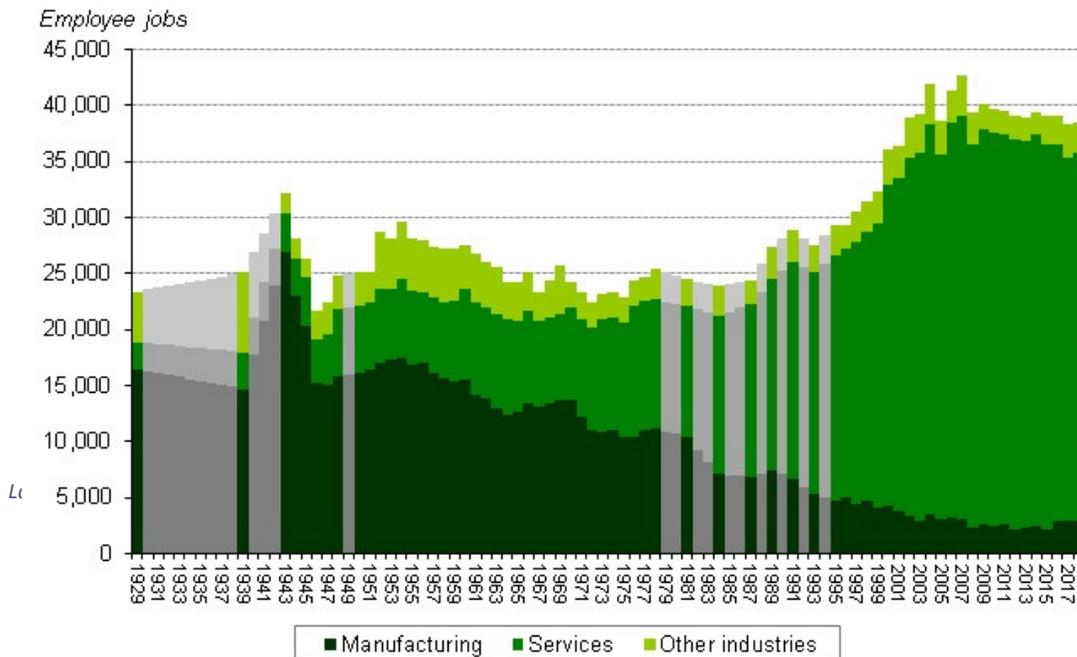
Increasing employee numbers

Across Chorley more specifically, there has been a continued growth in employee numbers above national averages, which could be impacted by the corresponding growth in working age populations for the borough. Projections made prior to the Covid-19 pandemic indicate an increase in the working-age labour force over the next 10 years, making Chorley the only local authority in Lancashire which indicates an increase across all six of the models of projection measured by Lancashire Insight:



Lancashire Insight: Labour Force Projections (Lancashire County Council) 2019

The following graph from Lancashire Insight demonstrates how employee jobs have increased over time and how the make-up of job industries has changed with a decrease in manufacturing jobs and the majority of jobs in service industries.



Place of residence in comparison to place of work

Another key trend is that there is a significant number of employees who live in Chorley but work for businesses in other towns or cities, with the 2011 Census indicating that only 39.1% of people ages 16+ both living and working in the authority. This could be partly due to there being less jobs available within Chorley, with a job density per resident of 0.63 in 2020 in comparison to 0.82 across the North West. However, this could also be due to residents commuting to other areas for higher paying roles, with average earnings for those who reside in Chorley of £29,276 per annum in comparison to those whose place of work is in Chorley of £23,320 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics, 2021). This could mean that well qualified employees are seeking work outside of the borough, with the ONS Annual Population Survey showing that in 2021 44.8% of residents in Chorley held an NVQ4 and above in comparison to 38.5% across the North West.

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## Appendix A – Impact Assessment (IA)

<b>Name of the project, policy, service, or strategy:</b>	Chorley Council Economic Strategy 2022		
<b>Responsible officer:</b>	Victoria Willett (Director Change and Delivery)		
<b>Service Lead:</b>	Victoria Willett (Director Change and Delivery)		
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	09.09.22	<b>Date of review:</b>	



WORKING TOGETHER



# Introduction

## Overview

### What is an Impact Assessment?

The Impact Assessment is a tool to ensure that any policy, project, strategy, or service is assessed to consider any positive or negative impacts for all our residents with regards to equalities, health and sustainability. It is important that this is done in a timely manner and ideally it should precede the start of the project, policy or strategy concerned at Chorley Council or South Ribble Borough Council.

### Who is the Impact Assessment for?

The responsibility of conducting the Impact Assessment is with the leading officer of the policy that is being assessed, with service leads responsible for the final sign off of the assessment. Once complete and signed off, the Impact Assessments are submitted to Performance and Partnerships, who are responsible for storing, monitoring, and ensuring the quality of the assessments. The assessment tool covers both Chorley and South Ribble Borough Council.

### Why do we need to do Impact Assessments?

As Councils, we are committed as community leaders, service providers, and employers. Therefore, we will work to ensure that everybody is afforded equality of opportunity and good life chances. The Impact Assessment is a tool we use to ensure that we fulfil these commitments and thus meet our legal duties.

## Instructions

### Quick steps for completion

Follow the quick steps below when completing the Impact Assessment:

**1. Sections:** There are three sections to the Impact Assessment. These include:

- Equality impact: the impact on the nine equality strands, which include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. See the **Equality Framework**.
- Health and environmental impact: the impact on health and wellbeing as well as the environment.

- Reputational impact: the impact on the Councils' reputation and our ability to deliver our key priorities. Reference should be made to the Corporate Strategies.

**2. Rating and evidence:** Each section has a number of questions that should be given a rating and evidence given for why the rating has been selected. This allows us to quantify the impact. The rating key is outlined below:

Code	Description
P	Positive impact
N	Negative impact
NI	Neutral impact

**3. Actions:** Once a rating is given, actions should be identified to mitigate any negative impacts or maximise any positive impacts of the policy, project, or strategy that is being assessed.

**4. Sign off:** Once the assessment is completed, sign off is required by a Service Lead.

**5. Submit:** Once signed off, the Impact Assessment should be sent to the Performance and Partnerships Team, who will store the assessment securely and check for quality.

**6. Follow up:** Actions should be implemented and changes should be made to the policy, project, or strategy that has been assessed, with follow ups conducted annually to monitor progress.

## Information and Support

### Contact details

To submit your completed Impact Assessment or for guidance and support, please contact Performance and Partnerships at [performance@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:performance@chorley.gov.uk) or [performance@southribble.gov.uk](mailto:performance@southribble.gov.uk)

## Equality Impact

Area for consideration	P	N	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity have upon:</b>					
Those of different ages?	✓			The Strategy will help to support career pathways for all by working with local education providers and employers to connect the curriculum to key work skills and offering entry level schemes for key skills and sectors. This is likely to have a particular impact on younger people, with the strategies delivery to be aligned with local education partners.	No further action required
Those with physical or mental disability?			✓	The Strategy will further support access to work for groups with additional requirements through enhanced employability support.	
Those who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment?			✓	No impact	
Those who are pregnant or are parents?			✓	No impact	
Those of different races?			✓	No impact	
Those of different religions or beliefs?			✓	No impact	

Those of different sexes?			✓	No impact	
Those of different sexual orientations?			✓	No impact	
Those who are married or in a civil partnership?			✓	No impact	
Socio-economic equality or social cohesion?	✓			The Strategy identifies opportunities to work with partners to take a more targeted approach to identifying and supporting key groups in the borough to access work and other economic opportunities. This includes enhanced employability support to target specific areas and geographies and using schemes with employers and private businesses to invest in those furthest away from employment.	No further action required

## Health, Social and Environmental Impact

Area for consideration	P	N	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity have upon:</b>					
Enabling residents to start well (pre-birth to 19)? <i>(Please consider childhood obesity, vulnerable families, and pregnancy care)</i>	✓			The Strategy will help to support career pathways for young people by working with local education providers and employers to connect the curriculum to key work skills.	No further action required
Enabling residents to live well (16 to 75 years)? <i>(Please consider mental and physical wellbeing, living environment, healthy lifestyles, and improving outcomes)</i>	✓			The Strategy will support residents of a working age to live well by supporting the development of opportunities for businesses and high-quality employment. Strong local businesses will also help to provide greater services to all residents across the borough.	No further action required
Enabling residents to age well (over 65 years)? <i>(Please consider social isolation, living independently, dementia, and supporting carers and families)</i>	✓			The Strategy recognises the role that all residents play in ensuring a successful economy through their contributions either in paid employment, volunteering or informal caring.	No further action required
Natural environment? <i>(Please consider impact on habitation, ecosystems, and biodiversity)</i>	✓			The Strategy aims to support the development of 'green skills', offer incentives for jobs that meet the demand for sustainability, and support businesses to operate more sustainably. The Council will make sustainable use of resources when developing space for businesses.	No further action required

<p>Air quality and pollution? <i>(Please consider impact on climate change, waste generation, and health)</i></p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>The Strategy aims to support the development of 'green skills', offer incentives for jobs that meet the demand for sustainability, and support businesses to operate more sustainably. The Council will make sustainable use of resources when developing space for businesses and support green upgrades to commercial premises.</p>	<p>No further action required</p>
<p>Natural resources? <i>(Please consider the use of materials and as well as transport methods and their sustainability)</i></p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>The Strategy aims to support the development of 'green skills', offer incentives for jobs that meet the demand for sustainability, and support businesses to operate more sustainably. The Council will make sustainable use of resources when developing space for businesses and support green upgrades to commercial premises.</p>	<p>No further action required</p>
<p>Rurality? <i>(Please consider the impact of those who live in rural communities, their access to services/activities)</i></p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>The Strategy identifies both the importance of developing the Town Centre and economic centres outside of Chorley, with assistance to be continued for independent traders with a hyper local focus.</p>	<p>No further action required.</p>

## Strategic Impact

Area for consideration	P	N	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity make upon:</b>					
The Councils' reputation? <i>(Please consider impact on trust, confidence, our role as community leaders, and providing value for money)</i>	✓			The Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on the Council's reputation by responding to the economic needs of the borough and bringing forward actions to support local businesses and residents.	No further action required
Our ability to deliver the Corporate Strategy? <i>(Please refer to the Strategic Objectives)</i>	✓			The Strategy directly related to the Corporate Strategy priority 'a strong local economic' and associated action to 'refresh the Economic Development Strategy'	No further action required

## Impact Assessment Action Plan

If any further actions were identified through the Impact Assessment, then they should be listed in the table below:

Action	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Governance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Council	Tuesday, 27 September 2022

### Polling Station Review 2022

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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#### Purpose of the Report

- To inform members on the outcome of the recent Polling Station Review 2022 survey for information.

#### Recommendations to Council

- That there will be no change to polling station locations, except for St Chad’s parish hall which will be used instead of a portacabin, which returns to the original approved recommendation at the council meeting held on 16 November 2021.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- Repairs have been made to the parish hall, which is now fit for purpose.

#### Other options considered and rejected

- To continue the use a portacabin as a polling station located on St Chad’s parish hall car park at future elections. It was considered the use of the parish hall would be preferable due to accessibility and cost.

#### Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
Clean, safe and healthy communities	<b>An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area</b>

**Background to the report**

- 6. Each year it is customary for the Returning Officer to review the success of the polling stations used at that year’s election.
- 7. To gain a greater understanding on the suitability of polling stations used, members of the council were invited to complete a short survey between 1 July and 29 July 2022. The survey consisted of questions about the suitability of premises for the use as a polling station and the ability of the polling station staff employed. In total eleven members responded to the survey.

**Result of polling station survey**

- 8. A summary of responses are detailed in the table below -

Polling Station	Comments	Response
<p>Temporary Mobile, St Chad’s parish Hall (Chorley North East Ward)</p>	<p>The use of a temporary mobile polling station instead of the parish hall was not considered appropriate.</p> <p>Although the parish hall is preferable to the use of a portacabin on this site, there is a steep slope to the entrance which could have implications for those voters with mobility issues.</p>	<p>At the council meeting on 16 November 2021, members approved the recommendation to use the parish hall as a polling station. However, shortly after the meeting, it was brought to the RO’s attention that due to the parish hall not being used during the covid-19 pandemic, internal problem with the building were undetected. As a result, there was a delay in the treatment works which caused extensive damage, leaving the building unsafe to use. As a temporary measure, it was decided that a portacabin should be situated on the parish hall car park.</p> <p>At the time of writing this report it is understood that the parish hall is once again available for hire. As such the polling station will be located in the building for future elections.</p> <p>Next to the parish hall there is a flat piece of land that is large enough to have cars parked on, as well as space for vehicles to turnround. Restrictions to cars parking in this area will be limited to those with mobility/disability issues. While able bodied voters will be encouraged to park on the main car park.</p> <p>There is also a ramp leading into the parish hall to allow easy access.</p>

	<p>It was also reported that the parish priest at St Chad's parish hall was unaware that the car park was being used to site a portacabin to be used as a polling station at the election on 5 May 2022.</p>	<p>During the covid-19 pandemic, Liverpool Dioceses completed a review of their buildings. Councils were informed that during this time, booking of their premises needed to be made with the head-office instead of locally.</p> <p>The RO's staff did try to contact the parish priest out of courtesy to inform him about the arrangements without success. Since the election on 5 May contact has been made with the parish priest and a dialogue has already commenced for the hire of the parish hall for future elections.</p>
<p>St George's CE Primary School (Chorley South East &amp; Heath Charnock Ward)</p>	<p>The signage for this polling station was considered lacking at its entrance.</p> <p>It was suggested that additional, larger, more weather-proof signage should be displayed on Carr Lane.</p>	<p>The RO has updated his records to include additional, appropriate polling station signage to be displayed on Carr Lane for future elections.</p>
<p>St George's Church (Chorley North West)</p>	<p>Move voters from this venue to St Mary's Social Club.</p>	<p>Following the 2019 local government boundary review, voters who attended the polling stations of Chorley Methodist church, St George's church and St Mary's social club fell within the same borough ward and county divisional boundaries. As such the requirement to have three polling stations to serve this area was no longer required. Particularly as the number of electors attending St Mary's social club and St George's church was small due to the high number of voters opting to vote by post.</p> <p>At the council meeting on 16 November 2021, members approved recommendations that voters allocated to St Mary's social club would instead attend Chorley Methodist church, which remove the requirement to use St Mary's social club. There were no changes to voter arrangements at St George's church.</p> <p>As St George's church has been</p>

		<p>successfully used as a polling station for some time without any concerns being raised, the RO felt that there were insufficient reasons put forward to move voters from St George’s church to St Mary’s social club at this time.</p>
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- 9. Other polling stations highlighted in the survey all received positive feedback to their suitability for polling station use. These included Whittle-le-Woods village hall (Buckshaw and Whittle ward); Astley Village community centre, St Joseph’s parish centre and St Peter’s CE primary school (Chorley North and Astley ward); Clayton Brook village hall (Clayton East, Brindle and Hoghton ward); The Fields community centre (Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard ward); Buttermere community centre (Chorley South West ward) and Duke Street primary school (Chorley South East and Heath Charnock ward).

**Climate change and air quality**

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

**Equality and diversity**

- 11. There are no implications in this report to the polling stations, except for St Chad’s parish hall. Following a site visit to St Chad’s parish hall, the RO is confident that the venue is sufficiently accessible to those voters with limited mobility and disabilities.

**Risk**

- 12. Changes to polling station arrangements are kept to a minimum to avoid voter confusion, which may cause reputational damage to the council. To assist voters the name and address of the polling station they should report to is included on their poll card. Polling station information, including maps can also be found on the council’s website.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

- 13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

- 14. There are no comments.

**Background documents**

Polling Station Review [Polling Station Review Report Template Aug 2021.pdf](#)

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Cathryn Filbin (Electoral Services Team Leader)	cathryn.filbin@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515123	30/08/2022

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