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# ANNUAL REPORT

2020/21

**Chorley**  
Council

# Welcome to Chorley Council's annual report

This report presents Chorley Council's annual report for 2020/21. It provides an overview of activities and achievements over the last year, outlining the key steps that we have taken to ensure that we continue to deliver our vision and priorities as outlined below:

## Our vision:

A proactive community leader, supporting the borough and all its residents whether in rural or urban areas, to reach their full potential through working in partnership to deliver services that achieve the best outcomes for local people and protect vulnerable people



**Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all**



**A strong local economy**



**Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities**



**An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area**



## Council Leader's Introduction

From Councillor Alistair Bradley,  
Executive Leader and Executive Member  
for Economic Development and Public  
Service Reform

There have been an extraordinary number of achievements that have contributed to delivering better outcomes for residents in Chorley over the past twelve months, which I am proud to present in this report.

We have progressed our ambition to plant a tree for every resident by 2025, with over 24,000 trees planted across the borough in this year alone. This is supporting us to be more sustainable and promote green issues as a community leader.

We have also created more than 360 future jobs in the borough through our Business Grant programme as well as our Digital Creative scheme. This will help to move our economy forward and benefit our residents by providing job opportunities.

Over the next year, we will be focusing on some key developments that will continue to boost economic growth and accommodate the ambitions of our communities and businesses. This includes creating employment land at Alker Lane as well as redeveloping the former bus depot site off Eaves Lane.

In addition, we will continue to work closely with our partners, communities, and business in order to build a better Chorley as we move on from the crisis.



## Overview of Resources

From Councillor Peter Wilson, Deputy  
Executive Leader, Executive Member  
(Resources)

I am pleased to report that, despite the unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic, we have continued to deliver our key corporate projects as well as provide high quality services for our customers.

For example, we delivered the first phase of the extension of shared services with South Ribble Borough Council. This ambitious move will provide more resilience, opportunities to improve services, and better value for money for our residents.

We have also continued to provide tailored support for those at need during the crisis. This includes for local business, such as through our webinars and Business Engagement service, as well as local residents, such as through our holiday hunger programme and support delivered by our Communities Team.

Going forward, we will continue to be ambitious with what we would like to achieve as we strive to continuously improve outcomes for people across borough. This will ensure that Chorley remains a great place to live, work, and visit.

“There have been unprecedented challenges over 2020 and 2021. Despite this, we have continued to be ambitious with what we wanted to achieve and have ensured that it has been delivered”

# In a typical week in 2020/21 we.....

Assisted  
**3,510** residents  
with service requests via email,  
phone or online



Planted  
**472** trees  
across the borough.



Recycled  
**339** tonnes  
of household waste



Benefited  
**23** residents  
with opportunities created by the  
Communities Team

Emptied  
**76,210** wheelie bins



Created  
**7** projected jobs  
through council support or  
intervention

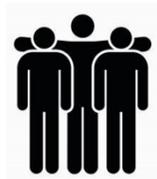


Prevented  
**12** people  
from potentially becoming homeless



Completed  
**7** handy person jobs  
across Chorley

Supported  
**3** community groups  
to improve



Engaged with  
**58** businesses  
providing support and advice



## COVID-19 Community Response

In 2020, we launched the 'Chorley Together' programme to help support the most vulnerable in the borough through the on-going COVID-19 crisis. This has been a collective effort from the council, key organisations and the local community, who have come together to help those who are most vulnerable. This includes key partners such as Chorley Buddies, Pauline's Angels, Inspire Youth Zone and NHS responders. We had many volunteers from the community come forward, such as doctors and nurses, lorry drivers, businesses, staff who have been furloughed, and those who have retired to volunteer. Alongside this work, we have continued to deliver and improve our normal services whilst protecting residents.

The key statistics below to outline the response work and support delivered to support the community over 2020/21:



**992** calls processed via the crisis support line



**93** people assisted with shopping through our Supermarket Scheme

**973** households supported through the Chorley Together programme



**242** cases assessed for financial support

**516** food parcels given out

**47** Volunteers involved in delivering support

**142** homeless people provided with weekly support and provisions

**139** clinically vulnerable people supported

**50** community groups supported the community response

**BUSINESS SUPPORT**

**54** business webinars delivered

**£40m** worth of Covid-19 grants processed

**7,779** payments dispensed to businesses

**1,831** businesses supported



## Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all

- Residents who take pride in where they live and their achievements
- Residents who are all able to take an active part in their local and wider community
- Easy access to high quality public services, both face to face and online



### OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2020/21:

- **105** community groups supported to improve
- **17** community groups awarded with grants, amounting to **5k**.
- **47** people signposted to volunteer opportunities



In February 2021, we launched our new council website. This was developed through user testing to map customer journeys and capture user experiences, ensuring that new website is customer focused. The website now features audio visual tools to support those with additional needs, which can read aloud, translate, magnify, and change the colour of text on each page, as well as a revised user interface. This project has ensured that our online services are easy to use and accessible, enhancing the customer experience.



We delivered initiatives focusing on food poverty and holiday hunger to ensure that all residents have access to food and can equally live healthy lives. Through making funding available for community groups to

apply for, we have provided over **300** families with support. In addition to this, we have distributed supermarket vouchers to families in need.



We launched our Activity Buddies Programme in partnership with Chorley Buddies in 2020, training volunteers to connect with and support vulnerable residents with long term health conditions and those experiencing social isolation in order to build their confidence as well as involve them in the community.



We began the project to renovate of Astley Hall, which will deliver vital improvements to maintain the structural integrity and safety of the building as well as transform the visitor journey and improve access.

This will ensure a sustainable long-term future for the facility, with associated benefits for tourism, and improved accessibility. Works delivered over 2020/21 include the removal of the old render from the hall, restoration of the seventeenth century brick facade, and the creation of new windows, which have been crafted by local contractors.



Small Community Grants were awarded to voluntary community and faith sector groups from across the borough, including to Chorley Panthers RLFC for Covid safety and sanitation equipment, to the 1<sup>st</sup> Clayton Brook Scout Group for materials for activities and financial support for struggling families, as well as to Friends for You to fund afternoon teas for those who are socially isolated. This will ensure that we continue to have thriving local communities and community-based groups.

## Clean safe and healthy communities



- Clean and safe streets
- Reduced health inequalities
- A wide range of quality recreational activities
- High quality, affordable and suitable housing
- High quality play areas, parks, and open spaces in both urban and rural locations



### OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2020/21

- **365** handy person jobs undertaken
- **621** people prevented from being homeless through council intervention and support
- **42.8%** of household waste recycled



We published a new webpage to present up-to-date information, advice, and support services for tenants at risk of homelessness. This aims to increase awareness of tenant rights in the private sector and ensure that residents have access to essential legal information regarding their tenancies. This forms part of our proactive approach to preventing homelessness across the borough, with our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy scheduled to be implemented over 2021/22.



Throughout 2020/21, improvements have been made to **19** play, open space, and pitches across the borough to help create safer and healthier communities. This includes the instillation of lighting, benches, and information boards at Great Knowley, construction of a sports pavilion and grass pitch at the Westway Sports Campus, improvements to the pond and

paths around Eaves Green, and instillation of new play equipment at the Broom Close Play Area.



We installed over **30** wildflower meadows as part of our drive to improve biodiversity, tackle climate change, and enhance our green spaces. These have added splash of colour across the borough and have provided invaluable food and habitats for insects and pollinators.



Work to transform Tatton Recreation Ground and the former bus depot site off Eaves Lane was commenced in 2020 and will include high quality, affordable and suitable housing, a GP surgery, a pharmacy, a café, and a community centre when completed. This will provide vital facilities for residents and improve health provision and open spaces, supporting wellbeing outcomes and wider benefits such as community cohesion and reduced anti-social behaviour.



Following consultation with local residents, we installed perennial wildflower turf and **6** cherry trees at the former Grafton Street Play Area. This has transformed the space into an urban oasis and will provide an essential green space for people living in the area, with associated benefits to health and mental wellbeing.



We launched our Winter Warmth Programme in conjunction with our Affordable Warmth Grant to support those effected by fuel poverty. As part of this, we have been publishing brochure packs providing advice, guidance, and tips on how to keep warm, healthy and happy during the winter months. This has helped to tackle health inequalities by keeping vulnerable people informed on how to access services and tackle winter related health issues.

## A strong local economy

- A vibrant town centre and villages
- A strong and expanding business sector across the whole of the borough
- Access to high quality employment and education opportunities across the borough



### OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2020/21

- **£40 million** administered in Covid-19 business support grants
- **366** projected jobs created through council support or intervention.
- **1,831** business supported by the Council



To support local business, we launched an online directory called 'Shop Local', which will present and promote the services of local businesses. The businesses range from both food and commercial retailers in addition to other services, such as pet supplies and leisure. This will support people to shop locally and sustainably.



We commenced improvements to the historic Covered Market as part of our aim to ensure that the town centre remains a vibrant commercial hub by transforming the visitor experience and facilities. Work completed over 2020/21 includes the designing of a new striking entrance, installation of

new signage as well as the redecoration of the exterior of the building. This will preserve the long term future of the market.



We have been delivering training and support webinars for sectors in distress, including sessions on financial health checks for businesses impacted by the pandemic. This has included over **54** webinars, which have been attended by **643** attendees. This seeks to stem the impact of the pandemic on local business and provide key support and advice.



We launched a new museum gift shop and information centre for Astley Hall in December 2020, which has enriched the visitor experience and further promoted the destination as a great place to visit. The shop, which is located in the Hall's old coach house, provides a range of

locally sourced and sustainable gifts that are inspired by the history of the Hall and the surrounding area.



We have administered financial support to business in the area across the year. This has included over **£40** million in Covid-19 government grant schemes, amounting to **7,779** payments to businesses. We have also been supporting the government Kickstart Scheme, which has provided funding to employers to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds who are at risk of long term unemployment based on our referrals.



We helped to create more than **366** projected jobs through our Business Grant programme as well as our Digital Creative Scheme. These programmes aim to support start-ups, entrepreneurs and existing businesses to ensure a thriving and diverse local economy that can accommodate the ambitions of residents.

## An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

- A council that consults and engages with residents
- An ambitious council that continually strives to improve
- Cohesive communities in and around our rural and urban areas

### OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2020/21

- **15%** increase in the number of service requests received online.
- **3%** reduction in customer dissatisfaction with the services received in a five-year period.
- **9%** improvement in the average time to process new benefits claims and change events to **3.37** days

We have continued to fund and protect bus routes across the borough to support services that were at risk of withdrawal enabling our residents continued access to vital services such as the hospital and town centre.

As part of our commitment tackle climate change since our declaration of a Climate Emergency back in November 2019, we have been delivering our Green Agenda. operating more sustainably as a community leader.

This has included the planting of **24,536** trees as well initial mapping of our carbon footprint. This is supporting our ambition of operating more sustainably as a community leader.

We have continued to transform our ways of working, aiming to do more for less, whilst retaining a high level of service. Our transformation programme has seen budget efficiency savings and increased income totalling **£680k**.

We successfully delivered the first phase of the extension of shared services between ourselves and South Ribble Borough Council. This has involved the sharing services such as Legal, Democratic Scrutiny and Electoral Services, Transformation

and Partnerships, as well as Communications and Visitor Economy. This will reduce costs of operating services across both councils whilst strengthening resilience and creating more development opportunities both for staff and for the council as an organisation.

The multi-agency group (PIVOT) have managed **120** cases in 2020/21, with **42%** cases involving mental health issues as main reason for support and further **18%** of cases involving issues with housing. This has provide joined up support for vulnerable adults, children, and families with complex needs, achieving better outcomes for wellbeing whilst ensuring more sustainable outcomes for individuals and services. This in turn is building more resilient communities.

The council has continued to invest in improvements right across the borough that have helped deliver better long term outcomes for residents in 2020/21.



## An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area



**£13.5k** invested in the Green Agenda programme to improve our environmental performance and operate sustainably. This includes supporting the delivery our Tree Planting Strategy.



**£16k** invested in the Strawberry Fields Digital Hub as part of further upgrades to the state of the art facility.



## A strong local economy



**£260k** spent on improvements around the town centre to ensure it remains a vibrant and attractive commercial hub.



**£15k** invested in the Covered Market to preserve it as a historic focal point of the borough.



**£630k** allocated to the Alker Lane development, which will deliver vital office and light industrial spaces to accommodate the ambitions of local businesses and support job creation.



## Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



**£800k** spent on home adaptations to enable residents to live independently for longer.



**£1.5m** invested in the Westway sports hub development. The site will include football pitches and an athletics track, providing access to a first-class sports facility in Chorley.



## Clean safe and healthy communities



**£500k** invested in Leisure Centres to improve health and wellbeing facilities across the borough.



**£620k** allocated to purchasing affordable homes to ensure access to high quality housing.



**£1.2m** spent towards the project to build Whittle Surgery, which will greatly improvement health capacity and provision in the area.



**£280k** invested in play and open spaces across the borough.

## Future Challenges

Looking ahead, the council will need to balance anticipated increased demand for services as communities emerge from Covid-19 and recovery begins against the potential for retraction in public spending. However, there will also be opportunities to be better than before, as we learn from a community focussed response and build new relationships with residents and wider partners to achieve sustainable services for the future.

**Over the next year we will need to continue to consider:**

### RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

To meet the changing needs of our borough within the financial constraints the council faces, it is vital that we continue to improve as an organisation and transform the way that we work.

As well as looking at our processes and systems, developing our workforce and investing in new technology, we will further extend our shared services with South Ribble to build in additional capacity and resilience.

### PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The recent pandemic has seen us need to work with our partners more closely than ever before, sharing resources and making better use of technology. We must build on this learning to shape our future approach to partnership working so that we can continue to deliver sustainable public services.

As a council we will work through our public service reform partnership and build on our relationship with South Ribble Council to do even more across the two boroughs.

### UNCERTAINTY

Financial and political uncertainty at a local and national level, including the impact of COVID-19 and Brexit, will mean that we need to plan for a range of scenarios so that we can sustain high quality services for our residents.

We will continue to work towards a balanced budget, delivering the Medium Term Financial Strategy and driving forward our transformation programme to ensure that the organisation is in a strong position to respond to future challenges.

### COVID-19 RECOVERY

Over the next 12 months, there will be a focus on delivering our recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and coming out of lockdown.

The council has a clear plan to sustain support for the most vulnerable residents, get council services back on track, protect local businesses and deliver the projects and improvements that matter most to our residents. We will support employability and work proactively to return to local economic growth.

## Looking ahead to 2021/22

Looking forward to 2021/22 we will continue to focus on delivering positive outcomes for residents against our corporate priorities, this will include the following:



### Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all

**Undertake renovation works at Astley Hall:** Conducting vital conservation improvements and transforming the visitor experience.

**Deliver year one of the Digital Strategy:** Developing our use of technology and data to deliver efficient and accessible digital services for our customers.

**Implement the community resilience locality action plans:** Delivering targeted and bespoke support to develop self-sufficient and healthier communities, taking into account the challenges of the pandemic.



### A strong local economy

**Deliver employment land at Alker Lane:** Constructing a mixture of light industrial units and office spaces to accommodate the ambitions of local businesses.

**Deliver improvements to the town centre:** Enhancing the retail and visitor experience of the town centre to ensure it remains a vibrant commercial hub.

**Bring forward site at Bengal Street:** Finalising site plans and securing planning permission ahead of the site's future development.



### Clean safe and healthy communities

**Deliver the extra care scheme and community facilities at Tatton:** Constructing vital health and wellbeing infrastructure for local residents that will support improved outcomes.

**Improve play and community spaces across the borough:** Providing high quality facilities for residents and improving access to open space, sports and recreation.

**Implement the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan:** Strengthening mental health, substance misuse, and budgeting support as well as providing support for those in the private rental sector.



### An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

**Deliver phase 2 of Shared Services:** Creating efficient and value for money shared services between South Ribble Borough Council and ourselves.

**Extend the borough wide programme of improvements to street services:** Enhancing the borough as a great place to live, work and visit.

**Work with our partners to deliver sustainable public services:** Developing intelligence led services that address wider wellbeing factors and improve outcomes for residents.

**Deliver a project to support Chorley Council's commitment to the green agenda:** Improving our environmental performance in line with the declaration of a Climate Emergency.

## Appendix A

### Trade Union Facilities time for 2020/21

The trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force on 1 April 2017. These regulations place a legislative requirement on relevant public sector employers to collate and publish, on an annual basis a range of data on the amount and cost of facility time within their organisation. The facility time data for Chorley Borough Council for the period of 2020/21 is shown below. We have included the tables to illustrate the information required, and it is published alongside the Annual Report for the period 2020/21.

#### Table 1 - Relevant Union Officials

What was the total number of your employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period?

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
8	8

#### Table 2 - Percentage of time spent on facility time

How many of your employees who were relevant union officials employed during the relevant period spent a) 0%, b) 1%-50%, c) 51%-99% or d) 100% of their working hours on facility time?

Percentage of time	Number of Employees
0%	0
1-50%	8
51-99%	0
100%	0

#### Table 3 - Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Provide the figures requested in the first column of the table below to determine the percentage of your total pay bill spent on paying employees who were relevant union officials for facility time during the relevant period.

	Figures
Provide the total cost of facility time (including oncosts)	£1409.13
Provide the total pay bill	£10254427
Provide the percentage of the total bill spent on facilities time	0.01

#### Table 4 - Paid trade union activities

As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, how many hours were spent by employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period on paid trade union activities?

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of the total paid facilities time hours	0
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