

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive (Introduced by the Leader)	Council	19 July 2022

Chorley Council Annual Report 2021/22

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

1. To provide a summary of the Council's achievements during 2021/22 as well as highlight the challenges and opportunities facing the Council in 2022/23 and beyond.

Recommendations to Council

2. That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure the effective monitoring of Council performance and delivery.

Other options considered and rejected

4. No other options have been considered or rejected.

Executive summary

5. Overall performance against the Corporate Strategy in 2021/22 was good, with significant progress achieved against the Council's key priorities. These include:
 - 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.
6. Despite the challenging and uncertain period due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other emerging challenges in the economy, the Council has continued to deliver against the Corporate Strategy whilst providing support to local residents and businesses that have been impacted.

7. 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.
8. The Annual Report for 2021/22 is available at **Appendix A**, which includes the Trade Union Facilities time for 2021/22, as required by regulation from 2017.

Corporate priorities

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

Background to the report

10. The annual report is a key mechanism for presenting information about the Council's performance for residents, partners, and key stakeholders. The report provides information regarding the key activities that have been delivered over the past twelve months to meet our vision and corporate priorities.

Summary of the report

11. The Annual Report for 2021/22 is available at Appendix A. The key headlines from the report include:

Residents Survey

12. In 2021 a resident survey was completed to understand what communities think about the way in which the council delivers services, life in Chorley, support following the pandemic, and the priorities for the council including the response to climate change.
13. Despite challenging conditions and the impact of the pandemic, the overall findings from the survey show that in general residents' satisfaction has increased compared to the previous survey in 2017. When benchmarked against the Local Government Association polling, Chorley Council performed above the average in the three main areas of satisfaction, the area as a place to live, the way in which the council runs things and providing value for money.
14. Overall, 1,279 responses were received, which have been weighted to ensure the survey results are representative of the borough's population. The headline findings include:
 - 73% of residents are satisfied overall with the way the Council runs things,
 - 86% said that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live,
 - 82% are satisfied with parks and green spaces,
 - 83% said that they are satisfied with waste and recycling services.

Delivering the Corporate Strategy Priorities

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

15. Major works to Astley Hall were completed to ensure that it remains a prime local asset for residents and excellent attraction for visitors. A programme of improvements and restoration totalling over £1.8m has seen the vital renovation works completed on time with its official reopening having taken place in May 2022. The works included the restoration of the seventeenth century brick facade, windows, front door and important conservation work. The improved visitor experience incorporates a new accessible entrance, interpretation boards and visitor shop. The works have ensured that the hall remains a focal point that residents can take pride in, with associated benefits for tourism and the local economy such as the recent G7 speakers conference at which the Hall took centre stage.
16. More action has been delivered to support residents following the pandemic through the Community Resilience Action Plans. Key initiatives have helped to tackle food poverty and holiday hunger including a Holiday Activity Food Programme which was delivered in collaboration with local partners such as the Youth Zone and the Chorley Schools Partnership. In summer 2021, 1,160 young people were supported through the programme, with an additional 1,082 supported over Winter. This has ensured that vulnerable residents have access to food and holiday club provision.
17. The Chorley Flower Show returned following its postponement during the pandemic. The event was the first flower show to be hosted in Chorley since 2019 and was visited by 13,000 people. The popular event promotes Chorley as a great place to live, work, and visit as well as encouraging residents to get involved in their community.
18. Digital technology has been enhanced as part of ensuring council services are accessible, both online and face to face. New systems have been implemented to improve the way that planning documents are managed and processed through a secure, seamless process. Across the council, services have been reviewed to identify where workflows can be automated to drive efficiency and provide a better customer experience.

Clean, safe, and healthy communities

19. Improvements to 22 play and open spaces across the borough have contributed to clean, safe and healthy facilities for communities across the borough. These improvements range from the installation of the Flood Management Scheme at the Carr Brook Linear Park, new play equipment at Jubilee Way and Longfield Avenue Play areas, as well as new football pitches at Kem Mill Lane and Twin lakes Playing Fields. This will ensure that all residents have fit-for-purpose outdoor facilities and green spaces, with associated benefits to health and wellbeing.
20. The Westway Sports Hub was completed and opened as part of a £2.7 million investment to develop the facility, which features a 3G pitch, athletics track and sports pavilion. The venue will facilitate a wide range of recreational activities, supporting out residents to live active and healthy lives. Since its opening in August 2021, the hub

has been utilised by community groups such as Disability Football, the School Sports Partnership, and the Fire Service.

21. Communities will benefit from better facilities, including the new £3.9 million Whittle GP surgery which opened in March 2022. With joint investment from NHS England and the Council, the new surgery provides modern, fit for purpose accommodation for a local GP. The facility boasts ten consulting rooms, two treatment rooms, and is carbon neutral including features such as solar panels and electric vehicle charging points. This larger facility will ensure that local services can accommodate growing patient demand ensuring residents have easy access to high quality health care.
22. Delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan has strengthened working relationships with housing providers to create new pathways into supported accommodation for those with mental health and substance use issues that are at risk of homelessness. A new webpage and additional communication highlight tenant rights as part of our strategy to prevent residents being left without a home. We have also been providing direct support to young people aged 16-25 seeking homelessness support, processing and administering their cases to ensure direct help.
23. The Council continues to provide affordable and suitable housing that can support people to remain independent. This year the Council purchased nine bungalows, which were refurbished with modern appliances and safety equipment. These have been let to over 55s, providing safe and secure housing and improving the provision of bungalows in the borough. Together with projects such as Tatton Gardens, this will ensure that elderly people can live independently for longer, remain socially connected and overtime reduce the demand and intensity on local services.

A strong local economy

24. Exciting improvements to the town centre ensure it remains a vibrant commercial hub that continues to attract visitors locally and further afield. Works completed include the renovation of the historic covered market, which now features a striking new entrance as well as updated paintwork, canopies, and signage. This will ensure its long-term future as a commercial focal point in the town that supports independent traders. The newly installed toilets at the market also won 'Loo of the Year' for the seventh year running, highlighting our commitment to ensure that the town centre is accessible for its users. Other ongoing improvement works include the clearing of the former bingo hall site, which has been cleared ahead of future development.
25. Construction of the Strawberry Meadows development off Alker Lane has progressed, with the foundation and framework now complete. Once finished, the development will provide essential commercial and industrial buildings to accommodate businesses, supporting economic growth in the borough, promoting inward investment, and facilitating job creation. The £11.1m site will feature a mix of office and light industrial space and will include small 500sqft units through to larger 5,000sqft units. The development builds on earlier investment projects delivered by the Council, such as the Strawberry Fields Digital Hub that was completed in 2019. Strawberry Meadows is scheduled to complete later in 2022.

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

26. Phase 2 of shared services with South Ribble Borough Council has been completed, generating savings for the Council totalling £273k over 2021/22. The second phase involved the sharing of ICT and Customer Services, building on the success of Phase

1 (Legal, Democratic Services and Electoral Services, Transformation and Partnerships, as well as Communications and Visitor Economy). The programme of shared services enables the council to invest in front line services and build its resilience by sharing skills and expertise.

27. In September 2021, the former Public Service Reform Board amalgamated with the South Ribble Partnership to form a single cross borough collective, focused on driving forward sustainable and effective public services. The Partnership developed its strategy and an action plan to drive change and affect strategic decision making on key areas of the economy, how we share and better use data and intelligence and a model for locality working. Early success was had in hosting the Economic Summit in November 2021 at Strawberry Fields where over 100 stakeholders discussed the future of the local economy to inform future economic strategy.
28. Environmental ambitions were progressed including the planting of over 34,000 trees throughout the borough as part of our commitment to plant a tree for every resident by 2025. The tree giveaway was publicised on our new climate change webpage and social media channels as ways to promote green activities and projects to further encourage engagement with the environment. Initial carbon calculations have been conducted on council operations and assets, which will inform the creation of robust and targeted interventions going forward.

Council spending

29. The Council has invested in improvements across the borough, which have helped to secure better long-term outcomes for residents in 2021/22. Investments that respond to resident priorities include:
 - £3.9m invested in the development of Whittle Surgery,
 - £1.8m in the creation of the Westway Sports Hub,
 - £320k spent to support our ambitious events programme, such as the Chorley Flower Show, Chorley Live, and Christmas festivities.
30. Funding has also been allocated towards delivering Council owned affordable housing whilst £1.6m has been secured from Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding in order to deliver initiatives to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Future challenges 2022/23

31. Looking ahead to 2022/23, we have a number of challenges that we will face as a local authority. As public spending continues to face pressure and the potential for impact across the economy it is essential that the Council continues to have a clear plan to deliver support for those who need it most while maintaining high quality public services.
32. The Corporate Strategy for 2022/23, sets out our ambitions and priorities for the year ahead including the completion of major development projects such as the Strawberry Meadows employment site and the Tatton Gardens Extra Care Hub, which will provide essential facilities for both residents and businesses whilst building vital local assets. We will also be ambitious in our actions to address climate change, focusing on the goal of planting a tree for every resident by 2025 and improving the environmental performance of council assets. Improving the customer experience will remain a critical focus, seeking to transform services so that they are easy to access, high quality and value for money.

Climate change and air quality

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

Equality and diversity

34. There are several projects over 2021/22 that have contributed towards improving equality outcomes for residents across the borough, which are presented in the Annual Report. Examples include improved access to health services through the completion of the new Whittle Surgery and the support for vulnerable families delivered through food and holiday club provision as part of the Holiday Activity Food Programme.

Risk

35. Each corporate project delivered in 2021/22 had a risk register established on the GRACE risk management system to ensure the effective identification, monitoring, and mitigation of risks to the Corporate Strategy and its delivery. Risks to service level projects were also captured through service and business plan risk registers.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

36. There are no financial implications of this report however the information within this report directly influences the financial performance of the Council.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

37. This is a report for information and noting. There are no direct legal implications arising.

Background documents

38. Relevant background documents are linked below:
- [Chorley Council Annual Report 2020/21](#),
 - [Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22](#),
 - [Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22](#),
 - [Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22](#),
 - [Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22](#).

Appendices

39. The following documents are included as appendices:
- Appendix A – Annual Report 2021/22.

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
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