

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Change and Delivery)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Thursday, 3 October 2024

Corporate Strategy 24/25 Refresh Update

Is this report confidential?	No
Is this decision key?	Yes
Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards

Purpose of the Report

- To update the Committee on the refresh of the Corporate Strategy 2024/2025.

Recommendations

- That the update of the Corporate Strategy 24/25 be reviewed.

Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure that the Corporate Strategy reflects the needs of the borough and that council resources are directed towards key priorities.
- At the Portfolio Exchange Meeting on 11th July 2024, Members agreed that the four key priorities of the Corporate Strategy 2023/2024 (Appendix A) should be retained. It was noted that they have only been in place since late 2022, and that they are broad enough to remain relevant as the coming years' priorities.
- It was agreed that many of the commitments identified under each of the key themes also remain relevant and will be retained
- It was agreed that the corporate strategy projects will be refreshed to reflect our ongoing commitment to deliver key pieces of work for our residents and communities. The projects could be a continuation of current projects whereby they need to move to the next phases or completely new projects that have been identified.
- At a further Portfolio Exchange meeting on 12 September, Executive Cabinet members were asked to consider proposed projects and developments within their portfolios.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

Background to the report

9. The Corporate Strategy is fundamental in guiding better outcomes for the borough. Successful delivery requires the council to take an intelligence led approach to strategic planning, taking into consideration emerging economic and political changes. As such the strategy is developed with thought for national, regional, local challenges and opportunities as set out in Appendix C. The Council is an ambitious and dynamic organisation and will adapt and respond to the needs of the borough as a community leader, maintaining a commitment to excellent services.

10. New Labour Government – 5 main missions

- Sustained economic growth – business, jobs and new homes
- Clean and green economy – energy, fuel poverty, green jobs, water
- Cracking down on crime and anti-social behaviour
- Focus on young people education and childcare
- Fit for the future healthcare provision

11. Local Government sector

- **Devolution of power across England:**

The Levelling Up White Paper set out the previous government's approach to rebalancing opportunities across the UK through the redistribution of government powers and funding. The White Paper included new details 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.

The Lancashire 2050 Framework set out the challenges and opportunities facing the county in eight key areas – including the economy, housing and transport. The council needs to ensure that it is well-positioned to secure opportunities for the borough and minimise any risks, particularly in any devolution discussions.

The deal that was agreed between the county council, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen and the previous government is going to be finalised. That means that a Combined County Authority will be created for Lancashire. Districts won't be full members of the combined authority but will instead be represented by two leaders who may get some limited voting rights, but that's not certain yet. The Leaders at both councils had been advocating for a new deal that would have included a mayor and the full involvement of all 15 councils in Lancashire. That isn't going to now happen, although the government have asked Lancashire to

look at options around governance models and a mayor and come forward with proposals.

○ **Increased demand for services:**

As public spending continues to face demand pressures and the potential for impact across the economy it is essential that the Council has a robust plan to ensure sustainable services in future. It will also be important to leverage recent investment in key assets to add value to the community and local economy. Many of the current corporate initiatives and projects provide support for residents in response to the cost of living crisis and will continue into future years including home energy efficiency and family support. Coordinated communications will be vital to ensure that benefits are highlighted to residents, raising the profile of the council, and increasing overall satisfaction.

○ **Financial position:**

The current financial outlook is still uncertain. Following a single year settlement in 2024/25 it appears likely that once again this will be the case for 2025/26 with the possibility of greater certainty in the years to follow. With that greater certainty there is some risk that the Council could face reductions in financial settlements if a redistribution of funds occurs. As noted in the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Council in February 2024 there remain risks around the future of business rates, the fair funding review and New Homes Bonus. The 2024/25 pay award is not yet confirmed and remains a potential pressure on Council budgets although provision was made for a significant increase. Overall while the Council remains financially stable there are budget gaps across the medium term meaning the Council must continue to prepare for the risks identified.

○ **Sustainability:**

The previous government published its Net Zero Strategy setting out how the UK will transition to a net zero economy by 2050. The main policy areas of the plan include:

1. Working with the grain of consumer choice: no one will be required to rip out their existing boiler, for example.
2. Ensuring the biggest polluters pay the most for the transition: through fair carbon pricing.
3. Ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected through government support: including energy bill discounts and efficiency upgrades.
4. Working with business to continue developing deep cost reductions in low carbon tech: through support for the latest state of the art kit to bring down costs for consumers and deliver benefits for businesses.

The Net Zero Strategy was successfully challenged by green activists in court arguing that the climate change strategy did not spell out how carbon emissions cuts would be achieved. A further policy document, Powering up Britain, was released in March 2023 and sets out how the government intends to enhance the country's energy security, and deliver the net zero commitments. Academics and green groups remain critical that the policy measures outlined will not make enough impact to meet the net zero ambitions.

This Council has its own ambitions to reach net zero by 2030 and we will have to continue to work with local partners and central government to consider any

future policy frameworks and funding opportunities, alongside the role of local government in delivering new green infrastructure and supporting green jobs.

12. Local insight

○ **Borough profile:**

Over the past decade, the population size has increased by 9.9% from around 107,200 in 2011 to 117,800 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and the North West (5.2%). Chorley has seen the second largest population increase in the North West. In 2021, Chorley ranked 201st for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, moving up 14 places in a decade. It is estimated that between 2014 and 2043 the population of Chorley will increase by 17.8%, the highest predicted growth rate by some way in Lancashire.

In 2021, Chorley is the 15th least densely populated of the North West 39 local authority areas. The number of households is projected to increase by a substantial 24.4% between 2018 and 2043, this is the second largest growth rate in Lancashire and exceeds the predicted percentage growth in households in England of 16.2%.

In terms of working age population, those aged 15 to 64 years in Chorley account for 62.6% of the population, which is a 1% increase from the 61.6% recorded in 2020 and is higher than Lancashire (60.7%) in 2020. In 2021, there has been an increase of 34.7% in people aged 65 years and over, and an increase of 10.2% in children aged under 15 years.

○ **Performance:**

Since the last index in 2015 all other areas of Lancashire have seen an increase in deprivation except Chorley and West Lancashire which have become relatively less deprived. The change in percentage is an increase of 3.5% from 2015 to 2019. Chorley has a decile rating of 7 which is higher than the previous figure of 6 in 2004/2007/2015. The Chorley Ward (E01024968) is ranked in Lancashire's 12 area's 5 least deprived wards.

The number of Chorley Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the bottom 20% of most deprived areas in England is eight however Chorley has 0 in the bottom 1% and 5% and only three within the bottom 10%. However Chorley does have 20 LSOAs in the top 20% of least deprived areas as well as seven in the top 10% and three in the top 5%.

Life expectancy in the borough is lower than the national average, with life expectancy in Chorley for men at 79.3 and women 82.6 compared to compared to 78.7 for men and 82.8 for woman in England. Life expectancy in Chorley is also higher than the regional average which is 77.2 for men and 81.3 for women.

○ **Residents Survey:**

A residents' satisfaction survey was undertaken between January and February 2024 to understand the views of residents about the local area, life in Chorley, the impact and support needed to recover from the Cost of Living crisis and input into the delivery of the Council's ambitions around climate change.

The residents' survey tracked similar questions used in previously surveys conducted by the Council in 2021 ,2017, 2015 and 2013. The survey achieved 1,432 responses, which have been weighted to ensure the results are representative of the borough population.

The questionnaire asked residents to provide their views of the local area, the council, and the services that the council provides. Of the eight corporate indicators, two are performing worse than target but within the 5% tolerance and six are performing worse than target and outside the 5% tolerance. A breakdown of the results for these indicators can be found at Appendix B and comparisons have been made with the results of the last resident survey which was conducted in 2021.

The overall findings from the survey shows that in general residents' satisfaction has decreased compared to the previous period in which the survey was conducted in 2021. Nationally there has been a decline in satisfaction, reflecting general discontent across the country.

When benchmarked against other councils, the comparisons indicate that Chorley is performing better when it comes to resident satisfaction. Three core areas have been identified by the Local Government Association (LGA) as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of helping councils understand the extent to which their residents are satisfied with their performance. The comparison shows that Chorley Council is performing better than the average in all three core areas.

These questions from latest poll (February 2024) from the Local Government Association (LGA) of resident satisfaction with councils are outlined in the table below. This round of polling saw some of the lowest/joint lowest scores since polling began in areas such as satisfaction with the way local council(s) run things and the extent to which local council(s) act on the concerns of local residents.

Residents' Survey 2023/24 (Including 'Don't Know/No Opinion' responses)			LGA 'Polling'*
LG Inform	Question	Chorley 2023/24	February 2024
Core A	Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are your local area as a place to live?	82%	74%
Core B	Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?	66%	53%
Core C	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council provides value for money?	49%	40%

* The Local Government Association (LGA) poll conducted in February 2024 took a representative random sample of 1,000 British adults (aged 18 or over).

13. The refresh has been conducted in collaboration with Members, employees, SLT and SMT. Stakeholders have been engaged at the following events:
 - Chorley Portfolio Exchange – 11 July 2024
 - SMT – 4 Sept 2024
 - Employee Engagement/Development session (at Chorley) – 10 Sept 2024
 - Chorley Portfolio Exchange – 12 Sept 2024
 - Employee Engagement Group – 23 Sept 2024

- SLT – 24 Sept 2024
- SMT – 25 Sept 2024

14. Stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout the process detailed below.

- Drafting of strategies and indicators (September - October)
- Indicator identification and target setting
- Finalising strategies (November)
- Budget planning (December – February)
- Budget consultation (January)

15. Proposed Project Areas

- Housing & Homelessness
 - Access to affordable housing and accommodation
 - Housing standards

- Environment
 - Net Zero actions
 - Food waste collections

- Economy
 - Astley Hall developments
 - Visitor economy
 - Jobs & Skills
 - Business grants
 - Local Plan
 - Woodlands

- Communities
 - Provision for disabled residents
 - Leisure facilities
 - VCFSE development
 - Anti-social behaviour

Climate change and air quality

16. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the council's carbon emissions and the wider climate emergency and sustainability targets of the council.

17. In particular the report impacts on the following activities:

- a. net carbon zero by 2030,
- b. energy use / renewable energy sources
- c. waste and the use of single use plastics,
- d. sustainable forms of transport,
- e. air quality,
- f. flooding risks,
- g. green areas and biodiversity.

Equality and diversity

18. Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for all corporate strategy projects before they commence.

Risk

19. There are no implications at this stage but risk assessments will be completed for all corporate strategy projects before they commence.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

20. The Corporate Strategy directly links in to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Council as part of budget setting annually. The impact of specific projects will be reflected in the budgets required to be set both in respect of increases and efficiencies.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

21. This section is to be completed by the Monitoring Officer (or by the Deputy Monitoring Officer if not available) and will include any legal implications for the Council.

Background documents




Appendix A – Chorley Council Corporate Strategy 2023/2024









Appendix B - Performance of Chorley Residents' Survey 2023/24 measures

Appendix C – Chorley Big Issues 2024

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Appendix B: Performance of the Residents' Survey measures

 Performance is better than target
  Worse than target but within threshold
  Worse than target, outside threshold

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	2021 Results	2023/24 Results		Trend
Percentage of people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	Bigger is Better	85%	86%	82%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of people who feel they cannot influence decision making in their local area*	Smaller is Better	25%	30%	33%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population satisfied with parks and open spaces	Bigger is Better	80%	82%	75%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population feeling safe during the day	Bigger is Better	90%	92%	89%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population feeling safe at night	Bigger is Better	70%	64%	60%		Worse than 2021
Satisfaction with street cleanliness	Bigger is Better	70%	67%	61%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of residents satisfied with the way the Council runs things	Bigger is Better	70%	73%	66%		Worse than 2021
Percentage of residents who feel that Chorley Council provide value for money	Bigger is Better	60%	56%	49%		Worse than 2021

*Reflected in the answers provided to those responding on the council acts on the concerns of local residents.