

# Your Council's Performance

Chorley Council Annual Report  
2010/11



# Going the extra mile to make Chorley Smile



## Welcome to Chorley Council's Annual Report for 2010/11



**Councillor Peter Goldsworthy**  
Leader,  
Chorley Council

Welcome to Chorley Council's Annual Report for 2010/11. I'm pleased to report that over the last year, the council has been improving performance in our key services while making savings and freezing council tax.

Chorley's streets are cleaner as a result of our additional investment last year; crime and anti-social behaviour are down; and people feel safer at night. Resident satisfaction has improved in key areas such as waste collection, recycling and keeping land clear of litter; and we've delivered record levels of affordable housing. As a result, 89 per cent of residents are satisfied with Chorley as a place to live, and satisfaction with your council has increased from 51 to 63 per cent – some of the highest levels in the country.

We aim to provide you with value for money and have made these improvements while achieving £747,000 of savings through being more innovative and doing things differently. Examples include streamlining back office services and becoming more efficient to redirect resources into the delivery of key priorities identified by residents, such as cleaner streets and improving the town centre.

The coming years will be tough for the council. We still need to save a further £1 million a year, over the next three years, and we're striving to achieve this with minimal impact on you by doing more for less. The good news is that we're bucking the national trend in 2011/12, like we did last year, by maintaining a high level of services for local people while still making savings.

This year, we have continued to listen and act upon the views of all our residents by holding a borough-wide consultation on the budget and surveying 1,100 residents to help us identify your priorities and improve our services. We're also becoming more transparent by releasing details of all our spending over £500.

We will be saving a further £1.2 million in 2011/12 and have frozen our element of council tax for the third time in five years. This means that our services will cost the average household £3.45 a week. This year we've focused on protecting frontline services, such as street cleaning, PCSOs and support for the voluntary sector. We're also investing an additional £266,000 to improve the town centre.

*Peter Goldsworthy*

Councillor Peter Goldsworthy  
Leader Of Chorley Council



Continuing to provide quality services and things that matter to you

## About us

Chorley Council delivers a range of services to residents, visitors and businesses across the borough of Chorley. For example, we keep the streets clean; collect your rubbish and recycling; as well as providing leisure facilities like All Seasons and Astley Hall.

We are an ambitious, forward thinking council and have exciting plans for the future. At the heart of everything we do is putting our customers – the people of Chorley – first.

Our corporate plan is based on the things you've told us are important and gives us a clear direction and focus, helping us to deliver what local people want.

It sets out our vision for Chorley and how we will go about achieving it. We've structured it around four themes and for each one set out how we want Chorley to look and feel in the future. These are underpinned by measures and key projects.

## Our vision

Chorley will smile as the most attractive, caring and vibrant place in the North West to live, work, play, invest and visit. People will be healthy and happy in safe communities where they can achieve their ambitions.

The council will be a consistently top performing organisation that delivers excellent value for money.

## Our key themes

### You and Your Family:

Strong family support;  
Education and jobs;  
Being healthy

### You and Your Community:

Pride in quality homes and clean neighbourhoods; Safe, Respectful communities; Quality community Services and spaces

### You and Chorley:

Vibrant local economy; Thriving town centre, Local attractions and villages

### You and Your Council:

A Council that is a consistently top performing organisation and delivers excellent value for money

## You and Your Family



### **YOU SAID:**

More should be done to help people lead healthy lifestyles.

### **WE DID:**

Provide free health checks for local residents by setting up the One Stop Health Shop in the town centre.

In 2010/2011, our priorities included reducing health inequalities, particularly focusing on reducing rates of teenage pregnancy and alcohol-related harm.

### **Reducing teenage pregnancy**

In 2010/11, we continued to invest with our partners in two local projects – Girls Aloud and Boyz Own – to help reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy to 38.7 per 1,000 girls aged under 17 – which is lower than the Lancashire and North West averages. We will continue to focus on this issue in 2011/12.

### **Tackling Chorley's alcohol problem**

Chorley has one of the highest rates of alcohol-related harm in Lancashire, but our partnership projects in 2010/11 are helping to improve this. Provisional figures indicate that the rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions has decreased by two per cent. In comparison, the Lancashire average increased by five per cent. Chorley now has the sixth highest rate of alcohol-related admissions in Lancashire, compared to the second highest last year. We're not complacent about this and will focus continue our partnership work in 2011/12.

### **Reducing alcohol harm in young people**

Last year the 'Healthy Shotz' project delivered information about the long and short term damage alcohol can do and its consequences to 874 of Chorley's 13 to 15-year-olds.

The 'Smart Response' project used information held by the council and its partners to deliver street work and parent group work focussing on minimising alcohol and drug harm and increasing awareness of personal safety where its needed most. A total of 152 young people were engaged in street work, and 922 young people in targeted group work.



**YOU SAID:** Alcohol abuse and its consequences is a big issue in Chorley, particularly for younger residents.

**WE DID:** Invest in projects to reduce the harm alcohol can do to young people.



**YOU SAID:** Provide more free and subsidised activities for young people – 63 per cent of you told us this was important.

**WE DID:** Put on more Get Up and Go activities than ever before – more than 21,000 children and young people took part last year. Recreation and sport Get Up and Go and leisure centres costs 73p a week from your council tax bill.

## You and Your Community



### **YOU SAID:**

We want quality parks and open spaces.

### **WE DID:**

Invest in our parks. Three have attained prestigious Green Flag awards.

There have been some major improvements in this theme last year. Overall satisfaction with your local area as a place to live increased to 89.4 per cent in 2010/11, from 84 per cent in 2008 – one of the highest rates in the country. Campaigns like Chorley Smile and events like the Picnic in the Park and Holocaust Memorial Day are having an impact, with 84.7 per cent of people feeling that Chorley is a place where people get on well together.

### **Cleaner streets**

Keeping streets clean costs you around 33p of your council tax a week. Last year, we invested an extra £60,000 into manually cleaning areas our sweepers couldn't reach. In 2010/11, 96 per cent of streets inspected were clear of litter and 94 per cent were clear of detritus (leaves and dirt). This is compared with 90 per cent and 94 per cent in 2009/10. 99 per cent of streets don't have graffiti. Satisfaction with how the council keeps public land clear of litter has increased from 60 to 66 per cent, placing Chorley in the top 25 per cent of areas nationally.

### **Improving your recycling and refuse collection service**

We collected 5.4 million bins last year, which costs you about 54p a week from your council tax bill. Last year we helped you increase your recycling rate to 48.7 per cent and worked with the Lancashire Waste Partnership to make sure that 40 per cent of your previously landfilled waste is reused or recycled. We also reduced the number of missed bins from 99 per 100,000 collections in 2008 to 40 this year.

In 2008, satisfaction with recycling was 68 per cent and satisfaction with refuse collection was 67 per cent. Both are running at 80 per cent in 2010/11.

### **Improving our planning service**

Unfortunately we failed to hit our targets for planning processing last year, as a result of an increase in demand. For example 77% of smaller applications from householders were decided within 8 weeks, below our target of 92%. So we've examined our processes to improve performance in 2011/12.



**YOU SAID:** We need more affordable housing in Chorley.

**WE DID:** Deliver 173 additional affordable homes last year – 62 per cent more than in 2009/10.

### **Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour**

Last year, we worked in partnership with the police, funding PCSOs and CCTV to help bring down crime by 1.7 per cent compared with last year. Anti-social behaviour is down by 11.7 per cent and criminal damage is down by 15.4 per cent. 57 per cent of you feel safe when out at night – that's higher than two years ago when it was 51 per cent. Our services aimed at preventing crime and disorder costs the average household 20p a week in their council tax bill. While Chorley still remains a much safer place to live than the national average, burglary, assault, serious violent crime and robbery have increased. We will continue to work with our partners in 2011/12 to tackle these issues.

### **Increasing food safety in Chorley**

Last year, we worked with local business to improve food hygiene and introduce a 'scores on the doors' rating system. This has been a great success with no premises preparing or selling food achieving a zero out of five score.

# You and Chorley



## YOU SAID:

Reduce the number of empty shops in the town centre.

## WE DID:

Invest an extra £266,000 in making improvements in the town centre to attract new businesses, fill the empty shops and make the place look more attractive to bring in more people.

In 2010/11 our priorities included supporting new business start ups, encouraging major employers to re-locate to Chorley, supporting business in the difficult economic climate and increasing the number of affordable new homes in Chorley.

## Investment in the town centre

In March 2011, empty floorspace in the town centre was higher than our target of 7.5 per cent so we're investing £266,000 in 2011/12 to introduce:

- Grants for town centre shop front improvements
- Business advice and support for businesses
- Refurbishment grants and business rate subsidies to attract high quality independent traders into empty shops

Since the end of the year we have already seen an improvement in businesses opening up in the town centre. Vacant town centre floorspace is down from 8.2 per cent at the end of 2010/11 to 6.6 per cent in June 2012 and our additional investment is likely to have a further positive impact.

We've also trialled new-look gazebos, to be introduced this year, to make the Flat Iron market more attractive, reduce the time taken to set up stalls and disruption to car parking.

## Bringing major employers into Chorley

The Council have developed an Inward Investment package to help attract major employers, such as international health and hygiene giants Kimberly Clark, who moved to Chorley in early 2011, creating up to 140 jobs for local people.

## Securing jobs in Chorley

We have been working with Business Venture Group to provide start-up support to small

businesses in Chorley. Despite the difficult financial conditions, we supported 67 new business start-ups over the last year, creating 73 jobs. 95 per cent of new businesses are surviving after 12 months and 91 per cent after two years.

## Reducing unemployment

Our actions have helped lower levels of unemployment over the last year to below the rate when the recession began. In March 2011, the unemployment benefit claimant count had fallen to 2.5 per cent of the working age population, compared to 2.9 per cent in March 2010 and 3.3 per cent in March 2009.

Economic and community development costs the average household around 16p a week from their council tax bill.



**YOU SAID:** Don't increase the car parking charges.

**WE DID:** Freeze parking charges and absorb the rise in VAT.

# You and Your Council



## YOU SAID:

The cost of everything is going up, don't put up our council tax too.

## WE DID:

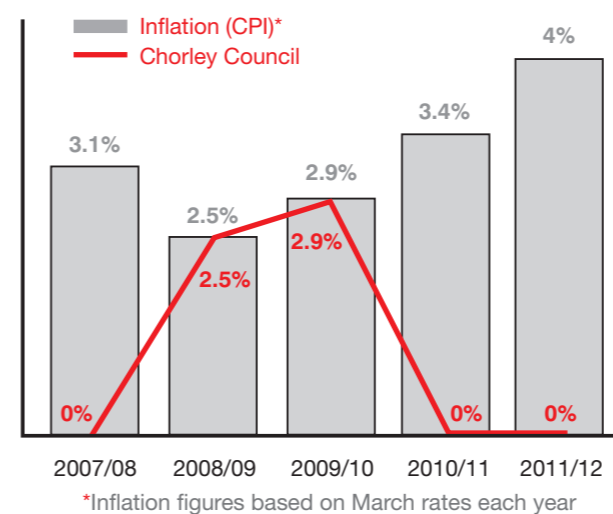
Freeze Chorley Council's share of council tax for the third time in five years.

We're working hard to reduce the cost of the services we provide without compromising on performance to try and give you more for less. Overall satisfaction with Chorley Council has improved from 51 per cent to 62.9 per cent – one of the highest rates in the country. Chorley has been recognised nationally by the Audit Commission for spending your money wisely. In 2010/11, we delivered £747,000 of savings and put in place further measures to save £1.197 million in 2011/12 to reduce our budget from £15.13 to £13.7 million while protecting front line services.

## Keeping council tax down

Our customers have consistently seen some of the lowest Council Tax increases in Lancashire while we've maintained high levels of performance. Over the last five years the average increase in the council's element of your council tax bill has been just over one per cent, less than half the national average change. This equates to an average increase of just £1.61 per year for a Band D home.

## Council Tax increases



## Making savings to invest in frontline services

Some of the ways we've been saving money over the last 12 months to keep our element of council tax low include:

- Restructuring our services to reduce the number of back office and managerial staff to reduce costs
- Delivering work for other organisations to generate income to fund services
- Improving our procurement

## Reducing sickness to get from more from staff

High levels of sickness absence cause problems in providing excellent services so we've worked hard on bringing sickness down. Last year, we lost just 6.9 days per employee – our lowest level of sickness on record.

## Motivated staff providing excellent services

In 2011, Chorley was voted the top council to work for in the Times Top 100 public sector organisations survey. Our results show that 86 per cent of staff believe the council provides a great service – one of the top scores in the country – and 98 per cent of residents were happy with the service they received from the council.



**YOU SAID:** We want to know how you're spending our council tax and business rates.

**WE DID:** Since Christmas 2010, we've increased our transparency by publishing a list of all spending transactions of more than £500 and the salary details of senior staff.



Going the  
**extra mile**  
to make  
**Chorley Smile**





This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515151 to access this service.

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ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپ کی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون

کیجئے: 01257 515823

