



Print Strategy 2024-2027

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Be Green, keep it on the screen



WORKING TOGETHER

Document History

Version

Name	Role	Review Date	Version
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Both councils have declared climate emergency pledging to work to make the Boroughs carbon neutral by 2030. It is therefore imperative that organisational changes are made, not only to champion the green agenda, but to demonstrate that our climate commitments are achievable.
- 1.2 The Chorley and South Ribble Council Joint Digital Strategy is now established to support virtual working. All employees are supplied with the most appropriate devices for their role; new multifunctional devices have been installed with 'Follow You' printing, 'Scan to Me' and scanning directly to the line of business application; a corporate virtual mail service has also been established to enable employees to send mail directly from wherever they are working. This also strengthens the Councils' business continuity arrangements.
- 1.3 This strategy defines Chorley and South Ribble Councils' Print Strategy 2024-2027.
- 1.4 The purpose of this print strategy is to support physical and behavioral changes for staff to enable a transition to more environmentally friendly practice. It also sets out clear parameters for communicating and sharing information with citizens including information sent by posted letter. The strategy will continue to support the wider use of digital technology to improve environmental performance.
- 1.5 Key principles and targets have been identified as well as the approach the councils will take to achieve those targets.

2. Key Principles

- 2.1 The overlying principle to the print strategy is to avoid printing and instead, develop 'on screen' solutions. This supports the Chorley and South Ribble Joint Digital Strategy where the councils have focused on becoming Digital First organisations in line with the councils' green commitments.
- 2.2 There are three further key principles behind this strategy.
 - to ensure a set standard and hierarchy for printing and mail
 - to maximise efficiency and minimize environmental impact
 - to reduce associate cost with printing and mail

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The definitions below concern specific terms and descriptions used in this strategy:
 - MFD – Multi-Functional Device capable of printing, copying and scanning
 - Mono – a print in black and white
 - Duplex – double-sided printing, print is produced on both sides of paper
 - Virtual Mail – a mailing solution that allows a user to send correspondence for print without physically needing to print or post it on premise.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This strategy applies to all permanent and temporary employees at both councils as well as volunteers, people on work placements and elected members.
- 4.2 This strategy is applicable to printing from all multi-functional devices and outbound postal mail sent by both councils.
- 4.3 It impacts, residents, customers, members, officers, businesses, and anyone receiving information from the council.
- 4.4 Exceptions include where there is a statutory or legal requirement to have a wet signature or printed format.

5. Background

- 5.1 There are several components that make up the cost of printing, including the cost of MFDs, paper, ink toner, energy costs as well as the cost of lost resource due to officer time spent printing.
- 5.2 A Gartner research study in 2017 estimated that the cost of printing one mono print in duplex was 6p per A4 sheet. The table below uses this estimate to estimate the total cost of printing at both councils in 2022-2023, based on the total number of A4 sheets procured.

2022-2023	Chorley	South Ribble
A4 sheets procured	156,250	375,000
Estimated print spend based on A4 sheets spend	£9,375	£22,500

- 5.3 For mailing, there are additional costs of envelopes, postage, as well as the cost of lost resource due to officer time spent mailing, depending on the postal methods selected.
- 5.4 There are currently several ways that services can send mail at the councils, including via virtual mail, using a supplier to collect onsite and taking items to the Post Office to send via Royal Mail. The table below shows the spend on mailing at both councils in 2022-2023

2022-2023	Chorley	South Ribble
Spend on mailing	£205,258.24	£167,624.12

6. Objectives

6.1 The strategy is based upon the following key objectives, where the councils will:

- **encourage officers and members to use a digital first approach** to printing where appropriate
- **substantially reduce the number of mail items** through a digital first direct communications approach to sending written correspondence
- **introduce printing and mailing hierarchy standards** for default items
- **minimise the handling and enveloping of mail** by rolling out the virtual mail supplier to all service areas

7. Strategy

The strategy is divided into several key elements. For each of these elements, the strategy will set out why the council intends to adopt the approach and what the council will do by 2027 to help understand how the strategy will be delivered.

7.1 Digital First Approach

Aim:

The preferred method of document viewing and storage is digital. Officers and members are encouraged to only print when digital methods are not available or appropriate.

To deliver this we will:

- consider alternatives before printing or photocopying, such as display documents on screen/by projection at meetings; use approved Council systems such as Microsoft Teams and SharePoint to collaborate with colleagues on documents, reading documents on screen using desktops/laptops/iPads; scan paper documents to share them digitally with those who need copies and use mod.gov application for all meetings including council committees.
- identify areas of unnecessary printing and produce a plan to manage this
- set an ambitious target of reducing print volumes by 20% per annum over the next 3 years.
- set predefined print quotas for all staff and members

7.2 Digital First Direct Communications

Aim

Digital methods of communication will be used when writing to customers, unless there is a statutory requirement to send correspondence by paper.

Customers will be encouraged to use digital platforms and receive digital correspondence, wherever possible.

Council Tax annual billing is an area that will use pilot campaigns for digital first correspondence as uptake data is readily available. The table below indicates the distribution of annual bills across both councils in 2023.

	Chorley	South Ribble
Annual bills sent by email	2,893	2,628
Annual bills sent by letter	56,446	51,845
Total bills sent	59,339	54,473
% bills sent electronically	4.9%	4.8%

To deliver this we will:

- in the first instance only send written correspondence via email using Microsoft, GOV Notify or directly from a business application, e.g. an email from the planning portal
- encourage customers to share their email address to improve communications
- set a target of reducing mail volumes by 20% per annum over the next 3 years
- by March 2024, 25% of annual bills sent electronically
- by March 2025, 50% of annual bills sent electronically
- by March 2026, 75% of annual bills sent electronically

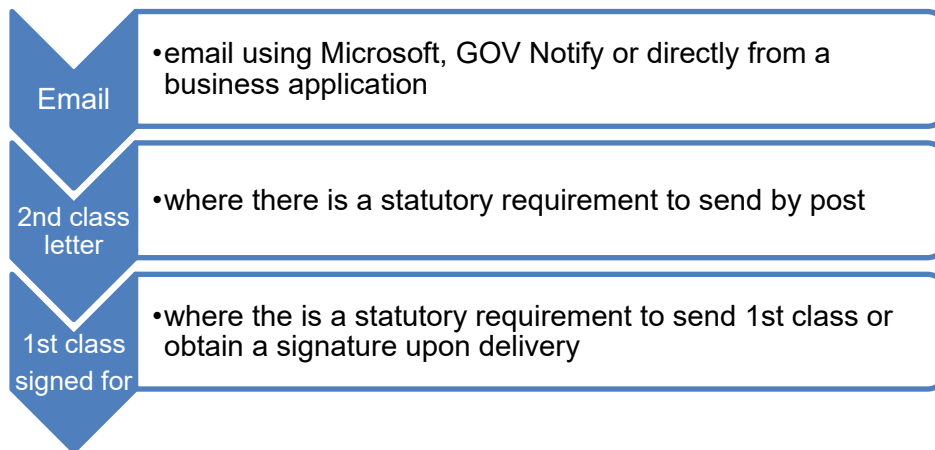
7.3 Print and Mail Standards

Aim

There are a variety of practical measures that can be taken to prevent compromise of data security, reduce printing and mailing costs, and the associated environmental impacts.

To deliver this we will:

- Adopt the following hierarchy standards when printing or using virtual mail
 - Send documents by PDF and not Word
 - Print multiple page documents as duplex
 - Use mono print, including when using the logos on printed mail
 - Print A4 where possible
 - Use a C5 envelope, 2nd class as default for mail items
- Use the below hierarchy for sending direct communications:



7.4 Virtual Mail

Aim:

A new contract with a virtual mail supplier has been procured, providing the Councils with preferential rates for mail items, which create efficiencies against on site printing methods.

All services areas will be encouraged to use the virtual mail supplier to minimise the handling and enveloping of mail.

To deliver this we will:

- create separate accounts for all service areas to manage their own virtual mail
- provide training for all service areas to use virtual mail

7.5 Engage Organisation-wide

Aim:

As an organisation championing the green agenda, we must adopt this strategy organisation wide, from officers to Senior Leadership Team and Members.

To achieve the ambitious targets outlined in this policy, every service area must work towards the goal of reducing print and mail to generate efficiencies and create environmental impact.

To deliver this we will:

- communicate the strategy effectively
- represent the Councils by leading from the front as officers and members who are also residents by adopting a digital first approach to receiving correspondence from the Councils.
- provide the right training across all levels of the organisation
- monitor and report openly on printing and mailing metrics