



# Developing the Green Agenda for Chorley

Position Statement

October 2019

## **Introduction**

Climate change has been dominating the headlines recently and there has been a notable shift in public concern over the environment.

This is backed up by the recent reports published by the United Nations (UN), the UK's Committee on Climate Change (CCC), and the declaration of a 'climate emergency' by many local authorities and by the UK Parliament.

Radical changes are needed to address climate change and this means we are facing two unprecedented challenges: we must dramatically reduce our carbon emission and we also need to prepare for unavoidable environmental impacts by building climate resilience into our systems and services.

Local authorities themselves directly emit a small percentage of the UK's carbon emissions – for example, South Gloucestershire Council emitted around 1% of direct emissions for their area in 2016 – but local authorities influence around 40% of emissions through their roles as planning, transport and waste authorities, as well as a major purchaser and commissioner of goods and services.

This power to influence makes councils uniquely placed to put the climate crisis at the heart of our place-shaping work, bringing people together and harnessing this desire for action, ensuring that everyone works together at all levels.

### **This report considers:**

- 1. The current position for Chorley**
- 2. Existing and planned activity to support the green agenda**
- 3. Research into activity in other areas**
- 4. Costs and budgets**
- 5. Next steps**

## 1. Chorley's Position:<sup>1</sup>

The Friends of the Earth group have scored Chorley's climate change performance as 64%. This performance is average compared to other local authorities.

They reported that:

- In Chorley, 44% of emissions come from housing, 26% from transport and 29% from industrial and commercial emissions.
- A tool developed by Tyndall Manchester suggests that Chorley should aim to reduce overall emissions by 14% per year.
- Chorley's specific areas for improvement are increasing the use of public transport, promoting cycling and walking, increasing renewable energy and increasing waste recycling.

Area breakdown:

- Housing: only 43% of homes are well insulated. It is suggested that Chorley should aim to upgrade the insulation of 2,851 homes per year till 2030 and that 1,834-government funded eco-heating systems should be fitted every year.
- Transport: 6% of people commute by public transport, 2% cycle and 9% walk. In the best performing similar local authorities, 21% use public transport, 5% cycle and 14% walk.
- Energy: Chorley has access to 20MW of renewable power in comparison to 74MW in the best performing similar local authority.
- Trees: 8% of Chorley is woodland. It is suggested that Chorley should increase their tree coverage to 20%.
- Chorley reuses, recycles or composts 43% of household waste

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<sup>1</sup> [https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-friendly-communities?#p:postcode=PR7 1DP](https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-friendly-communities?#p:postcode=PR7%201DP)

## 2. Current Council Activity

Chorley Council is already doing a lot to address environmental concerns and has a strong track record of working proactively to support this agenda. The table below provides key examples:

Topic	Activity
<b>Directorate – Policy and Governance</b>	
Joint Procurement Strategy	Includes a priority and action to support sustainable products and services.
Integrated Impact Assessments	Consider the sustainability of all key policies and strategies.
Staff benefits / incentives	Staff have access to cycle to work schemes and subsidised rail season tickets. Staff have recently taken part in Sustainable September, with one office using a teracycle box to recycle plastics which cannot normally be recycled.
Astley Hall green initiatives	<p>The Hall has used 'green museums' funding for new track lights and radiators. These have increased the energy efficiency of the Hall. Staff also use glasses instead of plastic cups, work with Café Ambio to use paper straws, vegi lids and glass sugar dispensers, minimise lighting in the Hall and grow organically in the eco-friendly Walled Garden.</p> <p>As part of the 'green museums' initiative several staff are carbon literate, the team follows a Sustainability Policy and they run Green Monday workshops to use history as a basis to encourage local pupils to reduce, reuse and recycle like people in the past did.</p>
Supporting residents	Grant to Green Living Chorley to help them set up a community eco-shop.
<b>Directorate – Early intervention and Prevention</b>	
Design Guide for Developments and Housing	A design guide is available to advise on sustainability, efficiency, surface water and energy.
Open Space Strategy 2014-19	Open Space Strategy projects have included reed bed creation at Astley Park, new allotment sites with a focus on captured, instead of mains, water, the creation of wetlands and grasslands and improvements to the habitat at Yarrow Meadows. In addition, community orchards or gardens have been created in Euxton, Whittle-le-Woods, Coppull, Clayton and Heskin. Gardens and other forms of planting have also been carried out at Primrose Gardens and Bretherton Parish Institute.

Environmental health	Bans on the release of Chinese lanterns and balloons on council owned land have been introduced.
Air quality	<p>Chorley Council produces an air quality statement report annually. Actions include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing with the diffusion tube monitoring programme</li> <li>• Implementation of the Lancashire Air Quality Planning Guidance note setting out how and when air quality issues need to be considered as part of the planning process</li> <li>• Production of an Air Quality Strategy Influencing the Local Plan process.</li> </ul>
MySpace	A joint initiative with LCFT that looks to support young people with mental health issues through environmental projects.
Home energy efficiency	<p>The council offers a range of measures to support energy efficient homes including an Energy Switching Service to help people get the best deal and in turn use less energy.</p> <p>We also work with partners to link in with support to better insulate homes and lower heating bills including the Lancashire Affordable Warmth Scheme which can provide health with boiler servicing, loft and cavity wall insulation in line with specified criteria linked to vulnerability.</p> <p>The council has also developed a Statement of Intent to participate in the governments ECO (Energy Company Obligation) flexible eligibility as a means for the council to make an application for a range of energy efficiency measure for qualifying residents through a declaration to an energy company on behalf or a resident.</p> <p>It should be noted that funding for energy efficiency and fuel poverty schemes is provided by government and has reduced significantly in recent years, limiting the amount of provision available. The current Lancashire Affordable Warmth Scheme is funded by Lancashire County Council and will cease as a result of funding cuts at the end of this year. Alternative local options are being considered to ensure some access to assistance for vulnerable residents.</p>
<b>Directorate – Customer and Digital</b>	
WorkSmart	Internal changes to the ICT systems means that it is now easier to work remotely, therefore reducing the amount of car travel needed.
Neighbourhood officers	Officers use electric vehicles such as NV200 Nissan vans.

Waste management	Recycling of plastic pots, tubs and trays has been introduced.
<b>Directorate – Business Development and Growth</b>	
Electric charging points	Charging points are installed on Market Street.
Bike storage	Storage is available in the town centre with new racks recently installed
Council buildings	<p>Extensive work has been undertaken in recent years to install energy efficient lighting in all Council buildings. The Town Hall roof has had solar panels installed.</p> <p>The new Digital Office Park has a BREEAM level of 26. This indicates that the development has scored highly in BREEAM's evaluation of sustainability across the procurement, design, construction and operation of the Digital Office Park.</p>
Tree planting	Waste contractor's FCC are working with Carbon Footprint to plant 500 tree saplings per year. This is following an agreement set out in the new waste contract.

### Action Planned for the Future

In addition to measures already in place, a number of activities are planned to support the green agenda:

Topic	Activity
Recycling	<p>Recycling of batteries and small electrical items will be introduced as part of the new waste contract.</p> <p>Approval is being sought from LCC for CBC to act as a pilot authority for tetrapak and carton recycling.</p> <p>Chorley Council is developing a waste and recycling strategy for 2020.</p>
Council practices	A review of the council's approach to internal recycling will be considered.
Non-native species management	Training for volunteers in Parish Councils on how to treat the invasion of non-native species.
Meadows and wildlife corridors	<p>We are currently looking to create wild flower meadows across the borough. This would reduce the amount of grass and verge cutting required by the Council and build on the work carried out for Chorley in Bloom.</p> <p>A review of the weed killer glyphosate is also being considered due to growing public concern.</p>

Tree planting	Alongside work in to creating wildlife corridors, there are plans for an increased tree planting agenda.
Lancashire Local Plan	An Issues and Options Consultation in November will consider the following areas: encouraging people to walk or cycle more, reducing the number of cars on the road, improving public transport, encouraging electric vehicles, increasing trees and woodland planting, air quality, smoke emissions and addressing climate change and the environment in general.

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### 3. Wider research and examples from other areas

#### Green pledge examples

##### **Kingston Council**

The pledge encourages organisations in the borough to sign up to 10 behavioural goals organised in to 3 categories:

- Buildings: using energy efficiently, using green energy, improving home/building insulation.
- Transport: driving efficiently, reducing car use. Shopping: buying quality items that last longer, keeping things for longer.
- Food: eating less red meat, reducing food-related waste, eating seasonal produce.

Organisations sign up and receive a 'pledge tree' which helps them choose a few specific actions to follow.

##### **Southampton**

The green city charter focuses on what the Council can do to help the environment. It starts with a brief description of the Council's green vision and how this can be achieved. This is followed by 9 key points:

- we want to be carbon neutral by 2030
- we will take actions that will improve the quality of life in our city
- we want the Healthy Life Expectancy Indicator to be the best amongst our peers and to remove the difference cities like Southampton experience with rural areas in terms of deaths attributed to air pollution
- we will work in partnership, share our knowledge and inspire others
- we will protect and enhance our natural environment
- we will make the best use of our resources, reduce our energy consumption, minimise waste and ensure we repair, reuse and recycle
- we will encourage, promote and incentivise the use of sustainable and active travel
- we will reduce emissions and aspire to satisfy World Health Organisation air quality guideline values. By 2025 we want to see nitrogen dioxide levels of 25 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as the norm
- we will use energy that is generated from renewable sources and support the generation of sustainable energy that does not compromise local air quality
- we will use services and products that support our vision.

##### **Trafford**

The Be Responsible Pledge focuses on actions that can help to look after the environment, reduce litter and promote recycling. There are different pledges for residents, schools and businesses.

Pledgers select tick boxes in order to pledge to different actions.

Due to the focus of the pledge, those who have signed up can receive a free litter picking kit.



## **West Sussex Climate Pledge**

The pledge provides an explanation of how the planet is changing and what can be done in West Sussex to help tackle climate change.

Each month, the Council raises awareness of a different theme from the pledge. The themes include making low carbon journeys, saving water, passing-on plastic, fighting against food waste, shopping local and saving energy. More detailed advice on each theme is available under tabs on the webpage.

The pledge also details actions, such as introducing solar farms, that West Sussex is taking to tackle climate change.

## **Green Links**

The South Ribble Green Links is a series of capital projects which aim to provide high quality parks, green links and open spaces to encourage people to get active and enjoy the outdoors.

A main goal of Green Links is to connect key green spaces through the provision of 76 km of improved cycle and pedestrian routes. South Ribble have begun to implement this by widening existing footpaths and replacing mud surfaces with self-binding gravel. The Council expects that this will help to reduce reliance on cars by making it easier, and more attractive, for residents and visitors to choose environmentally friendly travel methods such as walking, cycling or horse riding.

The Green Links portfolio currently includes one specifically 'environmental' project which aims to plant one new tree for every resident. In addition, the Green Links report notes that other environmental projects will be proposed in future years.

The wider range of projects forecasted for 2019/20 include building toilet blocks in parks, creating new football fields, introducing a ticket office at Leyland rail station, and providing street furniture and bus shelters.

## **Green Links: Possible Actions**

- Investigating the benefits of a joint Green Links venture, such as that carried out by Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council in North Wales.
- Implementing a tree planting project.
- Making current footpaths more accessible.
- Investigating whether there is a possible 'green links' route which could be implemented across the borough.
- Running a public consultation on the use of footpaths

## Solar Farms

Local authority	Activity
<b>West Sussex</b>	<p>Using unused or low-grade land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westhampnett solar farm- was opened in October 2018. It uses on-site batteries to store surplus energy so that it can be released to the grid at peak periods. The solar farm is built on a former landfill site that had no alternative use due to the presence of methane gas.</li> <li>• Tangmere solar farm- was opened in 2015 on the site of the former Tangmere Airfield. The 5MW solar farm generates enough electricity to power 1,500 homes and is expected to generate £13.8 million from feed-in-tariffs and electricity sales during the lifetime of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Warrington</b>	<p>Agreed to buy one operational farm in Hull and another in York in order to reduce the council's existing energy costs and to generate income generation. The council paid £62 million for the two farms which are estimated to raise £150 million in revenue over next 30 years. By supplying the Council with green electricity, they are also expected to save £2 million each year.</p>
<b>Northumberland</b>	<p>Has approved plans to build a £3 million solar farm which is to be suspended above a carpark at the County Hall. This would, alongside existing roof solar panels, cover 50% of fuel costs at the Hall. The farm will also be connected to electric charging points for vehicles to use.</p>
<b>Swindon</b>	<p>Has invested £3,000,000 towards a 4.8MW solar farm. Other investors, including residents have also paid £1,783,000 towards the farm. Revenue which is created from the Feed-in Tariff and Export Tariff is expected to create a long-term income for the Council and investors.</p>

## **Electric Vehicles**

The Government have recently written to the council highlighting their priority to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The switch to zero and ultra-low emission vehicles is a vital part of this effort to reduce carbon emissions and improve poor air quality.

The vision is that all drivers of electric vehicles in the UK should be able to access public charging infrastructure that is affordable, efficient and reliable. With more than 200,000 electric vehicles on our roads, the Government and private sector have supported the installation of more than 22,500 places to charge. Chorley currently has 32 public charging devices and 20 public rapid charging devices.

Government has recently launched a £400 million Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund to catalyse private investment into electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the UK. The fund will hugely expand the UK's public charging network. Including, for example, park and ride schemes.

The Government is seeking to work with local authorities to support the development of the public chargepoint network through initiatives such as the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) as a lack of suitable on-street charging is one of the biggest strategic barriers to mass adoption of electric vehicles.

Another round of funding has been announced to make available £5million in 19/20 to support the On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme.

Further new proposals will make all new-build homes in England to be fitted with a chargepoint as well as proposals to introduce green number plates for zero emission vehicles to incentivise electric vehicle use. In addition to the funding, the government are requesting feedback on barriers to uptake of zero emission vehicles including charge point provision for residents without off street parking.

**Other examples and options have been capture in the table at Appendix A**

## 4. Budget and resourcing

The table below details the budget allocated to the green agenda across a variety of other local authorities including funding for additional resource and specialist advice.

Local authority	Budget allocation
<b>Tendring Council</b>	<b>£150k</b> for specialist advice to investigate their carbon footprint and create carbon friendly policies.
<b>Scarborough</b>	<b>£80k</b> approved in the 2019/20 Financial Strategy in order to fund a Sustainability Officer Post for 2 years. This role would coordinate and manage Green projects across the Council.
<b>Stroud</b>	<b>£300k</b> for investment in cycle paths
	<b>£60k</b> for carbon neutral budget
<b>Cambridge Council</b>	<b>£581k</b> for solar and heating upgrades to local leisure centers and accommodation.
<b>South Ribble</b>	Green Links- total cost in year 1 and 2 is <b>£2.8 million</b> alongside an existing capital strategy commitment of <b>£1.4 million</b>
<b>Nottingham</b>	A citywide workplace parking levy makes £9 million a year, this has paid for a tram system powered the council's not for profit energy company.
<b>St Neot's</b>	<b>£3k</b> of the Community Infrastructure Levy to funding the first stage of measures to make the council carbon neutral by 2030
<b>Devon</b>	<b>£35k</b> for Climate Emergency Project Manager is being recruited and they have also made £250,000 available for preparation of an emergency response. This role will manage the Devon-wide multi-agency response to climate change.
<b>East Sussex</b>	An annual budget of <b>£350k</b> to fund energy-saving building improvements
	Solarbourne framework agreement of <b>£300k</b> to cover the cost of installing solar panels at all council sites
<b>Cardiff council</b>	<b>£360k</b> for clean air initiatives such as provision of electric vehicles and charging points

## 5. Options and next steps:

- Declaring a climate emergency – most councils declaring a climate change emergency are aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030/2050 and follow their declarations by announcing additional actions such as setting up climate change boards, strategies, workings groups and prevention targets.
- Developing a campaign and action plan to raise awareness of the Council's current climate change activity and support available for residents
- Calling on national government to provide the necessary policy, power and resources needed to implement a climate change plan particularly in terms of sustainable transport provision.
- Developing a green pledge or Climate Change Charter to help local organisations and businesses 'get on board' with climate change action
- Considering the resource requirement locally to establish an action plan for the council which could fund specialist knowledge, additional expertise, capacity to deliver specific projects or a dedicated climate change officer.

## Appendix A – alternative suggestions

Suggestion	Detail
Woodland Trust- planting for residents	Create a plan to allow individuals or community groups to undertake tree planting in their local areas. Free trees are available from the Woodland Trust
Woodland Trust- council planting	The Woodland Trust will provide support and cover up to 75% of costs when 500 trees are planted as woodland on at least half a hectare. The Trust also subsidises up to 75% of costs if 100+ metres of new hedging is planted with allowance for a large tree to grow every 6 metres. For smaller areas, subsidised tree packs of 30-420 trees are available from £41.15.
Protecting ancient woodland	Create a 50m buffer zone to new housing developments.
Town centre planting	Plant trees on wide roads in the town centre and vertical planting on buildings.

## Wildflower Planting-

Suggestion	Detail
Eco burial	Create an eco-grave area with cardboard coffins, minimal waste and sustainable planting (trees/ wildflowers.) Potential benefits could include protecting greenfield sites from development, providing a more attractive place of remembrance and reducing the amounts of waste which traditional burials and cremations can cause.
Signage	Wood or willow sculpture sign to draw attention to wildflower meadows. See appendix A for example.
Wildflower social media campaign	Plymouth Council ran a photography competition on social media to raise awareness of their meadows.
Grass verges	Reduce cutting of grass verges in order to allow wildflowers to grow, encourage wildlife and save money.

### Recycling and Waste-

Suggestion	Detail
Litter picking and bins	Litter picking in green spaces and more bins in Yarrow Valley Country Park in order to limit litter being dropped.
Reducing the size of all domestic waste bins	Bolton Council has reduced the size of their 240 litre waste bins to 140 litres and the new bins save the council around £4 million a year as there is less waste to dispose of. Officers have also found that the introduction of the bins has not led to an increase in fly-tipping.

### Green Travel-

Suggestion	Detail
Safe and connected cycle routes	Such as the Guild Wheel in Preston or Ribble Green Links.
Improve public transport	More buses and routes.

## Plastic Free-

Suggestion	Detail
Plastic free town	Support Plastic Free Chorley, a campaign run by Green Living Chorley which aims to achieve certification for Chorley as a 'Plastic Free Community' from the charity Surfers against Sewage. The certification requires signing up 12 local businesses who must swap 3 single use items for a more sustainable alternative, planning some eco-friendly events such as fundraising, spread the word to local schools and community groups and create a small steering group to continue the work after certification. Green Living Chorley is interested in progressing this but would benefit from council support
Water bottle refills	Encourage businesses to sign up to a water bottle refill scheme. Those taking part would display posters and stickers in their windows to say they are happy to refill. South Lakeland Council and Daventry District Council have similar schemes.
Cloth Nappy Incentives	Incentives for cloth nappies- some councils offer an incentive such as a £50 voucher.
Provide free reusable bags and containers to residents	Examples of reusable supermarket schemes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Waitrose- refill essentials using a reusable container for 15% less than the standard cost of the products.</li> <li>- Sainsburys- selling re-usable recycled plastic bags for fruit and veg at 30p per bag.</li> <li>- M&amp;S Plastic Take Bag Schemes- lots of supermarkets have bins where plastic which can't normally be recycled can be deposited</li> </ul>
Plastic library	Frome Town Council Library has tools such as sanders available to borrow. Tools such as these are often only used for a short time which means that plastic production would reduce if one tool could be used by several people.
Promote Terracycle	Terracycle is a company which collects rubbish which cannot be recycled for a small cost. This is ideal for businesses.
Single Use Plastic Strategy	Introduce a single use plastic strategy such as that recently adopted by South Ribble. The South Ribble Single Use Plastics Strategy aims to eliminate the use of single use plastics in Council operations by March 2025, with a reduction of 85% by March 2021. It also aims to encourage staff, partner organisations, and local businesses to follow suit. The strategy proposes 'quick wins' such as preventing plastic bottles from being bought by the Council.



### Public Engagement-

Suggestion	Detail
Education	Workshops for schools.
Green events	Promote green living through public events.

### Renewable Energy and Efficiency-

Suggestion	Detail
Solar farm	See above
Build better quality homes	Improve homes to reduce excess energy use.

## Appendix B

### Mini meadows:

Below is an example of wooden welcome sign used for an event at Astley Walled Garden:

