



## Astley Village Parish Council

### Agenda

To: Members of Astley Village Parish Council.

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED** to attend the Meeting of the Astley Village Parish Council to be held on **Wednesday 1 March 2023** at the rise of the Parish Meeting in the Community Centre at which the following business will be transacted.

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#### **Summons**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive members' apologies.

**2. Election of Chair**

Following the passing of Arnold Almond on Thursday 16 February 2023, the Parish Council are invited to elect a Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers are invited to declare any interests they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for this meeting in accordance with the requirements of the relevant authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464).

**4. Public Engagement**

Members of the public are invited to put questions/make representations to the members of the Parish Council.

**5. Borough/County Councillor Reports**

To consider reports from Chorley North and Astley Ward Borough Councillors and County Councillor (Lancashire County Council) (Enclosed).

**6. Minutes**

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 11 January 2023 (Enclosed).

**7. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider the Press and public for any item on the Summons due to the

confidential nature to be discussed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

#### **8. Parish Clerk Report**

To consider a report of the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer providing an update on ongoing projects, work outstanding and activities since the last meeting of the Parish Council (Enclosed).

#### **9. Statutory Business**

- i. To consider applicants for co-option to the vacant Councillor position.
- ii. To consider any planning issues relevant to the village.

#### **10. Financial Matters**

- i. To consider a report of the Responsible Financial Officer providing the financial position (Enclosed).
- ii. To consider a report of the Responsible Financial Officer recommending payments to be approved (Enclosed).
- iii. To consider a report of the Responsible Financial Officer providing details spend against budget headings (Enclosed).

#### **11. Spring Newsletter**

The Parish Clerk to report at the meeting.

#### **12. Policy and Document List Review**

To review the current Policy and Document List (Enclosed).

#### **13. Review Annual Council Work Programme - Scheduled Items**

To review the Annual Council Work Programme of Scheduled Items (Enclosed).

#### **14. Annual Report of the Parish Council 2022/23**

To note the Annual Report of the Parish Council 2022/23 presented to the Parish Meeting on 2 March 2022 (To follow).

#### **15. Environment Reports**

To receive a verbal update at the meeting.

#### **16. Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies**

- Chorley Liaison – 18 January 2023 – Councillor John McAndrew. (Agenda Pack enclosed).
- Friends of Astley Park – Councillor John McAndrew.
- Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) - 9 February 2023 – Councillor John McAndrew. (Agenda Pack enclosed).

#### **17. Correspondence**

The Clerk to report at the meeting.

#### **18. Matters for information**

Notify the Chair of any item to be brought under this section, prior to the meeting. Only items requiring urgent attention, information, referral to another authority, or matters offered for consideration at a future meeting can be raised. No legal decisions or spend can be agreed.

## 19. Dates of Future Meetings

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 10 May 2023 at the rise of the Parish Meeting.

### Schedule of Meetings 2023/24

Meetings of the Parish Council will take place on the following dates:

- Wednesday 10 May 2023 (Annual Meeting)
- Wednesday 5 July 2023
- Wednesday 6 September 2023
- Wednesday 1 November 2023
- Wednesday 3 January 2024
- Wednesday 6 March 2024 at the rise of the Parish Meeting

Craig Ainsworth  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
5 Clarendon Gardens  
Bromley Cross  
BL7 9GW



23 February 2023



# Astley Village Parish Council

<b>Title</b>	<b>Borough/County Councillor Reports</b>					
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Councillors Alistair Morwood, Adrian Lowe and Jean Sherwood, Borough Councillors - Chorley North and Astley (Chorley Borough Council)</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>1 March 2023</b>					
<b>Type of Paper</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Information</b>	<b>X</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Borough Councillors - Chorley North and Astley (Chorley Borough Council).</p>						
<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>We have all continued to be involved in our various committees &amp; with our councillor responsibilities. We have liaised with Places for People, local residents &amp; various officers regarding matters affecting some residents.</p> <p><u>Councillor's Street Surgeries</u>          Since returning from the Christmas holidays, we have engaged with residents in Broadfields, Foxcote and Studfold. This will continue in various areas throughout the year with the aim of covering all areas of the village.</p> <p><u>Garden of Reflection</u>          Following dialogue with Lindsay Blackstock, Open Space Strategy Officer at Chorley Borough Council, she has confirmed that the soil edges to this area will be grass seeded in April 2023. Lindsay has also confirmed to the Parish Council that Chorley Borough Council would maintain the new paths, new benches and the new tree which has been installed as part of the work. She further clarified that no further planting schemes or maintenance thereof will be carried out on the land unless agreed by Chorley Borough Council.</p> <p><u>Foxcote Play Area</u>          After a visit to the play area it was noted that the planned knee rail installation is still outstanding. It is going to be situated along the path edge to denote the play side of the open space from the other amenity side. Again we contacted the relevant officer who was able to inform us that the work will be completed by the end of February 2023.</p> <p><u>West Way Sports Hub Play Area</u>          We have been informed that the work has now been contracted and is expected to begin in March 2023.</p>						

Places for People

We will meet for a walkabout on Wednesday 15 February 2023 and will discuss various matters that residents have raised with us.

An initial contact will hopefully result in a visit being arranged for us to visit Buckshaw School with the aim of making good community links.

**Action required by the Parish Council**

To note the report.



# Astley Village Parish Council

<b>Title</b>	<b>Borough/County Councillor Reports</b>					
<b>Report of</b>	<b>County Councillor Aidy Riggott (Euxton, Buckshaw &amp; Astley) - Lancashire County Council</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>1 March 2023</b>					
<b>Type of Paper</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Information</b>	X
<b>Purpose of Report</b>						
To consider a report from the County Councillor for Astley Village (Lancashire County Council).						
<b>Key Issues</b>						
<p>Please accept my apologies for the meeting on 1 March 2023. I have a meeting at Chorley Council that I need to attend to - Neighbourhood Area Meeting, Western Parishes which is the other part of my Lancashire County Council Division.</p> <p>Since the last meeting, a large proportion of my time has been spent preparing for Lancashire County Councils Budget setting meeting which was held on the 9 February 2023. This time of year, is particularly busy as in six week period we have two Full Councils and two Cabinet Meetings at Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>I have been helping residents redirect their queries with regards to parking to the relevant bodies and reporting some potholes that had appeared along Chancery Road.</p> <p>I remain hopeful that the resurfacing of Chancery Road would be included in the Highway Maintenance Capital Programme for 2023/24, however this document has yet to be published at the time of writing.</p>						
<b>Action required by the Parish Council</b>						
To note the report.						



## Astley Village Parish Council

### Meeting of the Council

11 January 2023 at 7.00pm

Present

Councillor Arnold Almond (Chair) in the Chair; Councillor John McAndrew (Vice Chair); Councillors Keith Ashton, Emma Barraclough, Matt Lynch, Edward Murdoch, Gillian Sharples, Chris Sheldon and Ian Thomas.

#### **308.01 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies.

#### **308.02 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor John McAndrew declared a Personal Interest as a Governor at Buckshaw Primary School.

Councillor Ian Thomas declared a Personal Interest as a trustee of The Leyland and District Royal Air Forces Association Branch.

#### **308.03 Public Engagement**

Members of the public were invited to put questions/make representations to the members of the Parish Council.

Mr Andrew Pratt MBE, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire attended the meeting. He explained that his specific responsibilities included the Road Safety Partnership and he was Chair of the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board.

Following a public consultation in 2021 where there had been over 6,000 responses, Andrew Snowden, the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner had published the 'Police and Crime Plan for Lancashire 2021-2025 (Leading the Fight Against Crime). The priorities were tackling:

- Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – including improved support for victims and witnesses.
- Disrupting and Dismantling Organised Crime – GCHQ would be establishing a Cyber Security Base in Lancashire.

- Dangerous Driving – 42 people were killed in 2022 as a result of dangerous driving.

In response to questions, he reported that:

- The Lancashire Constabulary had a good record in recruiting and retaining Police Officers.
- There would be a new Police station on the former Runshaw College Chorley Campus on Euxton Lane in addition to a station in Chorley Town Centre.
- The local Community Police Officers would be happy to attend meetings of the Parish Council to report on and discuss policing issues in the village. It was a priority to ensure the Police Officers were visible and accessible to local communities to build relationships with residents.

RESOLVED – That Mr Andrew Pratt be thanked for attending the meeting and be invited to attend a Parish Council Meeting annually.

#### **308.04 Borough/County Councillor Reports**

Reports from Chorley North and Astley Ward Borough Councillors and County Councillor (Lancashire County Council) (copies of which had been circulated) were considered.

County Councillor Aidy Riggott reported that he was hopeful that the resurfacing of Chancery Road would be included in the Highway Maintenance Capital Programme for 2023/24.

RESOLVED – (1) That the reports be noted.

(2) That County Councillor Aidy Riggott be requested to arrange for the loose chippings along Chancery Road to be removed to avoid damage to cars.

#### **308.05 Minutes**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 2 November 2022 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **308.06 Parish Clerk Report**

The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on ongoing projects, work outstanding and activities since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

##### **Experimental Traffic order To Make Chancery Road One Way**

Mr Peter O'Neill, Events Team Leader, Chorley Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss the traffic order making Chancery Road one way for the bonfire and fireworks display event on Friday 4 November 2022.

##### **Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection**

Ms Lindsey Blackstock, Parks and Open Space Strategy Officer, Chorley Borough Council attended the meeting and reported that the construction of the garden of remembrance was complete. The soil edges would be grass seeded in April 2023.

Parish Councillors suggested that new plaques be placed on the three benches commemorating Queen Elizabeth II Golden, Diamond and Platinum Jubilees and a plaque commemorating her life be placed against one of the new trees planted.

### **West Way Nature Reserve Enhancement Project**

Ms Lindsey Blackstock, Parks and Open Space Strategy Officer, Chorley Borough Council reported that she had prepared a draft Partnership Agreement setting out the total cost and financial contributions to deliver the West Way Nature Reserve Project. The Agreement included the provision of £2,000 for educational and recreational enhancement (interpretation boards) as agreed by the Parish Council.

### **Astley Village Community Centre**

A meeting had been arranged with Ms Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities (Chorley Borough Council) to discuss opportunities for making better use of the small meeting room at the Astley Village Community Centre during the day for community use.

The existing entrance arrangements at the Community Centre made it difficult to segregate the nursery from the rest of the building which was clearly an important safeguarding constraint. The Parish Council believed that there were opportunities to reconfigure the existing access arrangements at the Community Centre to enable the small meeting room to be used during the day.

### **Restoration of Astley Hall - Conservation of the painting of Susannah Brooke**

Chorley Borough Council had provided an update regarding the conservation of the painting of Susannah Brooke (child). The paintings conservator, Lancashire Conservation Studios had now assessed the painting in person and the cost of conservation excluding VAT was higher than originally estimated. Lancashire Conservation Studios had assumed from the images that the distortions were due to lack of tension but in fact they are caused by delamination of the lining canvas which could only be corrected by re-lining.

### **Proposing Neighbourhood Priorities 2023/24**

The next Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) would be held on 9 February 2023 and at the meeting members would be invited to propose neighbourhood priority project ideas to be discussed and agreed for delivery between April 2023 and March 2024. The Parish Council considered the guidance for creating a proposal and the process and noted that ideas must be submitted prior to the meeting so they can be collated and shared to help aid discussions within the meetings.

### **Buckshaw Primary School**

Councillor John McAndrew had attended the school assembly on Friday 6 January 2023 to present the children with their book's bags funded by the Parish Council.

The school had approached the Parish Council for funding in relation to the Forest School Programme. The School had plans to increase the current weekly session for one term during their school year to every other week, all the way through the year. The School was seeking £1000 to fund a further 65 sets of waterproofs as the children would go out in all weathers and get very wet and muddy.

### **Attachments to Lighting Columns**

Councillor Emma Barraclough would be writing to Lancashire County Council seeking permission for attachments to lighting columns along Chancery Road, to include poppies in the period immediately before and after Armistice Day and banners throughout the

year.

The Parish Clerk has arranged to purchase 120 poppies for along Chancery Road to be attached to the lighting columns Poppy size - 30.1cm x 39.6cm, (5 sheets) - Total cost £465.34 plus VAT.

### **Chorley Flower Show Applications 2023**

The Parish Clerk had made an application to have a presence at the Chorley Flower Show 2023.

### **Play Area and Path at West Way Sports Hub**

It was reported that following the tendering exercise, the chosen company had suggested a redesign for the play area safety surfacing. It had been suggested that the company be requested to return to the original concept with simplified colours/design to aid the long-term maintenance.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

It was reported that correspondence had been received from Chorley Borough Council regarding resources available to promote Neighbourhood Planning and provide support for Parish Councils that might be interested in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Planning was introduced as part of the Localism Act which allows Parish Councils to produce their own plans for their area that have real weight in planning decisions. Neighbourhood Plans could assist Parish Councils determine where you want new homes, shops and offices should be built including what they should look like should planning permission be granted.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Mr Peter O'Neill and Ms Lindsey Blackstock be thanked for attending the meeting.

(3) That the following expenditure approved by the Parish Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 16.2 be noted:

- Tesco, Christmas Selection Boxes - £250.
- Buckshaw Primary School, School Book Bags - £1,210
- Chorley Council, Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection - £5,000
- Chesford Grange Hotel, SLCC Practitioners Conference - £246.50.
- SLCC, SLCC Practitioners Conference £288.
- Councillor Emma Barraclough, Christmas Event - £45.90.
- Tesco, Christmas Event Refreshments - £101.35.
- Printwise, Christmas Event Printing - £100.
- Printwise, Winter Newsletter 2022 - £750.
- Tesco, Milk for Christmas Event - £5.25
- Post Office Counters Ltd, 2nd Class Stamps - £5.44

(4) That the Parish Council support the introduction of an Experimental Traffic order to make Chancery Road One Way for the following events:

- Picnic in the Park.
- Astley Illuminated.
- Chorley Flower Show.
- Bonfire and fireworks display event.

(5) That Chorley Borough Council be requested to arrange for new plaques be placed on the three benches commemorating Queen Elizabeth II Golden, Diamond and Platinum Jubilees and a plaque commemorating her life be placed against one of the new trees planted (wording to be agreed by the Parish Council) and the cost be funded by the Parish Council.

(6) That the draft Partnership Agreement setting out the total cost and financial contributions to deliver the West Way Nature Reserve Project be endorsed and Councillors Keith Ashton and Emma Barraclough be nominated to represent the Parish Council in relation to this Project.

(7) That the following Councillors be invited to the meeting with Ms Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities (Chorley Borough Council) to discuss opportunities for making better use of the small meeting room at the Astley Village Community Centre during the day or community use:

- Councillor Arnold Almond.
- Councillor John McAndrew.
- Councillor Chris Sheldon.
- Councillor Ian Thomas.

(8) That the Parish Clerk be requested to confirm that the Parish Council is happy to continue with the contribution of up to £3,000, with Chorley Borough Council covering the shortfall from its collections budget.

(9) That the Parish Clerk be requested to put forward the following two projects to the next Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) on 9 February 2023 as neighbourhood priority project ideas for delivery between April 2023 and March 2024:

- Making better use of the small meeting room at the Astley Village Community Centre during the day for community use.
- Improvements to the footpath (not the tarmac path) from Buckshaw Primary School gate area to the Clough Acre area off Great Meadow.

(10) That the Parish Clerk be requested to write to Buckshaw Primary School suggesting that they approach the local ward and county councillors for funding from their delegated budgets towards 65 sets of waterproofs.

(11) That Councillor Emma Barraclough be requested to prepare a proposal in respect of the proposed attachments to the lighting columns along Chancery Road for consideration at the next meeting on 1 March 2023.

(12) That in view of the limited land within the Parish available for new developments, the Parish Council should not prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **308.07 Statutory Business**

#### (i) Co-option to the Parish Council Vacancy

No application had been received.

(ii) Planning Issues Relevant to the Village

The Parish Clerk reported that the Parish Council had not been consulted on any planning application received by Chorley Borough Council since the last meeting of the Parish Council on 2 November 2022.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**308.08 Financial Matters**

(i) Financial Position

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) showing the financial position as at 23 December 2022.

RESOLVED – That the financial position be noted.

(ii) Payments to be Approved

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) recommending a list of invoices to be paid between 1 January 2023 and 28 February 2023 as follows:

Date	Creditor	Description	Total	Vat	Net
06/01/23	Employee 4	Reimbursements (November 2022)	51.85		51.85
06/01/23	Employee 4	Reimbursements (December 2022)	42.85		42.85
01/01/23	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental (January 2023)	66.00	11.00	58.00
23/01/23	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (January 2023)	14.39	2.40	11.99
13/01/23	Employee 4	Salary & Backpay (January 2023)	553.30		553.30
13/01/23	HMRC	Tax (January 2023)	138.20		138.20
01/02/23	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental (February 2023)	66.00	11.00	58.00
23/02/23	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (February 2023)	14.39	2.40	11.99
15/02/23	Employee 4	Salary (February 2023)	335.00		335.00
15/02/23	HMRC	Tax (February 2023)	83.80		83.80
			<b>1,365.78</b>	<b>26.80</b>	<b>1,344.98</b>

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the payments as detailed above.

(iii) Spend Against Budget Headings

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to review the spend against budget headings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(iv) Proposed 2023/24 Budget Headings and Precept

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) to assist the Parish Council in finalising the Budget for 2023/24.

It was reported that the 2023/24 Tax Base approved by Chorley Borough Council for Astley Village was 933.70 (1,421 properties).

The Village Development Plan Working Group had met on 14 December 2022 and made recommendations in relation to the Village Development Plan and make recommendations in respect of the Budget for 2023/24. The Personnel Committee met on Wednesday 23 November and 8 December 2022 and made recommendations in respect of the Budget for 2023/24. These recommendations were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED (Unanimously) – That the Astley Village Parish Precept for 2023/24 be set at £24,420 (Parish Yield: £20,543 and Parish Top-up Grant: £3,877) with the Band D amount being £22 (the same as 2022/23).

(2) That the updated Village Development Plan be approved.

(3) That the following 2023/24 budget be approved:

Budget Heading		Budget Sub-Heading	Total Budget (£)
<b>01 - ADMINISTRATION</b>	01-1	Room Hire/ Zoom Subscription	250.00
	01-2	Office/Sundry	1,000.00
	01-3	Insurance	450.00
	01-4	Auditors/Accounts	300.00
	01-5	Election/By-Election/Polls	7,000.00
	01-6	Employee Costs (Salary, Training etc)	5,750.00
	01-7	Employee Contingency	1,000.00
	01-8	IT/Website	1,000.00
<b>02 - COUNCIL</b>	02-1	Newsletter/Publications	1,500.00
	02-2	Village Caretaker	-
	02-3	Councillor Training	500.00

	02-4	Grant Awards/Local Projects and Groups	2,500.00
<b>03 - VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>	03-1	Lighting of Christmas Tree/Christmas Event	800.00
	03-2	Village Improvements (Additional Seating)	7,000.00
	03-3	Improve Village Centre & Enhance Village Green	1,000.00
	03-4	Planter Scheme (including maintenance)	860.00
	03-5	Tree Planting and Maintenance	500.00
	03-6	Wildflower Meadows/Corridors	500.00
	03-7	West Way Nature Reserve	-
	03-8	Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection	247.00
	03-9	Astley Village Community Centre - Increase community use of the building	10,000.00
	03-10	Refurbishment of existing Gateway Signs	1,000.00
	03-11	Road Safety (Maintenance of SPIDs)	500.00
	03-12	Grant - Astley Hall (Restoration of Picture)	-
	03-13	Play area and path at West Way Sports Hub	35,000.00
	03-14	Improving Community Engagement and Raising the Profile of the Parish Council	5,000.00
<b>04 - GENERAL RESERVE</b>	04	General Reserve	20,000.00
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>103,556.00</b>

(v) Asset Register

The Parish Clerk submitted the updated Asset Register (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED – That the Asset Register be approved subject to the inclusion of the Unknown Tommy statue and the three new benches in the Community Garden of Reflection.

(vi) Appointment of Internal Auditor for the 2022/23 Accounts.

RESOLVED – That Ms Susan Edwards be appointed as Internal Auditor in respect of the 2022/23 Accounts at a cost not exceeding £100.

**308.09 Spring Newsletter**

The Parish Council discussed the timing and potential articles for the Spring edition of the Parish Council Newsletter.

RESOLVED – (1) That the next newsletter be produced in June 2023 and the Parish Clerk be requested to include an item on the Summons for the Parish Council meeting on 1 March 2023 to consider the content.

(2) That Parish Councillors be requested to suggest potential articles to the Parish Clerk in advance of the next Parish Council Meeting on 1 March 2023.

### **308.10 Christmas Event - 8 December 2022**

The Parish Christmas Carol Singing Event had been held on Thursday 8 December 2022 and attended by approximately 110 people. Refreshments were served following the event in the Community Centre. Father Christmas had made an appearance and children from Buckshaw Primary School had sung some carols.

That the Parish Council had provided each child at Buckshaw Primary School with a Christmas selection box and the cost was met from the 'Lighting of Christmas Tree/Christmas Event' Budget (£250 – 300 selection boxes). Tesco had donated £40 to purchase 40 additional selection boxes and Councillor Matt Lynch had funded 10 selection boxes.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That an article be included in the Spring Newsletter inviting residents' views on whether the event in 2023 should take place on Friday 8 or Saturday 9 December and at either 5pm or 7pm.

### **308.11 Environment Reports**

It was reported that the community litter picking sessions would take place on the first Saturday morning of each month at 10am from the Community Centre. They would be promoted on the Parish Council Noticeboards and through the Parish Council Facebook account.

It was noted that a new Local Plan was being prepared for Chorley, Preston and South Ribble to cover the period to 2038. Although there were no areas designated within Astley Village, it was suggested that Parish Councillors might want to respond to the consultation.

### **308.12 Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies**

#### Chorley Liaison

The minutes of the Chorley Liaison meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2022 (copies of which had been circulated) were submitted for information.

#### Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North)

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on 9 February 2023.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

### **308.13 Minutes of the Personnel Committee**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 23 November and 8 December 2022 (copies of which had been circulated) were noted.

### **308.14 Correspondence**

Correspondence received had been reported as part of the 'Parish Clerk Report' (Minute 308.06). The additional correspondence was reported:

- Concern that the post of Village Caretaker is to be left vacant due to the amount of litter in the village.
- Dangerous parking on Long Croft Meadow by employees of Chorley and South Ribble Hospital.
- An invitation to receive assistance in producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Parish Clerk be requested to bring to the attention of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Local Police Officers, the dangerous parking on Long Croft Meadow.

(2) That the Parish Council should not pursue producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **308.14 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 1 March 2023 at the rise of the Parish Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.25 pm.

Chair

# Astley Village Parish Council

<b>Title</b>	<b>Parish Clerk Report</b>					
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Parish Clerk &amp; Responsible Financial Officer</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>1 March 2023</b>					
<b>Type of Paper</b>	<b>Decision</b>	X	<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Information</b>	X

**Purpose of Report**

To provide an update on ongoing projects, work outstanding and activities since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

**Key Issues**



**Arnold Almond**

It was with great sadness that we learned that Arnold Almond, Chair of the Parish Council had passed away peacefully on Thursday 16 February 2023 surrounded by his family.

Arnold was first co-opted onto the Parish Council on 3 July 2019. He was later elected Chair of the Parish Council in May 2021 where he continued to fulfil the role with the support of Councillor John McAndrew (Vice-Chair) right up until the week before his death.

Arnold will be greatly missed by the Parish Council and the friends/Partners he worked with as Chair of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council have sent its sincere condolences to Arnold’s wife Joan and his family.

**West Way Nature Reserve Project**

Works to Westway Nature Reserve started on site on 13 February 2023 for a duration of two weeks.

**Restoration of Astley Hall - Conservation of the painting of Susannah Brooke (child).**

Chorley Borough Council have confirmed that they will contact the conservator to confirm the work can proceed and will keep the Parish Council updated on the progress. They are aware that the Parish Council would prefer for the work to be carried out before the end of the financial year.

### **Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection**

The plaques have been ordered through Chorley Borough Council's supplier and Chorley Borough Council have offered to put them on the benches. The new plaques will be placed on the three benches commemorating Queen Elizabeth II Golden, Diamond and Platinum Jubilees and a plaque commemorating her life be placed against one of the new trees planted.



### **Gateway Signs**

The Parish Development Working Group will be considering options for the refurbishment of the existing Gateway Signs at their next meeting and have recommended that £1,000 be allocated for this initiative.

### **Leasing of the Grass Pitches to Astley and Buckshaw Junior Football Club (Pony Field near Derian House)**

No response has been received from Chorley Borough Council regarding the request for information enquiring when the lease to Astley and Buckshaw Junior FC for the Pony Field near Derian House are due for renewal and seeking an assurance that the Parish Council would be consulted as part of the renewal process.

### **Proposing Neighbourhood Priorities 2023/24/ Astley Village Community Centre**

Proposals submitted by the Parish Council were considered at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) on 9 February 2023 in respect of:

- Making better use of the small meeting room at the Astley Village Community Centre during the day for community use.
- Improvements to the footpath from Buckshaw Primary School to Great Meadow.

There is a tarmac path from the Buckshaw Primary School to the Banastre area off Great Meadow. There is also a well-used dirt path, from the school gate to the Clough Acre area off Great Meadow which is the path the Parish Council have sought funding to upgrade.



A meeting took place with Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities on Thursday 9 February 2023 to discuss the use of the Community Centre. The meeting was also attended by Councillors Chris Sheldon and Ian Thomas.

Ms Mullin was very positive regarding the Parish Council's proposal and undertook to:

- Confirm with the Commercial Services Department who manage the building that they have no objection to the proposed building works.
- Obtain an estimate for a new external entrance, a security/fire lock being installed to the internal door to the rest of the building and converting the storeroom into a disabled toilet accessed from the small meeting room (a door to the store already exists from the small meeting room).

It is the Parish Council's understanding that the room is only used on a Wednesday afternoon, 2-4pm for French lessons during the day Ms Mullin she undertook to confirm this and find out regular bookings taking place during the evening.

Ms Mullin offered to confirm with Bernie Heggarty, Neighbourhood Priorities Officer ahead of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) on 9 February 2023, that she would support the scheme in principle and commended the Parish Council for trying to make better use of this community space.

At the meeting there was also had an opportunity to speak to the owner and manager of the Little Explorers Nursery who confirmed they would support the project and in fact welcomed greater community use of the building.

I have emailed St Vincent de Paul Society Chorley Buddies to enquire what their requirements would be to introduce a Community Larder and run support groups in Astley Village and suggested the Parish Council meet with them prior to the Parish Council meeting on 1 March 2023.

Following discussions at the Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) meeting on 9 February 2023, it was agreed that the footpath improvements project be put forward as one of four neighbourhood priorities.

The community centre project was discussed but it was agreed needed more scoping around feasibility which will continue outside of neighbourhood priorities.

#### **Attachments to Lighting Columns**

Councillor Emma Barraclough has prepared a proposal in respect of the proposed attachments to the lighting columns along Chancery Road so that an application can be made to Lancashire County Council. The poppies have now been purchased.

#### **Long Croft Meadow – Dangerous Parking**

I report to Inspector Moys at Lancashire Constabulary regarding the concerns raised at the last Parish Council meeting regarding dangerous parking on Long Croft Meadow by employees of Chorley and South Ribble Hospital. They are parking on pavements so that pedestrians are forced into the road, opposite driveways making life very difficult for residents and across bends.

He has requested the local policing team for the area (PCSO Scott Robinson and PC Nicola Barff-Lewis, the area Sergeant Neil McLaughlin and the Road safety manager Shaun Canning) to look at this issue and see what they can do to help resolve the issue.

#### **Unify Annual General Meeting**

The Parish Clerk attended the Unify Annual General Meeting via Zoom on Thursday 16th February 2023. At the meeting it was agreed that an interest rebate in addition to an annual dividend be paid. This means that members who have borrowed from Unify over the last 12 months, will be given back some of the interest they have paid on their loan to help with the cost of living crisis and the increase in fuel cost

### **“The Future of Local Councils” Report**

The Society of Local Council Clerks have published a report on ‘The Future of Local Councils’ which highlights changes and challenges, and makes some crucial recommendations on legislation, professionalisation, collaboration with national government, sector standards, and more. The report follows a collaborated project with the Local Governance Research Centre (LGRC) at De Montfort University (DMU) to conduct an important survey of parish, town and community council clerks across England and Wales; the first comprehensive, national survey of the local council sector in more than thirty years. The report is attached and a paper copy has been provided to Parish Councillors.

### **2023 Practitioners' Conference**

The Parish Clerk attended the Society of Local Council Clerks Practitioners' Conference on 1 and 2 February 2023. There were a number of actions arising from the conference including making the Parish Council's insurers aware of the recent Section 96 Licence entered into by the Parish Council with Lancashire County Council regarding trees planted by the Parish Council on land within the ownership of the County Council.

Providing a copy of the recently updated Asset Register and the following increase:

- Street Furniture £21,899.10 needs to be increased to £25,725.
- Mowers & Machinery £5,304.50 needs to be increased to £7,000.
- Laptop £556.97 needs to be increased to £1,400.

Confirming with the Parish Councils insurers that none of the following projects recently supported by the Parish Council are on land owned by the Parish Council and that all future maintenance and the ownership of the street furniture/play equipment rests with Chorley Borough Council and therefore that these do not need to be included on our Asset register:

- Providing funding for example for Bus Shelter Power Washing/ repainting.
- The creation of ‘Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection’.
- Improvements to the West Way Nature Reserve.
- Committed funding towards a new play area and path at West Way Sports Hub.

Zurich Insurance have confirmed that our understanding of the Public Liability cover in respect of the Section 96 Licence entered into by the Parish Council with Lancashire County Council is correct.

They have updated the assets and there is no additional cost for 2022/23 it could have an effect on the premium at renewal.

I have received confirmation from Chorley Borough Council that and that all future maintenance and the ownership of the street furniture/play equipment rests with Chorley Borough Council for the above projects and as so the assets do not belong to the Parish Council.

I attended workshop by Gallagher Insurance on managing cyber risks and it was pointed out that there should be a Service Level Agreement setting out the services provided to the Parish Council by Easy Web Sites Ltd and the security controls in place to protect the Parish Councils data stored by you. I have requested a copy of the agreement.

The Parish Clerk has approved the following expenditure in accordance with Standing Order 16.2:

- Norton, Anti Virus Software (Subscription) - £64.99.
- Adlington Electrical Ltd, Christmas Tree Lights - £240.
- Chorley Borough Council, West Way Nature Reserve Project - £5,000
- Poppy Signs Ltd, Poppies for Lighting Columns £558.41.
- M60 Toll, SLCC Practitioners Conference - £5.80
- Viking, Post-It TableTop Easel & Pad - £27.47.
- M&S, Flowers (Mrs Joan Almond £45.00.

**Action required by the Parish Council**

To note the report.

# The Future of Local Councils

**A Survey of Parish, Town and  
Community Councils in England  
and Wales**

This research is the result of a collaboration between the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Local Governance Research Centre (LGRC) at De Montfort University (DMU). The research was conducted by Arianna Giovannini (DMU), Steven Griggs (Staffordshire University), Alistair Jones (DMU), Steven Parker (Open University) and Jonathan Rose (DMU). It was funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund.



The research team would like to thank the many clerks who gave their time to participate in the survey and the discussions that followed. Their invaluable contribution to the delivery of the survey cannot be underestimated.

Special thanks go to Johnathan Bourne FSLCC, James Derounian, and Elisabeth Skinner MBE FSLCC for their critical questioning of the design of the survey and our emerging findings. Without the initial encouragement of Elisabeth and James, the survey might not ever have been undertaken.

Our thanks also go to Lydia Hopton PSLCC and Helen Quick for their support in getting the initial findings of the survey out to a wider audience.

Of course, the final responsibility for the arguments and recommendations presented in this report lies with the research team.

Published by the SLCC, January 2023.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.** National associations across the sector should work in collaboration with national government to deliver a public information campaign on the role of local councils, targeting in particular support to widen the pool of those individuals willing to stand for election as a councillor.
- 2.** The government should offer financial support to local councils to support and ensure the holding of elections for local councillors.
- 3.** In keeping with the Civility and Respect Project, supported by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales (OVW), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations, further training should be provided to local councils on the Seven Principles of Public Life. Importantly, complaints over behaviour should be advanced by the chair of the council or the council as a whole, thereby giving valuable and necessary support in such circumstances to the role and responsibilities of clerks. Monitoring officers in principal authorities require further capacity if they are to be in a position to support local councils in addressing standards issues.
- 4.** Training budgets across the sector should be increased to support the building of organisational capacity within local councils. All local councils should dedicate resources to training and skills development for councillors and for their workforce.
- 5.** Local councils should review their engagement of, and communication with, young people and different communities, evaluating the need in their area for youth councils and community forums as part of an investment in neighbourhood planning processes. As part of this review, they should evaluate their use of social media as a tool to connect and engage with communities.
- 6.** National associations should come together to establish a career path that encourages a diverse graduate entry into the profession of clerks. This career path should offer attractive contractual terms and conditions that align with other tiers of local government and public sector organisations. Mentoring schemes and leadership development programmes should target equality across the profession, particularly the equal advancement of women into the posts of clerks in larger councils.

- 7.** Supporting the work of the Local Government Association (LGA) and others, local councils and principal authorities should negotiate frameworks for collaboration between the different tiers of local government. These frameworks should be accompanied by the publication of statements of collaborative intent that establish a duty to consult local councils and/or the putting into place of local council forums between principal authorities and parish and town councils.
  
- 8.** Collaboration between local councils should be facilitated. The government should make funding available for the generation of ‘good practice’ guidance and collaborative projects between local councils.
  
- 9.** The 2011 Localism Act gave local councils a range of new powers. Local councils should re-evaluate their use of these powers, while central government should consider the attribution of such powers to all local councils as part of a national review of the legislation governing the sector.
  
- 10.** Parts of England and Wales remain unparished. Such inequalities of democratic representation risk accelerating as devolution deals bring into being new tiers and arrangements for local government across different regions and counties. To counter such risks, government should launch a national consultation on the future roles and responsibilities of local councils as part of a strategic review of the organisation of local government.

# THE FUTURE OF LOCAL COUNCILS

For many communities across England and Wales, parish, town, and community councils are the first tier of elected local government. Yet, the roles and responsibilities of these local councils, like other tiers of local government, remain poorly understood by many members of the public.<sup>1</sup> Local councils can raise their own funds. They can act as stewards of communities. They hold in trust halls and buildings, provide playgrounds and sport facilities and manage greenspaces. They deliver and support local services. And they represent and empower community voices in local planning and neighbourhood development.

The demands of austerity, climate change and Covid recovery, as well as support for localism, have heightened calls for the strengthening of the place-shaping powers of local councils. In fact, parish and town councils have increasingly taken on responsibility for community services, often in collaboration with principal authorities seeking programme improvements and efficiencies.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, this first tier of local government has become increasingly bound up with the negotiation of devolution deals, with new roles and responsibilities for local councils often viewed as a means of ensuring local democratic representation as counties and districts are restructured into large unitary authorities.<sup>3</sup>

But it remains a diverse sector. There are 10,000 local councils across England and Wales, ranging from rural parishes with budgets of a few thousand pounds to large town and city councils with budgets in the millions.<sup>4</sup> Any future reform arguably has to acknowledge or work with such diversity, and in the absence of a comprehensive evidence base of the capacities and resources at the disposal of local councils, there is a risk that programmes of reform will be clouded by prior assumptions and gaps in understanding. Indeed, writing in 1992, academics at Aston University, reflecting on the previous 30 years of local government research, underlined that ‘there have been few large-scale surveys of local councils.’<sup>5</sup> Many across the sector would argue that little has changed since.

This report aims to address such gaps in understanding by presenting the evidence of the first comprehensive survey of local councils across England and Wales for almost 30 years. The study is modelled on the survey of parish and town councils in England which was undertaken in 1991 by the Public Sector Management Research Centre at Aston University. This 1991 survey was reviewed through detailed discussions with a working group of clerks and officers from the SLCC in order to identify changes to the roles and responsibilities of local councils. As in the 1991 survey, the aim was to provide policymakers with a national picture of the activities of local councils, their leadership and conduct of council business, their engagement with communities, and their collaboration with other tiers of government and public organisations.

The data in this report was subsequently collected from a survey of 591 council clerks working in England and Wales. The survey was conducted between 23 September 2021 and 22 October 2021, with data collected online. Council clerks were invited to participate by the SLCC, with invitations being sent via email and additional reminder messages disseminated through other media. The sample represented over 10% of the SLCC membership, and approximately 7% of all local council clerks in the country. The sample aimed to be as representative of local council clerks as possible. Because we did not specifically over-recruit from Wales, the Welsh sample made up only 6.1% of respondents, which is approximately in line with the population distribution. Council clerks surveyed represented councils ranging in size from less than 100 registered voters to more than 64,000, with the most common size being 2001-4000 registered voters.

The main body of the report sets out the findings of this survey. It is divided into three overarching sections. The first section examines the local council, its councillors and its clerks, and standards in public life. The second turns to the work of the council, analysing council meetings and the functions of local councils before turning their engagement with communities and the collaborations between councils and tiers of government and other actors and public agencies. The final section examines the areas of expenditure of local councils, their staffing, and their assets. The report concludes with an assessment of emerging lessons from the survey and recommendations for change.

# THE COUNCIL AND ITS COUNCILLORS

## Council membership

In our survey, the membership of local parish and town councils in England and Wales ranged from 5 to 31 councillors. The average size of local councils was 12 councillors, whilst the most common size of council was that of 7 councillors. Over a third of councils, 38%, had between 5 and 9 seats, while approximately a third (35%) had between 10 and 14, and a little over a fifth (23%) had between 15 and 19 seats. Less than 5% of all councils had more than 20 elected members, with the majority of local councils (approximately 61%) having between 6 and 12 elected members. However, the proportion of councils having 13 or more seats has almost tripled in recent years, increasing from approximately 13% in 1991 to 36% in 2021.<sup>6</sup>

## Representative mandate

The representative mandate of local councillors has transformed in recent years. In approximately half of local councils (52%) councillors continue to be elected to represent the whole parish or council constituency. But just under a half of local councils (47%) councillors are now elected to individual wards. This proportion of councils divided electorally into separate wards has more than doubled since the 1990s, when only 19% of local councils were divided into wards in 1991.

Parish and town councils are, our survey return suggests, increasingly run on national party political grounds, with almost a quarter of all councils (23%) controlled by national parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru). Such findings stand in marked contrast to the situation at the turn of the 1990s. In 1991, 10% of councils reported that members declared party political affiliations while only 4% of councils reported being run on party political lines, although this was considerably higher in larger and more urban councils where 34% were said to be run along party lines.

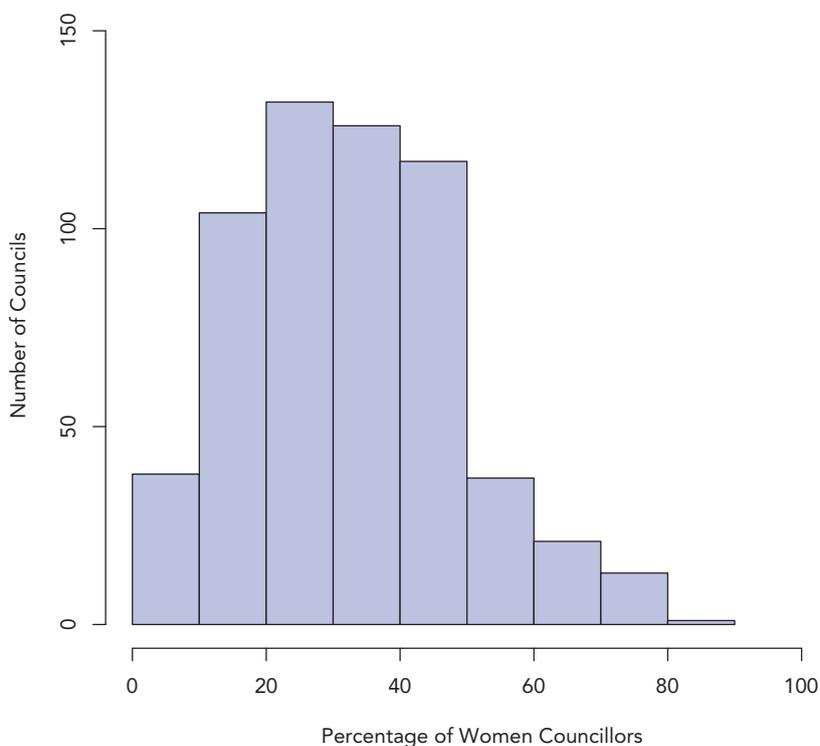
## Gender of councillors

The representation of women on public bodies influences decision-making outcomes, framing the agenda of policymaking and the engagement with different policy issues.<sup>7</sup> In 2021, women councillors represented between a quarter and a half of all elected members in approximately two-thirds (62%) of local councils.

The number of councils where women represented less than a quarter of councillors had fallen to approximately 1 in 4 or 26%; a figure that compares favourably to the gender balance of councillors in 1991 when men represented over three-quarters of councillors in almost half of all local councils. In fact, the proportion of councillors who are women across parish and town councils is comparable with other tiers of local government where 35% of councillors are women.<sup>8</sup>

However, women remain under-represented. In 2021, male councillors continued to outnumber their female counterparts in 76% or over three quarters of all local councils. Women represented three-quarters or more of councillors in less than 2% of local councils, while 2% of local councils reported no female representation on the council. In 1991, men were in the majority of all but 9% of local councils.

**Histogram of the Percentage of Women Councillors in English and Welsh Councils**

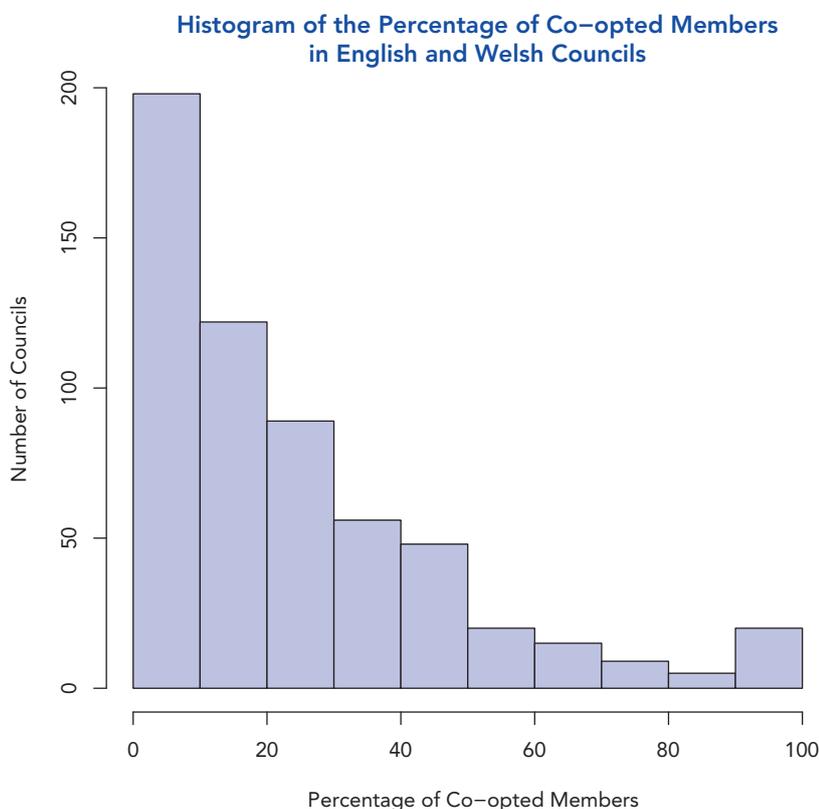


## Co-options

Co-option is where the council decides to appoint councillors to vacant positions on the council in the absence of an election. The overall level of co-option remains high and has arguably increased since 1991. In 2021, approximately three-quarters of local councils (74%) co-opted members onto their council. In 1991, the proportion of local councils engaging in any form of co-option stood at just over half, some 56%, 18 percentage points lower than levels of co-option in 2021.

The extent of co-option varies, as might be expected, from council to council. Across all councils, the average proportion of elected members reported as being co-opted onto the council was approximately a quarter (24%), while 34% of councils reported co-opting less than 10% of councillors; 37% co-opted between 10 and 30% per cent of councillors; and 29% co-opted more than 30% of councillors. However, one in seven local councils (14%) reported co-opting half or more of the elected members on their councils. Indeed, a significant proportion of all councils, approximately 6%, reported co-opting more than 70% or more of members onto their councils, with 3% of councils reporting that they co-opted all of their members without election.

Such findings tell us little of the potential rationales behind such practices, which may be down for example to a paucity of candidates coming forward, efforts to increase representation from different groups in communities, or the meeting of the time-limited needs of the council. Equally, our evidence suggests that the size of the council has little or no impact on the extent of processes of co-option.

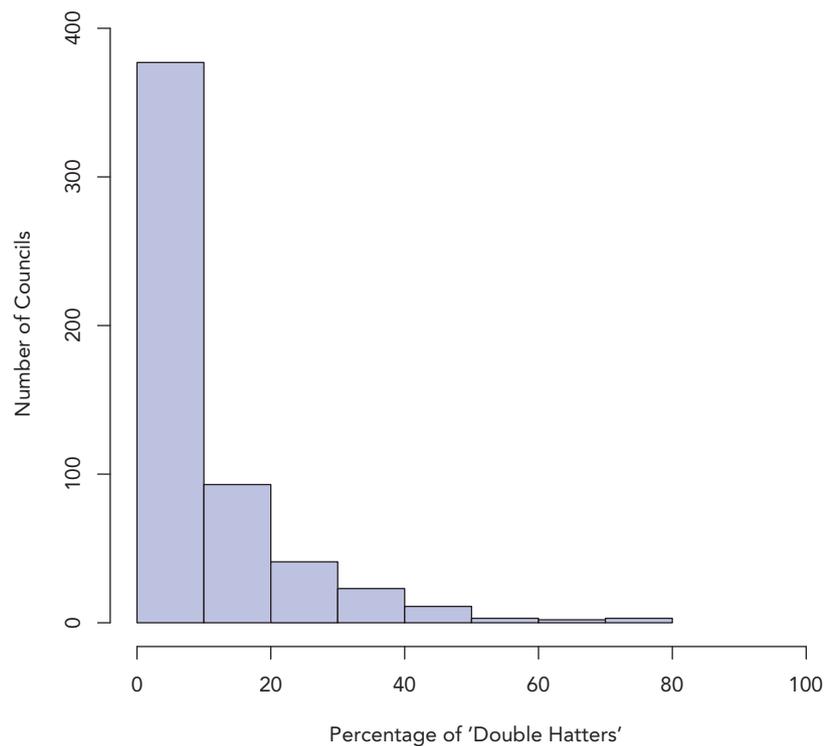


## Dual representation

Just under half of local councils (45%) had councillors who exercised a dual role, by also holding office on a district or county authority. The overall number of councils with at least one councillor with a dual role thus appears to have grown in recent years, increasing from 34% of all councils in 1991. However, in those councils reporting councillors exercising dual roles, the average proportion of so-called ‘double hatters’ on the council was 18%. It is notable that so-called ‘double hatters’ accounted for 20% or less of the councillor body in 69% of those councils with councillors exercising dual roles. Indeed, local councils where ‘double hatters’ represented 40% or more of the body of councillors were in the minority, accounting for approximately 7% of councils reporting councillors exercising dual representation. The highest proportion of ‘double hatters’ reported was 80% (although such calculations need to be considered in light of the relative size of local councils where an individual councillor can represent a fifth of councillors on the council).

Approximately 15% of all local councils had councillors with a triple representative role, holding office on local, district and county councils. In those councils where at least one councillor was exercising a triple role, the average proportion of so-called ‘triple hatters’ on the council was 9%. As such, this is rare within the council system, both in the sense that it is rare for councils to have anyone fulfilling this triple role, but also that even in councils where some people are ‘triple hatters’ it is uncommon to see other councillors doing the same. The highest proportion of ‘triple hatters’ reported on any council was less than 20%.

**Histogram of the Percentage of Members who are ‘Double Hatters’ in English and Welsh Councils**



### **Length of service of chairpersons**

The majority of chairs of local councils were relatively new in post. Just over a third of chairs (36%) had been in post for less than a year, while a further third (33%) had been in post between 1 to 3 years. In contrast, a quarter (25%) had been in post for between 3 to 10 years, while only 7% of chairs had been in post for over 10 years.

# THE CLERK

## Increasing numbers of women

Three quarters of clerks (74%) who responded to our survey were women, compared to 59% in 1991. The proportion of women clerks varied according to the size of local councils. In local councils with populations between 8,001 and 16,000, women represented 67% of clerks, as opposed to 54% in councils with populations of 16,001 to 32,000; 57% in councils with populations from 32,001 to 64,000; and 60% in councils with populations above 64,000. Men remain relatively over-represented across the posts of clerks in larger councils when considering the overall number of men in the role. However, it is no longer the case that in larger councils the typical clerk is a man employed full-time. In 1991, the proportion of full-time clerks increased with council size, as significantly the number of women clerks declined – only a quarter of clerks to councils with populations over 10,000 were women.

## Increasing professionalisation

One-third of all clerks (34%) worked full-time as clerks. This is a significant increase over the last 30 years – 96% of clerks were employed part-time in 1991. Some two-thirds of clerks continue to work part-time, but of those working part-time, 49% considered the role of the clerk to be their main occupation, while only 15% declared themselves to be part-time clerks working in another paid post (compared to 41% in 1991).

Councillors may take up the role of clerk to the council temporarily to cover a short-term vacancy or in an emergency. In 1991, a small minority (some 5% of clerks) reported being councillors for the council for which they were the clerk. This number had fallen to less than 1% in 2021, virtually eradicating what some might see as a potential clash of roles and responsibilities.

Approximately three quarters of clerks (76%) worked for one local council. Approximately a quarter (23%) worked for more than one council (compared to 10% in 1991). Of those clerks who worked for more than one council, approximately 69% worked for 2 councils; 18% worked for 3; 7% worked for four; and 2% for five. In 1991, 75% of clerks working for more than one council worked for one additional council.

Approximately one third of clerks (34%) held a university undergraduate degree as their highest qualification, while a fifth reported having a postgraduate qualification. In contrast, 12% claimed that their highest qualification was GCSE/O-levels, while a further fifth of clerks reported A-levels to be their highest qualification.

The proportion of clerks either having had a previous post or having another job in a professional or managerial occupation was 72% (an increase from 56% in 1991). Accordingly, the number having held or holding supervisory or clerical posts has fallen from 40% in 1991 to just below a quarter (23%) in 2021, while those having held or currently holding a skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual job was 2.5%. Approximately 2% of clerks had no other or previous employment.

## Training and Qualifications

About nine in ten clerks (89%) reported having had specific training for their post as clerk. This stands in marked contrast to the situation in 1991, when only approximately one third of clerks had had specific training for their role as clerk.

Roughly a quarter of all respondents (23%) reported having completed the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA), whereas six in ten (59%) had completed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). Some 10% of clerks had undertaken a sector specific higher education award.

Of those clerks who said that they had completed the ILCA programme, approximately one fifth (19%) had done so in the last 12 months, while 41% had done so more than five years ago. Similarly, of those clerks who reported having completed the CILCA programme, close to half (46%) had done so more than five years ago, compared to 15% who had completed it in the last 12 months. Of those clerks having undertaken a sector specific higher education award, a third (32%) had graduated in the last 12 months, while 39% had graduated more than 5 years ago.

Approximately 22% of clerks who worked in Wales reported having undertaken a OVW accredited award. Of those clerks, over half had completed the award in the last 1 to 2 years.

Clerks engaged in training programmes from multiple providers – with 71% reporting having undertaken day or evening courses organised by the County Association of Local Councils (CALC). Three quarters of clerks (57%) had undertaken day or evening courses organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Over a third (16%) reported having undertaken other forms of training.

Importantly, of those clerks who stated that they had undertaken training courses delivered by CALC, approximately seven in ten had done so in the last two years: with 45% reporting having participated in training provided by CALC in the last twelve months and 24% in the last 1-2 years. However, approximately 19% or one in five of clerks who reported having completed a course provided by CALC did so between 2-5 years ago, while over one in ten (12%) last accessed such training more than 5 years ago.

Such patterns of training were more or less mirrored in the take-up of the courses and programmes offered by the SLCC. Eight out of ten clerks who had accessed SLCC training had done so in the last two years (61% in the last 12 months, 19% between 1 and 2 years ago). However, 17% of clerks who reported having accessed SLCC training programmes had done so between 2 and 5 years ago, although only 3% of clerks who reported attending SLCC courses had done so more than five years ago.

## Training budgets

Over eight in ten local councils (82%) reported having a training budget to support the development of staff and councillors. The average annual training budget for these councils was £1918 a year. Reflecting the diversity of the sector, the lowest reported training budget was £30 per year, while the highest was £28,000.

Strikingly, 17% of local councils had no training budget to support the development of staff and councillors.

## Challenging demographics?

Approximately 27% of clerks who responded to our survey were aged between 61 and 70, with around 8% aged over 70. In contrast, only 5% were aged between 31 and 40 years old, while about a fifth (21%) were aged between 41 and 50 years old. The predominant age group of clerks, representing 39% of all clerks, is that of 51 to 60 year olds.

Such evidence is perhaps not surprising given that many clerks have entered the profession after other forms of employment and careers in different sectors. However, even allowing for recent ageing of the workforce in the UK, it remains that as a professional body the demographics of clerks is not representative of the broader working population or the communities in which they work.

Importantly, our evidence also points to a significant lack of diversity across the profession. Less than 1 per cent of clerks who responded to our survey identified as being from ethnic minorities.

## STANDARDS OF PUBLIC LIFE

Eight in ten local councils explicitly introduced the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) as part of the induction process for councillors. In 71% of local councils, the codes of conduct were the same as those in principal authorities, any necessary amendments notwithstanding. In 59% of cases, the codes of conduct were the same as the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct. Over half of council clerks (58%) had had specific training on the Seven Principles of Public Life.

In the event of a potential issue with the behaviour of a councillor in their council, 89% of clerks reported that there was a named person at their principal authority who could be contacted in such an event.

However, little more than one quarter of clerks either 'strongly agreed' (7%) or 'agreed' (20%) with the statement that the principal authority's monitoring officer had the resources and time to support them in addressing standards issues in their council. In contrast, approximately 16% 'strongly disagreed', while 21% 'disagreed', with the statement.

In fact, approximately a third of clerks either 'strongly agreed' (12%) or 'agreed' (23%) with the statement that they had a good working relationship with the monitoring officer of their principal authority (compared to 10% of clerks who 'strongly disagreed' and 8% who 'disagreed'). Yet, 43% of clerks when asked did 'agree' that they would be 'happy' approaching their principal authority's monitoring officer for advice. Indeed, a further 27% 'strongly agreed' with this statement, while 7% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

In the event of a formal standards complaint about the conduct of a councillor, only half of clerks (49%) expected complaints to be made by the chair of the council or the council as a whole rather than by themselves as clerk.

In the last four years, over half of local councils had experienced behavioural issues from councillors, such as bullying and disrespect towards other councillors or clerks. 11% of local councils had experienced at least one incident so serious that it prevented the council or its officers from carrying out some or all of their functions. One in five councils (19%) had experienced at least one serious incident which did not, however, prevent the council or its officers from carrying out their proper functions, while one in four councils (25%) had experienced behavioural issues which were deemed not to be serious. Just under half of local councils, 44% reported that they had not experienced any notable behavioural issues in the last four years.



## Public notification and access to meetings

Councils continue to use multiple means to publicise the date and venue of meetings. However, information technology and the internet has changed the communication tools at their disposal. While almost all councils (97%) continue to advertise meetings by displaying information on local noticeboards, the most common method used to publicise meetings in 2021 was through the local council website (98%). The practice of advertising local meetings in leaflets, council newsletters or parish magazines remained, with 34% of councils reporting using such channels to publicise meetings, a similar proportion to 1991.

Under half of local councils (48%) used social media to publicise the date and venue of meetings. However, it was common practice to use social media as part of broader communication strategies. Almost three quarters of local councils (74%) had a presence on Facebook. Use of other sites or platforms of social media was, however, less widespread. Under a third of local councils (27%) reported using Twitter, while only 13% used Instagram and 12% used YouTube. Approximately 1 in 20 local councils (4%) were present on LinkedIn and less than 1% were present on TikTok. 98% of local councils have a dedicated council webpage.

Importantly, 99% of councils reported in 2021 that they met the legal obligation of publishing agendas in advance of council meetings. In 1991 only two-thirds of councils published the agenda for meetings in advance, although this rose to 96% in councils representing over 20,000 people.

## Public participation at meetings

Public participation at meetings remained widespread. Approximately 8 in 10 councils (83%) reported that members of the public attended meetings of the full council, compared to 92% of councils in 1991.

Public attendance at meetings varied considerably according to the issue under discussion. Typically, councils reported a handful of members of the public attending meetings regularly. But councils also underlined how such numbers could expand fourfold or more when meetings addressed issues of local concern such as housing development and planning. More than one council reported 150 people or more attending individual council meetings. Yet, as noted above, there were approximately 17% of councils where members of the public did not attend meetings of the full council.

There was no clear pattern as to how the pandemic and lockdown constraints had impacted on public attendance at councils meetings: for some councils, the move to online meetings during the pandemic had increased attendance, for others it had led to falling attendance.

Over 9 in 10 councils (92%) reported that it was the practice for members of the public to speak at council meetings, leaving a significant minority of local councils (7%) where members of the public do not typically speak at council meetings. Overall, however, there has been a significant increase in members of the public speaking at meetings: in 1991 only half of councils stated that it was the practice for the public to speak at meetings of the council (although 92% did report regular attendance of the public at council meetings).

Only one in ten local councils live streamed council meetings. Of those councils who did not live stream meetings, 86% did not have the capacity to do so, while 14% had the capacity but chose not to do so.

Over three-quarters of local councils (77%) reported that the local press did not attend council meetings. In fact, as little as 3% of local councils stated that representatives from the local press attended all council meetings, while 5% said the local press attended 'most' meetings and 14% reported that representatives of the press attended a 'few' council meetings. This is a substantial fall in press attendance when compared to the findings of the 1991 survey in which 36% of local councils reported press attendance at council meetings.

## FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL COUNCILS

### Use of powers

Whatever the limitations of the Localism Act 2011, it provided (some) local councils with a general power of competence, ushering in Neighbourhood Planning, as well as the Community Right to Bid, and the Community Right to Challenge.

Over a third of local councils (38%) had used the general power of competence, although almost one fifth of councils (18%) had not used the power even though they were eligible to do so. Under half of councils (44%) remained unable to use the power because they were not eligible to do so.

Turning to the other powers of the Localism Act, only 6% of local councils reported having used the Community Right to Bid, while less than 1% had used the Community Right to Challenge. The Community Right to Bid had been, our findings suggest, used successfully and unsuccessfully to challenge proposed changes to land use and to protect local community assets such as village pubs, community centres and open spaces. It had also been used to take over the direct management of grass cutting services and play park and recreation grounds.

Finally, less than a third of local councils (31%) had completed a Neighbourhood or Place Plan. Of the local councils who reported not having completed a plan, close to a third, 32%, said that they were in the process of completing one – some 60 per cent were not.

## **By-laws**

In the last three years, only 1% of councils reported having made any by-laws. Over nine in ten councils (95%) had not exercised such powers.

## **Planning applications**

As a general rule, all local councils (98%) received information on planning applications affecting their area. However, the information received by local councils varied between councils and between applications. A third of councils (33%) reported receiving listings with only brief details of the applications, while almost half (47%) reported receiving lists and locations of applications. Only 40% of local councils received copies of planning applications themselves. Others reported receiving email notification with weblinks to online applications and planning portals.

Importantly, 96% of local councils reported that they were always consulted on planning applications in their area, with only 3% of local councils reporting that they were sometimes consulted, and less than 1% stating that they were rarely or never consulted.

Approximately half of councils (52%) made representations on planning appeals in the last twelve months (although it follows that almost half did not).

## **Enforcement and compliance**

In the last 12 months, approximately 3% of local councils had taken action to enforce their own by-laws. Local councils were only marginally more active in taking action to enforce other by-laws, with 4% stating that they had taken such action.

No local council who responded to the survey reported taking court action to enforce their by-laws. Those councils who undertook action to enforce by-laws opted to make representations or use other means. Making representations or other actions were also the preferred mode of action to enforce other by-laws with once again none of our respondents reporting having taken court action to enforce other by-laws.

Notably, approximately half of local councils (47%) had acted to ensure compliance with planning laws or planning conditions in the last 12 months. Less than 1% of local councils resorted to court action to enforce compliance with planning laws or conditions, with 40% of councils deciding to make representations and 4% pursuing other actions.

Similarly, 45% of local councils took action to maintain rights of ways in the last 12 months, with a quarter (25%) resorting to making representations and 13% pursuing other actions. Almost half of councils (45%) also ensured compliance with other regulations (for example speed limits and licensed premises), with 27% of councils making representations on such issues and 14% undertaking other actions. Taking court action was rare across all these instances of enforcement and compliance.

**Table 1: Local councils and use of powers**

(% of all councils) Taking Action to Ensure...	Yes	Types of action		
		Representation	Court action	Other
Own by-laws	3	1	0	2
Other by-laws	4	2	0	2
Planning laws or conditions	47	40	1	4
Maintain rights of way	45	25	1	13
Other regulations	45	27	1	14

## WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

### Consultation and public referendums

In the last 12 months, 6 out of 10 local councils (61%) had undertaken one or more consultation exercises or surveys with local communities. In contrast, the 1991 survey reported that 28% of local councils had held a local survey or consultation in the last 12 months.

Practices towards engagement did, however, vary across the sector, with 31% of local councils undertaking one consultation exercise or local survey; 18% undertaking two such exercises; 6% undertaking three; and 5% taking four or more. However, four out of ten councils, 39%, reported not having undertaken a single consultation exercise or local survey in the last year (although it has to be noted that these 12 months covered the Covid pandemic).



# COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

## Across tiers of local government

Over three-quarters of local councils (77 per cent) reported collaborating or working with other tiers of local government (be it district, county or unitary authorities). Collaboration took multiple forms from the purchasing of services, joint projects and engagement in competitive funding bids, asset transfers, delivery of Section 106 agreements, and the provision of services through service level agreements with other authorities. Typically, it covered services or initiatives in the field of the public realm and green spaces from grass-cutting and verge maintenance to litter picking and public footpaths through to the management of nature reserves, the provision of play areas and public toilets. It also included collaboration around planning and neighbourhood plans, highways and traffic calming, libraries, market town initiatives, as well as leisure and recreation and the provision of youth services.

Over half of local councils (54%) collaborated or worked with other parish, town or community councils. Again, this collaboration took on multiple forms, with local councils working collectively to deliver joint neighbourhood plans, create food banks and support community bus services, as well as tackling anti-social behaviour and addressing climate change, air pollution and flooding. Collaboration was notable among respondents in areas such as youth services and the public realm (including grass cutting and grounds maintenance) where some councils had service level agreements with other councils and shared community support officers and community wardens. Importantly, there was evidence of networking among parishes and town councils, with informal sharing of information and advice, collective responses to major planning applications and joint lobbying of principal authorities.

Six out of ten of local councils (65%) reported that they had often engaged with the county council and the district council in the last 12 months, be it through being asked for information, providing information, or consulting with or lobbying these local authorities. Approximately a third of local councils (29%) reported that they had often engaged with unitary authorities.

However, notwithstanding good examples of regular engagement, over a fifth of local councils were largely disconnected from county councils. Approximately 13% claimed to be rarely engaged with their county council in the last 12 months, while 15% reported that they had had no engagement at all with the county council over the same period. Similar patterns of engagement were reported with district councils: almost a fifth of local councils (19%) stated that they had had no engagement with district councils in the last 12 months, while 6% claimed to have been rarely engaged with district authorities in the last 12 months.

Finally, almost a half of local councils (48%) had had no engagement with unitary authorities in the last 12 months.

Significantly, engagement with other local councils was also mixed. On the one hand, only 4% of local councils stated that they were had not been engaged with other councils in the last 12 months. But on the other hand, only half of local councils (55%) reported that they often engaged with other local councils in the last 12 months, while 38% claimed to be rarely engaged with other local councils.

Overall, these findings paint a mixed picture. Some local councils are actively engaged with other tiers of local government and other local councils, and yet a worryingly large number may miss crucial broader engagement.

**Table 2: Local councils and engagement across tiers of local government**

Over the last 12 months how often has your Council engaged with... (% of local councils)	Often	Rarely	Never
County Councils	65	13	15
District Councils	65	6	19
Unitary Councils	29	7	48
Other Parish, Town or Community Councils	55	38	4

## Engagement with central government, MPs and public bodies

### *Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)*

Only a small minority of local councils (4%) reported being ‘often’ engaged in the last 12 months with what was then the Ministry of Housing, Communities and MHCLG (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). Over half of local councils (52%) had had no contact with the central government department over the same period, with some 37% reporting being ‘rarely’ engaged with or by it.

### *Department for Finance and Local Government (Cymru/Wales)*

Similarly, only a minority of local councils in Wales (8%) reported being often engaged with the Department for Finance and Local Government over the previous 12 months. The majority (83%) stated in contrast that they were rarely engaged with the Welsh government department.

### *Members of Parliament*

Approximately a fifth of local councils (19%) had been 'often' engaged with local MPs over the last twelve months. But, equally, about a fifth of local councils (21%) had had no contact with local MPs. In fact, the majority of local councils (56%) had been only 'rarely' engaged with local MPs.

### *Members of the Senedd*

28% of local councils in Wales reported engaging 'often' with local members of the Senedd over the last 12 months. In contrast, 69% considered that they rarely engaged with members of the Senedd.

### *Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)*

The vast majority of local councils (76%) had no contact with LEPs over the last 12 months. In fact, only 2% of local councils reported being 'often' engaged with LEPs, while 12% claimed to be 'rarely' engaged with local economic partnerships over the last 12 months.

### *Public Service Boards (Cymru/Wales)*

Over half of local councils in Wales (56%) reported that they had rarely engaged with their local Public Service Board over the previous year. This contrasted with little more than 6% of respondents who stated that they were often engaged with their local Public Service Board.

### *Police*

Local councils had regular contacts with the police, with 55% of local councils claiming to have been 'often' engaged with the police over the last 12 months. Only a minority of local councils (6%) reported having had no contact with the police. Nonetheless, there remained 37% of local councils that were 'rarely' engaged with the police over the last 12 months.

### *Clinical Commissioning Groups*

Notwithstanding the ongoing pandemic at the time of data collection, levels of engagement with clinical commissioning groups stood in marked contrast to those with the police. Only 4% of local councils reported having been often engaged by clinical commissioning groups, while a quarter of local councils, 25%, that claimed to be rarely engaged with clinical commissioning groups. Approximately two-thirds of councils, 62%, had had no contact at all with clinical commissioning groups over the last 12 months.

### *Housing Associations and Public Service Providers (water, gas and electricity)*

Similarly, local councils were, on the whole, not engaged with the work of housing associations, with approximately nine in ten councils reporting that they were either 'rarely' (41%) engaged by local housing association, or not engaged at all (44%) in the last 12 months. Engagement with and by service providers (water, gas and electricity companies) was only marginally more developed, with approximately three-quarters of local councils claiming to be either 'rarely' engaged by service providers (51%) or not engaged at all (21%) in the last 12 months.

### *Local Government Boundaries Commission (LGBC)*

Some two-thirds of local councils (60%) had had no contact with the LGBC in the last 12 months, with approximately one-third (29%) being 'rarely' engaged with or by the Commission. Merely 2% of local councils reported being 'often' engaged with the Commission.

### **Membership of representative organisations**

Approximately eight out of ten local councils (77%) were members of the National Association of Local Councils. 85% were members of a County Association of Local Councils. Engagement with county associations of local councils (CALC) was higher over the last 12 months than the national association (NALC). In those councils who were members of a CALC, almost three-quarters (71%) had had a member or clerk attend a County Association conference, seminar or course in the previous year. However, this figure dropped to approximately a third where the National Association was considered, with 31% of local councils who were members of NALC having had a member or clerk attend a National Association conference, seminar or course in the last 12 months.

Almost all local councils and clerks (94%) were members of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), although it has to be taken into account that the survey was largely publicised by the SLCC and will therefore have disproportionately drawn a sample from SLCC members. 60% of local councils and clerks who were members of the SLCC reported that a clerk or member of the council had attended SLCC conferences, seminars or courses in the last twelve months.

Three quarters of local councils in Wales were members of OVW. Of these councils, 58% reported that a clerk or member of the council had attended OVW conferences, seminars or courses in the last twelve months.

## Contact with regional and national representative organisations

### *National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and County Associations of Local Councils (CALCs)*

Approximately a third (32%) of local councils were 'often' engaged with NALC over the last 12 months. Almost half of local councils (49%) had 'rarely' engaged with NALC, and a fifth (21%) had had no engagement with the national association. However, in contrast, 64% of local councils had had regular contact with the CALC, with approximately a quarter (24%) reporting having been 'rarely' engaged with the county association, compared to 14% who had had no contact in the last 12 months.

### *One Voice Wales (OVW)*

The majority of local councils in Wales (61%) claimed to be often engaged with OVW, either in terms of being asked for, or providing information, or consulting or lobbying.

### *Rural Community Council (RCC)*

Two thirds of local councils (70%) had had no contact with the RCC in the last 12 months, while 18% reported being 'rarely' engaged with the Council. Indeed, only 5% of local councils reported being 'often' engaged with the Council.

### *Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)*

Over half of local councils (57%) were 'often' engaged with or by the SLCC over the last 12 months, while over a third (36%) engaged with the SLCC, albeit it 'rarely'. In fact, only 4% of councils claimed to have no engagement with the SLCC over the last 12 months. It must be noted, however, that survey returns were completed by clerks who were members of the SLCC.

## EXPENDITURE

Respondents were asked to list the three largest non-staff areas of expenditure in their council. Local councils were left to categorise funding themselves, such that certain councils acknowledged different forms of expenditure on, for example, maintenance and repair of assets, while others grouped activities together. Respondents were not asked to estimate how much funding such activities accounted for, either as a percentage of their budget or as a monetary value.

Responses revealed the diverse financial issues and experiences across local councils. Areas of expenditure identified varied from public clock maintenance, pest control and beach cleaning through to support for a police community support officer and the provision of community cafes and libraries onto to grass cutting, youth services and the delivery of a

Covid recovery fund. However, broadly speaking, spending by local councils coalesced around four functional areas: the custodianship of local community assets; the management of the public realm; support for communities; and running costs of the authority itself.

**Table 3: Local councils and areas of expenditure**

What are the three largest non-staff areas of expenditure in your Council?	Areas of expenditure	Local councils (%)
<b>Custodianship</b>	Grass cutting, trees and hedges	26
	Grounds maintenance	25
	Building maintenance	23
	General Maintenance	13
	Cemeteries and crematoriums, churchyards	9
<b>Public Realm</b>	Play areas, recreation grounds, sports facilities	28
	Green spaces, parks, reserves	11
	Street scene	10
	Highways, traffic calming, transport facilities	7
	Public toilets	6
	Streetlights and public lighting	6
	Waste, litter and dog fouling	5
	Allotments	3
<b>Community</b>	Grants and donations	20
	Events, including festivities	14
	Services (community focused)	8
	Projects	4
	Youth provision	3
	Newsletter, magazine and noticeboards	3
	Neighbourhood plan	2
<b>Running costs</b>	Office costs	11
	Insurance	8
	Loan repayments	4
	Staffing	4
	Other costs	4
	Subscriptions/memberships	3
	Legal and professional fees	3
	Rates	1

Notably a quarter of local councils reported grounds maintenance to be one of their primary spending commitments, while 23% identified building maintenance and repairs, and 13% listed general maintenance and repairs. The activities associated with such areas of spending varied, with some councils deciding to group activities under broad categories and others focusing on more specific activities. Spending on property maintenance and repairs covered a wide range of assets and resources, from town and village halls to community and conference centres onto tea rooms and listed buildings. 26% of local councils listed grass and hedge and tree cutting as one of their three largest financial commitments, while 9% listed the maintenance and running of cemeteries and crematoria and the upkeep of cemeteries as one of their biggest spending commitments.

Importantly, in terms of improvements to the public realm, over a fifth of local councils (28%) listed the upkeep and improvements to playing fields, recreational grounds and children's play areas as one of their three largest areas of expenditure. Equally, spending on green and open spaces, parks and nature reserves, was one of three largest spending areas in approximately 11% of local councils. 5% of local councils listed waste management, litter picking and dog fouling as one of their top three spending commitments in the last 12 months, while 6% listed public toilet provision, and 5% listed streetlights and public lighting.

Approximately one fifth of local councils listed grants and donations to community groups as one of their three highest areas of funding in the last 12 months. This sat alongside spending on community events and festivities as the two most reported forms of expenditure in what we have called community support. Such evidence underlines the role of local councils in offering support for the social fabric of their communities, directly supporting local groups and adding to the sense of place within these communities.

## **ASSETS OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

### **Growing organisational assets**

Local councils continue to act as stewards of extensive assets across local communities. These assets include land holdings, buildings, and facilities. Approximately seven in ten local councils (68%) own, lease, or hold on trust children's playgrounds. Nearly two-thirds (62%) provide parks and open spaces for local communities, while 60% provide recreation grounds and sport pitches. Over half (52%) make available to communities the use of allotments. And importantly, many local councils own such assets. Half of all local councils surveyed (51%) own children's playgrounds; 48% own parks and open spaces; 42% own recreation grounds and sports pitches, while over a third (37%) own local allotments and 31% own cemeteries or burial grounds.

**Table 4: Local councils and assets**

Does the council own, lease or hold on trust? (% of all councils)	Yes	Own	Lease	Trust
Council Offices/Town Hall	44	28	13	1
Village Hall/Community Centre	46	30	8	9
Sports Hall/Centre	14	9	2	2
Swimming Pool	1	<1	0	<1
Recreation Ground/Sport Pitches	60	42	10	10
Children's Playground	68	51	12	5
Skateparks/BMX	27	19	4	2
Parks/Open Spaces	62	48	11	5
Allotments	52	37	14	1
Village Green	31	23	2	2
Car/Cycle Park	28	20	4	2
Public Convenience	23	16	5	1
Cemetery/Burial Ground	36	31	1	1
War Memorial	55	41	1	5

In contrast, only 14% of local councils owned, leased or held on trust a sports hall or sports centre, while only approximately 1% provided a local swimming pool. An estimated one in ten local councils (9%) owned a sports hall or a sports centre.

### Management of land and buildings

In the last 12 months, less than 3% of local councils sold land or buildings under their management or stewardship. Only a minority of local councils either granted a licence for the use of land, granted easements over land, or granted a lease or tenancy. Similarly, a minority of councils purchased land or buildings, took on a lease or tenancy, or were given land or buildings. No council reported acquiring land or buildings by compulsory purchase order.

**Table 5: Local councils and management of land and buildings**

Do your council do any of the following in the last 12 months? (% of all local councils)	Yes
Sell land or buildings	3
Grant a licence for the use of land	15
Grant easements over land	9
Grant a lease or tenancy (land or buildings)	25
Purchase land or buildings	7
Take on a lease or tenancy (land or buildings)	13
Was it given land or buildings	8
Acquire land or buildings by compulsory purchase order	0

## STAFFING

### Growing capacity

94 % of local councils employed paid staff. This is a slight increase since 1991 when 91% of local councils employed staff, although only 7% of councils at that time employed full-time staff.

In 2021, 92% of local councils employed a clerk, with 25% of local councils also employing a deputy clerk and 31% employing administrative staff. Importantly, only 88% of councils had a paid clerk in 1991.

Equally, local councils continue to employ a variety of staff across multiple occupations. Approximately a third of local councils (32%) employed grounds staff, a quarter (25%) employed a building caretaker, 7% employed burial grounds staff, while 27% employed other staff. In many ways, this marks a clear progression from the findings of the 1991 survey when the most frequent paid posts were grounds staff, employed by only 15% of councils, and street cleaners employed by only 10% of councils.

**Table 6: Local councils and staffing**

Local councils employing...	% of all local councils	% for less than 15 hours per week	% for between 15-34 hours per week	% for more than 35 hours per week
Clerks	92	29	35	27
Deputy clerks	25	4	12	9
Administrative	31	8	19	14
Building caretaker	25	11	11	6
Burial grounds staff	7	1	1	5
Grounds staff	32	10	11	18
Other	27	15	11	10

### Reliance on unpaid staff

Only 1 in 5 councils (19%) reported having unpaid staff on a regular basis in the last 12 months. This compares to over a quarter of local councils (27%) who reported relying on volunteer workers in 1991. More importantly, reliance on unpaid staff in core functions was limited. Only 5% of local councils relied on the support of unpaid grounds staff, while 3% of councils relied on unpaid clerks, 2% relied on unpaid administrative staff and less than 1% on unpaid building caretakers and burial grounds staff. Notably, the largest category of unpaid staff supporting councils was the broad category of 'other' where 12% of councils relied on regular unpaid staff undertaking work for the council.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Local councils as community leaders

The findings of this survey confirm the rich tapestry of town, parish and community councils that make up the first tier of local democracy in England and Wales. Indeed, our evidence underlines the multifaceted dimensions of the community leadership exercised by local councils. Local councils are connected to the communities they serve, able to identify local needs and targeting services and resources efficiently and effectively. As such, they act as place-shapers in their management and provision of the public realm and the delivery of local services. They are stewards of community assets. They identify and give voice to local needs and demands, engaging communities in neighbourhood planning, and building community identities. They award grants and donations to local groups and organisations, strengthening community networks and community resilience. In fact, outside the running costs of the council itself, spending by local councils coalesced around three functional areas of community leadership: the custodianship of local community assets; management of the public realm; and support for local communities.

**Table 7: Exercising community leadership**

Approximately a third of local councils have completed a Neighbourhood or Place Plan.
Approximately seven in ten local councils manage children's playgrounds, while six in ten manage parks and open spaces.
In the last 12 months, 6 out of 10 local councils have undertaken one or more exercises in community consultation.
Over half of local councils nominate or appoint trustees to local charities.
One in five councils listed community grants and donations as one of their top three areas of spending.
Approximately 8 in 10 councils report members of the public attending meetings of the full council.

## Growing organisational capacity

Over the last thirty years, the organisational capacity of local councils to exercise community leadership has increased. First, the role of the clerk has professionalised. One-third of all clerks now work full-time, with over half of clerks having a university-level education and almost three-quarters having experience of work in another professional or managerial occupation. Notably, nine in ten clerks reported having had specific training for their post as clerk.

Second, more councils now employ staff across a range of occupations. Nine in ten councils employ a clerk, with one in four employing a deputy clerk and one in three employing administrative staff. Three in ten councils employ grounds staff while one in four employ building caretakers. In 1991, grounds staff were employed by only approximately one in seven local councils, while one in ten employed street cleaners. Only 1 in 5 councils reported having unpaid staff on a regular basis in the last 12 months, compared to over a quarter of local councils that relied on part-time volunteer workers in 1991.

## Changes to political leadership

The political leadership of local councils is central to the democratic legitimacy of their engagements across communities. Eight out of ten councils reported all or almost all councillors regularly attend council meetings, while nine out of ten councils met six times or more in the last 12 months. Importantly, the proportion of councils having 13 or more seats has almost tripled since 1991. Women councillors represent between a quarter and a half of all councillors in approximately two-thirds of councils.

At the same time, the political leadership of local councils has further aligned with patterns of political leadership in principal authorities. On the one hand, half of elected members on local councils are now elected to individual wards within parish and town councils. On the other hand, approximately a quarter of all councils are now controlled by national parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru).

# CHALLENGES AHEAD

## **'Levelling up' powers**

Our survey suggests that the legislation governing local councils, and the powers at their disposal, requires review. The Localism Act gave local councils a general power of competence, alongside the Community Right to Bid and the Community Right to Challenge. It also ushered in neighbourhood planning. However, the take-up of these powers is at best inconsistent, while many councils, approximately a half, remain unable to use the general power of competence because they are not eligible to do so. Less than a third of local councils had completed a Neighbourhood or Place Plan.

The reasons for this inconsistent use of the powers at the disposal of local councils are no doubt complex. Neighbourhood plans, for example, can involve a considerable level of resource. Alternative powers may be able to be used instead of the general power of competence. However, it remains the case that the powers at the disposal of local councils are not evenly distributed and that the range of their powers are to be found in multiple pieces of legislation, some of which were designed to meet the demands of different historical contexts.

## **Improving collaboration across the spaces of local governance**

Our evidence suggests good examples of regular collaboration between local councils and other tiers of local government. However, it remains the case that such patterns of collaboration are not consistently found across the sector. Over a fifth of local councils were largely disconnected from county councils and district councils. Almost a half of local councils had had no engagement with unitary authorities in the last 12 months.

Similarly, engagement with central government departments, clinical commissioning groups, and local enterprise partnerships was at best sporadic. Such a mixed picture of active engagement with other tiers of local authorities and central government, and indeed public sector agencies and organisations, implies that the organisational and place-making capacities of the so-called system of local governance are not being effectively mobilised as they might.

## Engaging communities

Our evidence suggests that local councils have become increasingly pro-active in seeking the views and identifying the needs of local communities. They have the potential to further build such connections and engagements within their communities. Many councils have not put in place the ‘institutional hardware’ that embeds community engagement in the running of the council. Only 5% of local councils reported having a youth council. Over eight out of ten did not hold community or neighbourhood forums. The appropriateness of such forms of engagement needs, of course, to be decided locally.

However, our evidence also contributes to existing studies which call for alternative methods of communication by local councils, particularly the innovative use of social media as a means of engaging young people.<sup>10</sup> Almost three quarters of local councils had a presence on Facebook and its social media platform, although it was recognised that the use of other sites or platforms was less widespread. Moving forward, the challenge of engaging communities, and particularly young people, may well arguably rest on how effective local councils are in making use of such social media platforms.

## Building the capacity of local councils

Despite the professionalisation of clerks in recent years, most clerks remain part-time, with a sizeable minority clerking for more than one council and many still undertaking another job. Of those councils employing a clerk, 29% did so for less than 15 hours a week. Male clerks remain relatively over-represented in larger councils when considering the overall number of men in the profession. In larger councils, men still remain over-represented across the posts of clerks. Indeed, the demographic profile of clerks remains challenging for workforce planning across the sector. The predominate age group of clerks, at 39%, is that of 51 to 60 year olds. And, across the board, the profession lacks diversity, for less than 1% of clerks who responded to our survey were from BAME communities.

In terms of skills development, the average training budget for those local councils with a training budget was only £1918 a year. The lowest reported was £30 per year, while the highest was £28,000. Strikingly, 17% of local councils had no training budget to support the development of councillors and staff.

Notably, collaboration with other local councils is also mixed. Only half of local councils (55%) reported that they had often engaged with other local councils in the last 12 months. Over a third (38%) claimed to be rarely engaged with other local councils. In other words, the collaborative capacity of the sector as a whole remains a resource that may well be further tapped and exploited to the benefit of local communities.

## **Strengthening political leadership**

Women, our survey confirms, remain under-represented in the body of elected members across local councils. In 2021, male councillors continued to outnumber their female counterparts in over three quarters of all local councils. Such findings confirm previous studies of the socio-demographics of local councillors which have underlined the gender imbalance of those serving as elected members, as well as the under-representation of young people and those from ethnic minorities.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the democratic legitimacy of local councils remains challenged by the absence of competitive elections to seats on local councils. In 2021, approximately three-quarters of local councils (74%) co-opted at least one councillor onto their council. Once again, the reasons or drivers of practices of co-opting are complex and diverse. However, our evidence suggests that such practices have remained stable, if not increased, since 1991.

Finally, in just under half of local councils (45 %) there remains the potential for confused accountabilities from 'double hatted' councillors who exercise a dual representative role, holding a seat on the local council as well as one on, for example, the district or county council. Approximately one in ten local councils even reported 'triple hatted' elected members who held seats on three different tiers of local authority.

## **Addressing standards in public life**

Our survey suggests that the large majority of local councils endorse or advance the Nolan Principles, while codes of conduct in local councils were often aligned with those of principal authorities, demonstrating a certain consistency of practices across the system of local government. However, little more than one quarter of clerks either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the principal authority's monitoring officer had the resources and time to support them in addressing standards issues in their council.

Importantly, in the last four years, approximately one in ten local councils had experienced at least one incident of behavioural issues from councillors so serious that it prevented the council or its officers from carrying out some or all of their functions.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Local councils are characterised by their diversity. On the one hand, this diversity is one of the strengths of the sector, enabling local councils to contribute in different ways to the well-being of communities across contrasting rural and urban economic, political, and social geographies. But, on the other hand, variations in size, accompanied by differential access to financial resources and assets, arguably militates against ‘one-size-fits-all’ roles and responsibilities for local councils. As such, further harnessing the potential of local councils may well be best served by the putting in place of a revised regulatory framework of tools and instruments that enables bottom-up and multiple speed solutions to emerge within them.

With this in mind, we conclude with a call for a national dialogue over the future of local councils. This should not simply be across local councils themselves but also among the tiers of local and central government, embracing a re-consideration of how central government and principal authorities work in partnership with parishes and town councils. We seek to focus this dialogue on a programme of evidence-based strategic recommendations and commitments which we set out below. Many of these lessons and recommendations will be known to those leading and working in the sector. They have been widely acknowledged for some time by councillors and clerks engaged in the everyday running of local councils across the country. However, as our evidence suggests, implementing such recommendations requires investment, both financially and politically. It is not simply the responsibility of local councils.

- 1.** National associations across the sector should work in collaboration with national government to deliver a public information campaign on the role of local councils, targeting in particular, support to widen the pool of those individuals willing to stand for election as a councillor.
- 2.** The government should offer financial support to local councils to support and ensure the holding of elections for local councillors.
- 3.** In keeping with the Civility and Respect Project, supported by NALC, OVW, the SLCC and county associations, further training should be provided to local councils on the Seven Principles of Public Life. Importantly, complaints over behaviour should be advanced by the chair of the council or the council as a whole, thereby giving valuable and necessary support in such circumstances to the role and responsibilities of clerks. Monitoring officers in principal authorities require further capacity if they are to be in a position to support local councils in addressing standards issues.

4. Training budgets across the sector should be increased to support the building of organisational capacity within local councils. All local councils should dedicate resources to training and skills development for councillors and for their workforce.
5. Local councils should review their engagement of, and communication with, young people and different communities, evaluating the need in their area for youth councils and community forums as part of an investment in neighbourhood planning processes. As part of this review, they should evaluate their use of social media as a tool to connect and engage with communities.
6. National associations should come together to establish a career path that encourages a diverse graduate entry into the profession of clerks. This career path should offer attractive contractual terms and conditions that align with other tiers of local government and public sector organisations. Mentoring schemes and leadership development programmes should target equality across the profession, particularly the equal advancement of women into the posts of clerks in larger councils.
7. Supporting the work of the Local Government Association (LGA) and others, local councils and principal authorities should negotiate frameworks for collaboration between the different tiers of local government. These frameworks should be accompanied by the publication of statements of collaborative intent that establish a duty to consult local councils and/or the putting into place of local council forums between principal authorities and parish and town councils.
8. Collaboration between local councils should be facilitated. The government should make funding available for the generation of 'good practice' guidance and collaborative projects between local councils.
9. The 2011 Localism Act gave local councils a range of new powers. Local councils should re-evaluate their use of these powers, while central government should consider the attribution of such powers to all local councils as part of a national review of the legislation governing the sector.
10. Parts of England and Wales remain unparished. Such inequalities of democratic representation risk accelerating as devolution deals bring into being new tiers and arrangements for local government across different regions and counties. To counter such risks, the government should launch a national consultation on the future roles and responsibilities of local councils as part of a strategic review of the organisation of local government.

# NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Local Government Commission 2030 (2021) *Local by Default*, Manchester: Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), p. 47.
- <sup>2</sup> Wills, J. (2019) *A New Geography of Local Government: The Changing Role of Town and Parish Councils in Cornwall, UK*, available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/37848/A%20new%20geography%20of%20local%20government%20in%20Cornwall.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y> accessed 17 August 2022.
- <sup>3</sup> See for example Treadwell, J., Tanner, W., Stanley, L. and Krasniqi, F. (2021) *Double Devo: The Case for Empowering Neighbourhoods as well as Regions*, London: Onward.
- <sup>4</sup> Jones, A. (2020) *The Resurgence of Parish Councils Powers in England*, London: Palgrave Pivot Cham.
- <sup>5</sup> Ellwood, S., Nutley, S. Tricker, M. and Waterston, P. (1992) *Parish and Town Councils in England: A Survey*, London: HMSO, p.9.
- <sup>6</sup> Throughout the report, figures from 1991 are drawn from Ellwood, S., Nutley, S. Tricker, M. and Waterston, P. (1992) *Parish and Town Councils in England: A Survey*, London: HMSO.
- <sup>7</sup> Local Government Commission (2017) *Does Local Government Work for Women?*, Fawcett Society, LGiU and Barrow Cadbury Trust, London: Fawcett Society, p. 19.
- <sup>8</sup> Fawcett Society (2019) *Women's representation in local government "at a standstill"*, press release, 02 July, available at: <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/news/new-fawcett-data-reveals-that-womens-representation-in-local-government-at-a-standstill> accessed 17 August 2022.
- <sup>9</sup> For an outline of the Seven Principles of Public Life, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2> accessed 17 August 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> See Willett, J. and Cruxon, J. (2019) 'Towards a Participatory Representative Democracy? UK Parish Councils and Community Engagement', *British Politics*, 14: 311-27.
- <sup>11</sup> See for example, National Association of Local Councils (2018) *Diversity in Local Councils in 2018*, London: NALC.





# Astley Village Parish Council

<b>Title</b>	<b>Planning Issues Relevant to the Village</b>					
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Parish Clerk</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>1 March 2023</b>					
<b>Type of Paper</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Information</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>						
To consider any planning issues relevant to the village.						
<b>Key Issues</b>						
The Parish Council has not been consulted on any planning application received by Chorley Borough Council since the last meeting of the Parish Council on 2 November 2022.						
<b>Action required by the Parish Council</b>						
To note the report.						

**AGENDA ITEM 10(i)****FINANCIAL POSITION - SUMMARY 1 MARCH 2023**

£

**Receipts and Expenditure Account****Receipts**

Precepts		20,397.00
Grant		3,877.00
Refunds		52.18
Other		-
Bank Interest/Compensation (Barclays)		137.27
Dividend (Unify Credit Union)		53.74
Advertisements		-
VAT on Receipts/Recovered		942.69
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>25,459.88</b>

**Expenditure Total****29,312.42****Income & Expenditure Reconciliation**

Balance Brought Forward at 1 April 2022		84,345.11
Add: total receipts to date	+	25,459.88
Less: total expenditure to date	-	29,312.42
<b>Balance</b>		<b>80,492.57</b>

**Bank Reconciliation**

Community Account (chequeing account)	20/02/23	+	4,955.00
Business Premium Account	20/02/23	+	70,809.39
Unify Credit Union deposit	20/02/23		5,438.46
Less unrepresented cheques/ET/SO		-	710.28
Plus uncleared credits		+	
			<b>80,492.57</b>

<b>Unrepresented cheques/SO/Payments</b>	
February (Zoom)	14.39
March	695.89
	<b>710.28</b>
	<b>0.00</b>

**AGENDA ITEM 10(ii)**

**PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED**

March/ April 2023

Date	Creditor	Description	Cheque No	Total	Vat	Net
03/03/23	Employee 4	Reimbursements (January 2023)	EB	25.75		25.75
03/03/23	Employee 4	Reimbursements (February 2023)	EB	169.75		169.75
01/03/23	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	DD	66.00	11.00	55.00
23/03/23	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (March 2023)	EB	15.59	2.60	12.99
15/03/23	Employee 4	Salary (March 2023)	EB	335.00		335.00
15/03/23	HMRC	Tax (March 2023)	EB	83.80		83.80
01/04/23	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	DD	66.00	11.00	55.00
23/04/23	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (April 2023)	EB	15.59	2.60	12.99
15/04/23	Employee 4	Salary (April 2023)	EB	335.00		335.00
15/04/23	HMRC	Tax (April 2023)	EB	83.80		83.80
				<b>1,196.28</b>	<b>27.20</b>	<b>1,169.08</b>

## BUDGET REPORT – 1 March 2023

Financial Year 2022/23 (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023)

Budget Heading		Budget Sub-Heading	Total Budget (£)	Spend to date (ex vat) (£)	Income (£)	Budget Remaining (£)
01 - ADMINISTRATION	01-1	Room Hire/ Zoom Subscription	200.00	210.63		10.63
	01-2	Office/Sundry	1,000.00	699.57		300.43
	01-3	Insurance	450.00	449.54		0.46
	01-4	Auditors/Accounts	300.00	275.00		25.00
	01-5	Election/By-Election/Polls	5,000.00	-		5,000.00
	01-6	Employee Costs (Salary, Training etc.)	6,500.00	6,529.78		29.78
	01-7	Employee Contingency	2,000.00	-		2,000.00
	01-8	IT/Website	1,000.00	714.16		285.84
02 - COUNCIL	02-1	New sletter/Publications	1,500.00	1,421.25		78.75
	02-2	Village Caretaker	500.00	12.00		488.00
	02-3	Councillor Training	500.00	35.00		465.00
	02-4	Grant Awards/Local Projects and Groups	2,000.00	1,974.00		26.00
03 - VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	03-1	Lighting of Christmas Tree/Christmas Event	800.00	901.60		101.60
	03-2	Village Improvements (Additional Seating)	7,000.00	-		7,000.00
	03-3	Improve Village Centre & Enhance Village Green	1,000.00	-		1,000.00
	03-4	Planter Scheme (including maintenance)	860.00	580.00		280.00
	03-5	Tree Planting	2,500.00	110.00		2,390.00
	03-6	Wildflower Meadows/Corridors	500.00	-		500.00
	03-7	West Way Nature Reserve	5,000.00	5,000.00		-
	03-8	Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection	5,000.00	5,166.66		166.66
	03-9	Finger Post Signs	2,500.00	1,373.00		1,127.00
	03-10	Gateway Signs and Refurbishment of Millennium Notice B	2,000.00	929.00		1,071.00
	03-11	Road Safety (Maintenance of SPIDs	1,000.00	-		1,000.00
	03-12	Grant - Astley Hall (Restoration of Picture)	3,000.00	-		3,000.00
	03-13	Play area and path at West Way Sports Hub	35,000.00	-		35,000.00
	03-14	Improving Community Engagement and Raising the Profile	1,500.00	1,680.45		180.45
04 - GENERAL RESERVE	04	General Reserve	21,141.25	-		21,141.25
Balance Carried Forward from 2021/22	84,318.49					
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>109,751.25</b>	<b>28,061.64</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,689.61</b>
VAT to be Recovered		<b>£1,250.78</b>				
Total Spend to Date				<b>29,312.42</b>		

# Astley Village Parish Council

## POLICY AND DOCUMENT LIST/REVIEW

	Doc No.	Policy or Document	Created / Reviewed	Meeting/ Review	Council Website
Official	01	Code of Conduct	Adopted 04/07/12		Yes
Official	02	Freedom of Information Publication Scheme	Adopted 03/11/08		Yes
Official	03	Standing Orders*	Reviewed 05/05/21	Annual meeting (May)	Yes
Finance	04	Financial Regulations*	Reviewed 05/05/21	Annual meeting (May)	Yes
Finance	05	Financial Risk Assessment *	Reviewed 07/09/22	September	Yes
Finance	06	Review of Effectiveness of The System of Internal Audit*	Reviewed 07/09/22	September	Yes
Council	07	Asset Register *	Reviewed 21/01/22	January	Yes
Council	08	Complaints Procedure	Adopted 04/09/19		Yes
Council	09	Grant Policy and Application Form	Reviewed 06/01/21		Yes
Council	10	Business Continuity Plan	Reviewed 04/09/13		No
Council	11	Social Media Policy	Reviewed 01/03/17		Yes
Council	12	Publicity Protocol	Reviewed 03/10/12		Yes
Council	13	Contact Privacy Policy	Approved 3/11/21		Yes
Council	14	Representative Protocol	Approved 05/12/07		Yes
Council	15	Bullying and Harassment Policy	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2022	Yes
Council	16	Equal Opportunities Policy	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2022	Yes
Council	17	Health and Safety Policy	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2023	Yes
Council	18	Grievance Procedure	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2023	Yes
Council	19	Disciplinary Procedure	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2023	Yes
Council	20	Councillor/Employee Relations	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2024	Yes

Council	21	Training Policy	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2024	Yes
Council	22	Councillor Contact Details Form	Approved 03/03/10		No
Council	23	Terms of Reference for Personnel Committee*	Reviewed 05/05/21	Annual meeting (May)	Yes
Council	24	Sickness Absence Policy/Procedure	Reviewed 19/01/21	November 2025	Yes
Council	25	Clerk Expense/Reimbursement Policy	Approved 02/09/20	November 2025	Yes
Council	26	Village Development Two Year Plan	Reviewed 21/01/22	January	Yes
Council	27	Internal Audit Plan and Statement of Internal Control*	Reviewed 07/09/22	September	Yes
Council	28	Vision, Aims and Objectives	Approved 04/11/20		Yes
Council	29	Scheme of Delegation*	Approved 05/05/21	Annual meeting (May)	Yes
Council	30	Document Retention Policy	Approved 3/11/21		Yes
Council	31	Protocol for Public Participation	Approved 2/11/21		Yes
Council	32	GDPR Risk Assessment*	Approved 03/11/21	November	Yes
		Contract of Employment & Statement of Particulars of Employees'	At time of appointment	Annually at the November meeting of the Personnel Committee	No

\* Requires annual review



# Astley Village Parish Council

## Annual Council Work Programme - Scheduled Items

For consideration by the Full Parish Council (unless otherwise specified)

Item	Meeting	
Review Asset Register - Annually, prior to 31 March each year	January	1
Appoint Internal Auditor - Annually, prior to 31 March each year	January	1
Newsletter Articles planning	January	1
Review of Village Development Plan	January	1
Agree Budget/Precept	January	1
Review Policy and Document List	March	2
Review Annual Council Work Programme - Scheduled Items	March	2
Newsletter Articles	March	2
Annual Report (prepared by the Chair/Parish Clerk)	March	2
Internal Audit (after 31 March and before due for submission (dependant bank statements)	May	3
Review Financial Regulations	May	3
Review Insurance (prior to June renewal)	May	3
Approve End of Year figures ((if finalised)	May	3
Approve External Audit and submit Audit by 1 June (or when specified by Ex Auditor each year)	May	3
Elect Chair and Vice Chair & Appoint to Committees/ Working Groups/ Outside Bodies	May (Annual)	3
Review of Village Development Plan	July	4
Internal Auditor Report	July	4
Christmas Event planning	July	4
Review of Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit (prior to 31 March each year)	September	5
Review Internal Audit Plan	September	5
Christmas Event planning	September	5
Newsletter planning	September	5
External Auditor Report	September	5
Review Financial Risk Assessment (prior to 31 March each year)	September	5
Christmas Event planning	November	6
Schedule of meetings	November	6
Newsletter Articles	November	6
Personnel Review (by the Personnel Committee prior to precept setting)	Oct/Nov	6

## **Chorley Liaison**

Wednesday, 18th January 2023, 6.30 pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley and Youtube

### Agenda

**Inspector Mike Moyes and Sergeant Neil McLaughlin will be available in the Council Chamber from 6-6:30 pm if you would like to go and ask any questions or raise any issues**

### **Apologies**

1 **Welcome by the Chair**

2 **Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 19 October 2022 of Chorley Liaison**

(Pages 3 - 6)

3 **Central Lancashire Local Plan - Presentation**

Planning Officers will be in attendance to deliver a short presentation and answer questions on the Central Lancashire Local Plan.

4 **Item requested by Croston Parish Council**

#### **Background**

- The provision of trained knotweed operators and equipment to spray/inject herbicide for an ongoing programme to remove this noxious weed before it causes expensive damage to the local infrastructure and leads to more homes becoming unmortgage able.
- Measures to ensure that the council operators/contractors are adequately trained to ensure that they are not propagating knotweed by strimming and flail mowing hedges and verges.
- Initial partial provision might be the provision of trained operators to supervise local volunteers.

5 **Questions from Members of the Liaison and the public**

In order to allow members of the Liaison and members of the public to raise issues of local concern, a period of 20 minutes has been set aside.

A member of the public may speak for no more than 3 minutes. Members of the public are not required to give notice of the issue they intend to raise, although it is expected in the case of service issues that the appropriate mechanisms for resolving the issue have been explored.

Where a question is raised which cannot be answered at the meeting, a record will be kept by officers supporting the meeting and it will be responded to via the appropriate mechanism.

6 **Items for Future Meetings**

(Pages 7 - 8)

A schedule setting out deadlines for items to be requested on the agenda for the Chorley Liaison and dates for future meetings is enclosed.

7 **Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

Chris Sinnott  
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Chorley Liaison Councillor Gordon France (Eastern Parishes) (Chair), Councillor Kim Snape (Chorley Rural East Division, Lancashire County Council) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Alistair Bradley (Chorley Town), Alan Platt (Western Parishes), Michelle Le Marinel (Northern Parishes), Aaron Beaver (Chorley Town West) and Danny Gee (Chorley Town North).

Electronic agendas sent to Chorley Liaison reserves (Councillors ) for information.

If you need this information in a different format, such as larger print or translation, please get in touch on 515151 or [chorley.gov.uk](http://chorley.gov.uk)



**MINUTES OF CHORLEY LIAISON**

**MEETING DATE** **Wednesday, 19 October 2022**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Gordon France (Eastern Parishes) (Chair), Councillor Kim Snape (Chorley Rural East Division, Lancashire County Council) (Vice-Chair), Lancashire County Councillors: Julia Berry, Chorley Borough Councillors (Chairs of Neighbourhood Area Meetings): Alistair Bradley and Alan Platt Town and Parish Councillors: Terry Dickenson, Ian Horsfield, Graham Ashworth, Christine Bailey, Tim Blackburn, Barbara Farbon, John McAndrew, Debra Platt and Bev Speers

**OFFICERS:** Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities) and Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Lancashire County Councillors: Aidy Riggott Chorley Borough Councillors: Aaron Beaver and Danny Gee Town and Parish Councillors: Katrina Reed

**11 Welcome by the Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**12 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 20 July 2022 of Chorley Liaison**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

**13 Introduction and Update from Lancashire Constabulary**

Inspector Mike Moyes from Lancashire Constabulary attended the meeting and gave a short introduction on his work as Geographical Inspector for Chorley and South Ribble. Also in attendance were XX

Inspector Moyes explained that anti-social behaviour was the top priority for the neighbourhood policing teams over the next few weeks and there would be an enhance police operation over mischief night and bonfire nights.

The following points were raised by members:

- Neighbourhood teams work from 8AM-10PM during the week, with teams working until 2AM on weekends. Response teams worked 24/7 and Leyland Police Station had now been re-opened as an operating base.



- Inspector Moyes advised that if something were occurring which was immediate risk to life and limb parishes would need to ring 999. If they had an issue where they needed to get through to the control room, but it was not an emergency they could dial 101. However, if there was concern within the community that had been raised and Parishes wanted advice, they could contact their local PCSO and Community Beat Managers. Inspector Moyes advised he would link Parishes with the correct officers for their area.
- The best way for members to report things anonymously is to use Crime Stoppers. If you access this service via email or telephone you can report anonymously, and the Police will act on information received.
- Members commented that it would be good to have posters for noticeboards with their local officers details on. Inspector Moyes agreed to look into this.
- Inspector Moyes advised members they could go out with local PCSO's to sign people up to In The Know and asked members to get in contact if they wanted to do this.
- Officers were unable to commit to monthly PACT meetings due to resources, however should there be an ad hoc issue officers may be able to attend a meeting with residents.
- The Police take road safety seriously and do rely on community roadblocks and tac ops. More information on SPIDS and 20mph speed limits would be provided to members.

**Actions:**

1. Parish Councils will receive the email addresses for Police Officers who work within their area, which would give more accessibility to parishes.
2. The contact details for Inspector Moyes would be circulated to Parish Clerks by the Democratic and Member Services Officer.
3. More information on SPIDS, 20mph speed limits and general road safety from Lancashire Constabulary would be circulated to Parish Clerks by the Democratic and Member Services Officer.

**14 Active Travel Consultation**

The Director of Communities introduced this item and explained the consultation sought to gain information on how people get to work and to identify any issues which may be preventing them from cycling or walking.

Members commented it was the first time they had seen the consultation and it may have been helpful for the Council to email the consultation to Parish Clerks in advance.

**15 Item requested by Adlington Town Council**

This item was introduced by Bev Speers (Adlington PC) who explained Adlington had met with Heath Charnock Parish Council to look at a joint approach. Adlington Parish Council had two areas where they would like to place SPIDS and asked if any other Parishes had any successful initiatives they could share.

The Director of Communities explained the lead officer within the authority was the Neighbourhood Priorities Officer who was currently looking at projects. Officers would work with the public protection team and look to share ideas on the use around the district.

Barbara Farbon (Bretherton PC) explained they had a SPID for a long time, and it was moved around the village. The SPID had obtained good data, for example vehicles on North Road doing 100mph at 3:30pm. Barbara offered to put Adlington in touch with the individual who manages their SPID.

Councillor Bradley explained that the Police were struggling to enforce speeding due to resource cuts and it was difficult to get officers into Chorley. The Council would be keen to support Parishes through work they are doing and can look to support communities doing things themselves.

Councillor Bradley advised that officers would collate the information from LCC and would put an article in the next In The Boro. Councillor Debra Platt agreed to circulate the information which had been provided to Parish Councils to the Democratic and Member Services Officer. Officers would also look towards creating a best practice guide on SPID devices and rule changes to be provided to Parishes.

Councillor Debra Platt advised that Lancashire County Council (LCC) were revisiting their policy on SPID's claiming that after six months the device would need to be moved. This would ensure that permanent SPID fixtures would be able to remain in place.

Councillor Bradley referred to Inspector Moyes and explained the Police had offered to speak to their Traffic Officer in Preston. Councillor Bradley would request the traffic officer to attend a future meeting of Chorley Liaison.

**16 Item requested by Euxton Parish Council**

Councillor Bradley responded to the question and explained the process was nearly finished. It is proposed the preferred options would go to each of the three Council's in the first two weeks of December.

The consultation will run for six weeks and will be done with schools and in every Parish with plans put into all libraries and council owned buildings. Residents would also be able to reply using a variety of methods. Parishes would be given a briefing before the consultation.



The Director of Communities advised that Officers had offered to come to the next Chorley Liaison meeting in January to go through the plans and consultation.

## **17 Questions from Members of the Liaison and the public**

The following questions were raised:

- High School Places on the future agenda – it was agreed this item would go on the March agenda. Information provided to Councillors regarding School Places would be disseminated to Parish Councils.
- Attendance of County Councillors at Parish Council meetings.
- Update on the boundary review.

## **18 Items for Future Meetings**

The Chair advised the agenda for January was already substantial and any additional items would be considered for a future meeting.

## **19 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

The Chair advised he had received an item under A.O.B and explained to members that there had been supply issues with the Royal British Legion (RBL) providing poppies for lampposts.

The Council had found an alternative supplier and were happy to share their details, Parishes would be expected to make an additional contribution to RBL.

Chair

Date



## Chorley Liaison agenda management timetable

Date of meeting	Deadline for items to be requested by Members	Agenda Publication Deadline
<b>Wednesday 18 January 2023</b>	Friday 6 January 2023	Tuesday 10 January 2023
<b>Wednesday 22 March 2023</b>	Friday 10 March 2023	Tuesday 14 March 2023

Please email [democratic.services@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@chorley.gov.uk) if you would like to request an item on the agenda.

### Future agenda items

Community energy funding  
 Revival/survival strategy for Chorley town centre post Covid  
 Time Credits  
 Our Health Our Care  
 Northern Rail  
 High School Places

### Intheboro

We are always on the look out for articles to include in intheboro which may be useful for Parish Councils.

If you have anything you feel may be useful and would like to be included please email [intheboro@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:intheboro@chorley.gov.uk) .

Intheboro is published on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month.

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# **Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North**

Thursday, 9th February 2023, 6.30 pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley and Microsoft TEAMS

## Agenda

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|--|--|
| <p>1 <b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>2 <b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>3 <b>Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 29 June 2022 of Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North</b></p> <p>Please see attached.</p> <p>4 <b>Neighbourhood Planning</b></p> <p>To receive a verbal update and presentation.</p> <p>5 <b>Cost of Living Update Report</b></p> <p>Report of the Director of Communities attached.</p> <p>6 <b>Northwest Parishes and Chorley North - Neighbourhood Priorities Updates 22-23</b></p> <p>Report of the Director of Communities attached.</p> <p>7 <b>Northwest Parishes and Chorley North - Selecting 2023-24 Neighbourhood Priorities report</b></p> <p>Report of the Director of Communities attached.</p> <p>8 <b>Any other business</b></p> <p>9 <b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 4 July 2023 at 6.30pm.</p> | <p>(Pages 3 - 6)</p> <p>(Pages 7 - 16)</p> <p>(Pages 17 - 20)</p> <p>(Pages 21 - 68)</p> |
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Chris Sinnott  
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North.

If you need this information in a different format, such as larger print or translation, please get in touch on 515151 or [chorley.gov.uk](http://chorley.gov.uk)

Meeting contact Clare Gornall, Democratic and Member Services Officer

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**Minutes of** **Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North**

**Meeting date** **Wednesday, 29 June 2022**

**Members present:** Councillors Danny Gee (Chair), Mark Clifford, Adrian Lowe, Alistair Morwood, Dedrah Moss, Jean Sherwood and John Walker

**Other Members:** Parish Councillor Eric Bell, Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council

**Attending virtually:** Councillor Aidy Riggott;  
Councillor Beverley Murray – Executive Member (Early Intervention);  
Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities;  
Craig Ainsworth, Clerk to Astley Village Parish Council

**Officers:** Angela Barrago (Service Lead - Communities) ;  
Bernie Heggarty (Neighbourhood Priorities Officer); and  
Clare Gornall – Democratic and Member Services Officer

**Apologies:** Councillors Tom Gray and Debra Platt; Parish Councillor John McAndrew, Astley Village Parish Council; Parish Councillor Arnold Almond, Astley Village Parish Council and Tracey Jones – Area Manager, Neighbourhoods – Places for People

### **21.1 Appointment of Chair**

Two nominations were received for Chair – Councillor Danny Gee and Councillor Debra Platt.

A vote was taken and by a majority show of hands it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Danny Gee be appointed Chair for the municipal year 2022-2023.

### **21.2 Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the municipal year.

### **21.3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Debra Platt

Councillor Tom Gray

Parish Councillor John McAndrew, Astley Village Parish Council

Parish Councillor Arnold Almond, Astley Village Parish Council and

Tracey Jones – Area Manager, Neighbourhoods – Places for People

#### **21.4 Minutes of meeting Monday, 31 January 2022 of Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North**

The draft minutes of 31 January 2022 were presented for approval.

It was noted that one of the attendees' names was spelled incorrectly, i.e. Councillor Alistair Morwood.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 31 January 2022 be approved as a correct record, subject to the attendance list being amended to read "Councillor Alistair Morwood".

#### **21.5 Northwest Parishes and Chorley North - 2021/22 Neighbourhood Priorities Update**

Bernie Heggarty, Neighbourhood Priorities Officer presented a report of the Director of Communities updating members on the Neighbourhood Priorities 2021/22.

Councillor Riggott asked to be notified when we have a date for installation as regards the defibrillator project. Bernie Heggarty to provide information.

Councillor Riggott referred to the Community Café and suggested generating publicity via a local magazine, and shop window stickers. He also suggested promoting it to relevant parish councils.

The Community skip / clean up days were raised. Bernie Heggarty that the cost was approximately £300 per skip.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted.

#### **21.6 Northwest Parishes and Chorley North - 2022/23 Neighbourhood Priorities Update**

Bernie Heggarty, Neighbourhood Priorities Officer presented a report of the Director of Communities update the group on the delivery and progress of the neighbourhood priorities for completion in 2022/23.

Councillor Walker raised the issue of whether some projects were viable in terms of affordability e.g. the Quiet Garden of Reflection.

Bernie Heggarty confirmed that he felt the projects were achievable within the area budget of £8,000. He explained that if a project was looking to go over budget it would be examined on a case by case basis. He also stated that he would keep Councillor Beverley Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention) informed in such cases.

Questions and responses were given in relation to the following projects:

Educational information boards near Buckshaw Village (Part A) – Councillor Riggott assured members that work was underway; and

To deliver an eco-project working with St Josephs (Part B) – With regard to the wildflower meadow, Councillor Clifford noted that annuals should be established prior to perennials to ensure sustainability. He requested that he be updated on further progress.

Improvement to the footpath leading from Lady Crosse Drive to Dunham Drive in Whittle-le-Woods – Councillor Walker expressed concern regarding the incline which may make it difficult for some users e.g. with pushchairs. Councillor Moss indicated that she had photographs she would be happy to share. Member queried whether it was possible to raise the matter with Redrow Homes. Councillor Lowe explained that it depends on the agreement between Lancashire County Council, Redrow Homes and Parish Councils.

Members then held a general discussion about the costs of some projects. Councillor Murray stated that any concerns about affordability of the projects should be discussed by the Neighbourhood Area Meeting members. Councillor Lowe also commented that in the event of a potential overspend it may be possible for Executive Cabinet extend the budget, otherwise the project may have to be dropped.

Bernie Heggarty stressed that it was part his role to assess the feasibility and affordability of projects and to deliver on budget. Prior to 2021/22 delivery, the rule of thumb, was that each priority project had a approx. budget of £2000 each. However, since last year we have moved to a Neighbourhood Area total budget of approx. £8000 and each NAM can select up to four projects with each of the projects potentially ranging in actual cost to deliver, giving a more flexible approach to managing the budget allocation. It was advised that some projects require significant officers time to deliver and area groups need to take this into account and not necessarily focus on the actual monetary spend to deliver a project. Sometimes projects can attract other funding, such as CIL monies or a contribution from local partners/parish councils etc. It is encouraged at the Jan/Feb meetings when neighbourhood priorities are proposed to consider how projects can work in partnership were possible and has had great success with this model of delivery across many priority projects.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## **21.7 Any other business**

None.

## **21.8 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, 9 February 2022 at 6.30pm.

Chair

Date

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities)	Neighbourhood Area Meeting; NW Parishes and Chorley North	Thursday, 9 February 2023

### Cost of Living Update Report

Is this report confidential?	<b>No</b>
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Is this decision key?	<b>No</b>
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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To update members of the progress on the Cost of Living Action plan

#### Recommendations

2. For the report to be noted

#### Corporate priorities

3. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (Please bold one)

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

#### Background

4. The communities service has been working on pressures related to Cost of Living since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic.
5. Further work has been done in this area to create a more comprehensive plan, in recognition of the increased pressures expected to affect a wide proportion of the community.
6. A copy of the full plan is Appendix A. This was approved at Executive Cabinet 20/10/22
7. Below is a summary of the key areas that have been delivered.

#### Website

8. The website is being updated regularly and has a dedicated page to keep residents informed of what help they can access through the Cost of Living crisis.
9. This can be found at [Cost of living support - Chorley Council](#)
10. Partners and residents are being directed to the website through social media and network meetings.

### **Warm Spaces**

11. Warm spaces are now live. We are working with partners to create warm spaces where there are gaps.
12. The link for the website is [Warm Spaces - Chorley Council](#). A recent Facebook post was very successful with over 100 shares.
13. Leaflets and postcards are in development to be sent to specific target areas in most need.

### **Large Community grant funding**

14. The large £100k community grant funding is designed to help those partners in the VCFSE sector to enhance their current provision during the Cost of Living Crisis, furthering the help available to Chorley residents.
15. Grants are available in two categories, up to £5k and £5k-£10k.
16. Projects that are designed should demonstrate they are prioritising those experiencing poor mental health, financial hardship, furniture poverty, life skills, digital barriers, and food poverty.

### **Household support fund**

17. Phase 3 is live until March 2023.
18. It is specifically targeting those not on benefits to help with fuel vouchers, advice on budgeting, food parcels and essentials.
19. The priority will be on those that have not received the cost of living payment yet.
20. More information can be found on Chorley Council's website.

### **Affordable Warmth fund**

21. The funding has now been extended and can be spent until March 2024.
22. Chorley Council have also been offered another 50% of funding to spend, proposals are currently ongoing.
23. The funding targets those who receive benefits or are on a low income.
24. The grant is mainly for homeowners who have any issues heating their home, for example boiler or glazing issues.
25. A targeted list of residents are being contacted who have ongoing health conditions. The list has been populated via our GP partnership work, however referrals from Members are still accepted.
26. Referrals are to be sent to [wellbeing.team@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing.team@chorley.gov.uk)

### **Holiday and Food (HAF) provision**

27. Up to date timetables will be shared through schools in the lead up to each holiday period.
28. Children can be referred into the programme via Inspire Youth Zone.
29. 887 children booked onto the Christmas activities which included 4 of activities for 4 days. This is significantly higher than the 777 targets.

### **Uniform swap**

30. Provision was successful in the past year with a rise in number of families utilising the provision.
31. The current format is very time consuming and was provided to fill a gap when schools were unable to offer their own schemes due to Covid protocols.

32. Early this year all schools will be encouraged to work the with Communities team and their PTA's/school councils to rehome preloved uniforms.

**Money Management sessions**

33. These have now been delivered at local schools with the possibility of doing more this year as part of the corporate strategy projects.

**Digital skills**

34. Short courses are underway, and our spread across the borough. The target over the next couple of months will be Warm Welcome spaces.

**Climate change and air quality**

35. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

**Equality and diversity**

36. There are no implications anticipated.

**Risk**

37. Key identifiable risks associated to this action plan relate to financial management of grants and funding and reputational impacts of which have been mitigated and managed through existing governance procedures.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

38. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Specific activities described within the plan are funded either from within existing Council resources, or from grant funding provided for that purpose.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

39. There are no concerns or issues with what is proposed from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

**Background documents** (or There are no background papers to this report)

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Cost of Living Action Plan

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Sinead O'Driscoll	Sinead.odriscoll@chorley.gov.uk	01257515421	12/01/2023

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# **Cost of Living Community Action**



Theme – Partnerships and Communications	Lead / Partnership	Timescale
<p><b>Continue the coordination and development of Chorley Together and the Chorley Together Food Sub-group</b> as mechanisms for information exchange, feedback from partners working directly with residents, sharing of resources and support, and identifying gaps and challenges.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team and Chorley Together and Food Sub-Group</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Continue the partnership approach to the design and delivery of the Household Support Fund</b> to ensure funding meets demands the gaps and demands being felt by our communities and communicated through direct resident feedback, internal and partner-led intelligence.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team and Chorley HSF Delivery steering group</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Collaborate with local government partners</b> through the Lancashire wide HSF forum and other energy related forums to ensure we are aware of all new schemes and developments and can benefit from any partnership models or approaches to increase efficiencies and achieve better outcomes for our residents.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team and Lancashire HSF Steering group</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Develop an integrated health and local authority approach to delivering grants such as Affordable Warmth</b> to ensure the grants reach those most in needs and specifically targets those most at risk and those at risk of hospitalisation.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Social Prescribing team, PCN and PHM teams</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Provide updates to key health and public service boards</b> to ensure progress and issues can be communicated across key partners.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities Team and Performance and Partnership team</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>

<p><b>Support partners in the VCFS sector to manage increase costs</b> due to increased demands and overheads through various support options including accessing grants and funding and assess how we can work together to meet forth-coming increased challenges.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Communication</b></p>		
<p><b>Utilise communication pathways through partners, the Council’s communication platforms and other resident-led networks</b> to circulate and promote key messages, advice, and signposting to resources to help mitigate impacts and ensure funding and support is widely communicated.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team, Democratic Services and Communications teams</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Update and provide opportunities for Elected Members to inform and shape plans</b> by continuing to provide updates and member learning sessions.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team</p>	<p>MLS to be scheduled. Updates to continue through internal channels</p>
<p><b>Continue to update the Councils website with a dedicated Cost of Living section</b> containing links to all the support available and linking to wider Council services and support.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Agree and develop a communication plan to ensure there is greater awareness</b> across the borough of the support and resources available and residents can activate support for themselves and for others.</p> <p><b>Agree resource to support the delivery of the plan</b></p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team and Communications teams</p>	<p>Proposed</p>

Theme – Data, Evaluation, and monitoring	Lead / Partnership	Timescale
<p><b>Utilise data and information from other Council teams and services</b> to inform approaches and join up workstreams so that residents pass smoothly through support options available.</p>	<p>Communities and Customer Services</p>	<p>Proposed</p>
<p><b>Continuously gather monitoring information as part of all workstreams to provide intelligence on wider factors affecting residents financial situation</b> to help inform the direction if future funding and highlight other social and wellbeing factors that need to be addressed to provide resilience and stability to residents to enable them to cope through the challenges ahead.</p>	<p>HSF delivery partners Chorley Council Social Prescribing and Communities team</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Hold ‘Chorley Conversations’ through a variety of settings</b> with residents and partners to have long-form conversations to enhance our knowledge on how we can adapt and improve how services and support are improved for residents so that they have greater impact and address wider inequalities and improve health outcomes for future generations. These conversations also support current delivery of support and services and how funding available locally is allocated.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Social Prescribing and Communities team</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
Theme – On the ground activity	Lead / Partnership	Timescale
<p><b>To continue with the delivery of the HAF Programme</b> which provides free meals and activities to identified cohorts of children and utilise the reach available through this route to offer the wider support available to their families. Use these links to provide wider wrap around support to these families and link them to other existing support schemes automatically.</p>	<p>Chorley Council and HAF Delivery Partners</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>
<p><b>To continue to support the development of choice-based food clubs</b> across the borough and develop a framework to support growth of such provision to increase ease of access in areas of demand across the borough.</p> <p><b>Through the framework ensure these groups continue to offer information and direction to wider support</b> and can react to shortages in supplies by being agile in adjusting the offer to broader wider essentials to reduce other household costs.</p>	<p>Chorley Council Communities team and Chorley Together Food Sub-Group Chorley Council Communities team and Chorley Together Food Sub-group</p>	<p>In place and ongoing  In place and ongoing</p>

<b>Provide resource and a supportive pathway available to residents and partners so that residents can access</b> holistic, person centered advice and guidance for complex cases and those accessing support for the first time.	Chorley Council Communities team	In place and ongoing
<b>Use links via the Councils Home Adaptations Team within the Communities service to direct customer to energy reduction schemes</b> to assess if improvements can be made to reduce consumption and costs	Chorley Council Home Adaptations team	In place and ongoing
<b>Continue to deliver the Handyperson scheme</b> to reduce financial burdens on those who qualify and offer wider support through this route via the commissioned delivery partner.	Chorley Council Home Adaptations team	In place and ongoing
<b>Continue the established School Uniform Swap scheme</b> and take the offer directly into communities through existing events and community activities and work with schools, including in villages and rural areas, to develop a long-term sustainable solution which is easy and comfortable to access for parents or children.	Chorley Council Communities team	In place and ongoing
<b>Using Neighbourhood Priority funding, to deliver money management sessions in targeted local schools</b> by working with external providers who have the skill and capacity to deliver sessions in an engaging way for children.	Chorley Council Elected Members and Communities team	Sep 22- Mar 23
<b>Ensure local grants and funding opportunities are maximised</b> by aligning funding criteria towards measured that will directly support cost of living impacts and provide capacity for bespoke levels of support to be available, including where intensive practical support is needed.	Chorley Council Communities team	In place and ongoing
<b>Continue to support increasing capacity to reduce isolation</b> by working closely with partners and aligning funding opportunities to support delivery and raise awareness through digital and non-digital routes.	Chorley Council Communities team	In place and ongoing
<b>Launch a digital support programme</b> that is targeted to supporting those who are suffering financially due to being digitally excluded.	Chorley Council Communities team	Sep 22 – Mar 23

<b>Identify resources required to extend community provision to create Warm Banks</b> to ensure residents know where to access warm places free of charge and can access wider support and access to charging points.	Chorley Council Communities team	Sep 22 to Oct 22
<b>Conduct feasibility study of creating a local white goods access scheme</b> based on evidence of the severity of this issue and the impact on residents to make cost effective and healthier food choices which will also support them to cope better financially.	Chorley Council Communities team	Nov 22
<b>Assess the forthcoming increased pressures of the Cost of Living on the wider community</b> , including our own staff, and identify additional support or workstreams to be established whilst assessing any additional resources required to deliver this support.	Chorley Council Communities Team and Leads from other Council service areas	Proposed
<b>Psychological and wellbeing support</b>	<b>Lead / Partnership</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Complete pilot phase of Confidence Building courses</b> and assess the long-term outcomes to better understand how this approach is supporting access to employment for specific cohorts who have greater emotional challenges to manage.	Chorley Council Communities team	Nov – Dec 22
<b>Continue to deliver an effective and demonstrable health and public sector integrated Social Prescribing model</b> which benefits from being aligned to the work of the Communities team and wider Council services and support options and ensure those identified through cost of living programmes can access this service.	Chorley Council Social Prescribing team	In place and ongoing
<b>Continue to work with health partners on Population Health Management approaches</b> to evidence the impacts at population level of integrated working through a focus on the wider determinants of health that lead to health inequalities and align evidence from this work to support cost of living impacts	Chorley Council Social Prescribing and Wellbeing team	In place and ongoing
<b>Promote Active lifestyles</b> and continue to increase participation in being active as a key tool in maintaining and improving mental and physical health.	Chorley Council Social Prescribing and Communities team	In place and ongoing



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director Communities	Northwest Parishes and Chorley North Neighbourhood Area Meeting	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES – 2022/23 UPDATES**

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

- To update the group on the delivery and progress of the neighbourhood priorities for completion in 2022/23

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- That the report be noted, and any issues/clarification is discussed and agreed at the meeting

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 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	<b>Healthy, safe, and engaged communities</b>

**BACKGROUND**

- Neighbourhood working has been a key priority for Chorley Council and since 2007 has seen the creation, adoption and implementation of the neighbourhood working model for Chorley which provides bringing together of neighbourhood teams, a funding mechanism to support local initiatives, reinforcement of the role of the ward Councillor in neighbourhoods, partnership working with key local stakeholders and support for relatively deprived and poorly organised neighbourhoods.
- The definition of neighbourhood working adopted is as follows:

**‘Working with our partners to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of all our citizens and improve the environment of the neighbourhoods in which they live’**

This definition emphasised the need to work on a partnership basis and to address wider issues within our communities such as health but recognises that work and activities that improve the environment and quality of life for our communities is also essential.

6. Neighbourhood working delivery is developed from a twice-yearly neighbourhood area meeting whereby neighbourhood area groups submit expressions of Interest to undertake environmental and community ‘Neighbourhood Priority Projects’ in their wards/communities.
7. The neighbourhood meetings in January and February of each year provide the mechanism for the neighbourhood groups to identify and agree the preferred projects that are important to the residents of each area. (except 2021/22 due to Covid and boundary changes)
8. June/July area meetings provides an update on the early stages of scoping priority projects and next steps. It is also an avenue to highlight any challenges that may affect delivery which needs to be discussed with area group members and alternative options agreed to be taken forward

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES 2022/23**

9. In the meetings held in January/February 2022 the priorities selected for the Northwest Parishes and Chorley North neighbourhood area were:
  - Creation of a Memorial area at Astley Village and Quiet Garden of Reflection at Euxton
  - To install educational information boards near Buckshaw Village and deliver an eco-project working with St Josephs
  - To install benches at identified locations on Euxton Lane
  - Improvement to the footpath leading from Lady Crosse Drive to Dunham Drive in Whittle-le-Woods
10. A lead officer and lead elected member or parish council representative was identified for each project to take forward delivery throughout the year.
11. The table below provides an overview of the project, works that have been undertaken to date and remaining actions to complete the project;

Priority	Updates	Clarification / potential issues	Anticipated Completion
Part A - Creation of a Memorial area at Astley Village	Site chosen on village green space utilising existing planter. Joint funded project with Astley Village Parish Council. Funds was secured to be able to carry out all intended works which have been complete.	NA	Complete

<p>Part B - Quiet Garden of Reflection at Euxton</p> <p>To create a new attractive and interesting space in the village to give residents an opportunity to sit, relax, remember, and just reflect on loved ones they have lost.</p>	<p>Located in the centre of the village, utilising a piece of land which has been very under used with natural woodland setting</p> <p>The project will be split into two phases. The neighbourhood project has supported the initial works. This included fencing, path, and banking works</p> <p>Second stage will be taken forward by Euxton Parish Council. A spec for the works/design is being created</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Part A - To install educational information boards near Buckshaw Village</p>	<p>Euxton Parish Council have provided example signs/info boards and contents from similar previous schemes</p> <p>Site walkover undertaken and existing sign boards reviewed. Draft plan graphics for jogging routes prepared and issued to Cllr Riggott for further discussion.</p>	<p>Further meeting to be arranged to agree sign content so that fabrication and installation can be instructed. Depending on style of board/sign chosen could result in extra funds being required</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
<p>Part B - Deliver an eco-project working with St Josephs</p> <p>Wildflower meadow and trees to improve biodiversity in the area and improve mental health</p>	<p>Following discussions with lead members and school it was agreed to plant a wildflower meadow and trees within identified area at St. Joseph's School</p> <p>Wildflower meadow - Ploughing, sowing, and planting was carried out</p> <p>Trees delivered in November and planted by the school</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>To install benches at identified locations on Euxton Lane</p>	<p>Sites established to install benches and sought approvals from LCC</p> <p>Further request for CAD plan/drawing from LCC has been submitted and awaiting LCC approvals</p>	<p>Not expecting issues but to note is dependent on approvals from LCC</p>	<p>March</p>

<p>Improvement to the footpath leading from Lady Crosse Drive to Dunham Drive in Whittle-le-Woods</p>	<p>Cllrs highlighted this as an ongoing issue and to seek planning enforcement support</p> <p>Planning have attempted to contact Redrow to discuss working jointly on possible solutions but to date have had no response – further attempts will be made</p> <p>Following site meeting, Streetscene can carry out general tidy up, small improvements plus regrading of the footpath which will make the site more visual pleasing.</p>	<p>Awaiting response from Redrow regards working together on possible solutions.</p> <p>Small visual improvements can be made by Streetscene while we await any contact from Redrow – but would suggest not regrading as could be wasted depending on future possible works</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
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**IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

**Climate change and air quality**

12. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

**Equality and diversity**

13. N/A

**Risk**

14. All priority projects will be scoped accordingly, and risks identified through appropriate policies and procedures. Neighbourhood priorities which require external partners may lengthen timescales on delivery or completion, but in these cases all stakeholders will be notified, and alternative solutions will be proposed and agreed

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

15. Neighbourhood priorities are supported by a £50k annual revenue budget. There are no other financial implications relating to the contents of this report.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

16. There are no legal implications arising directly from the report. However, each scheme may give rise to its own legal considerations, for example the need to satisfy the best value duty in the Local Government Act 1999 and comply with Contract Procedure Rules when awarding contracts.

JENNIFER MULLIN  
DIRECTOR (COMMUNITIES)

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Bernie Heggarty (Neighbourhood Priorities Officer)	bernie.heggarty@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515818	16/01/2023



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director Communities	North West Parishes and Chorley North Neighbourhood Area Meeting	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023

## SELECTION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES 2023/24

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide information on neighbourhood working and delivery which ensures the model continues to develop and meets the needs of members and the communities they serve.
2. To provide area groups with local intelligence within their communities to help support the area group in discussing and selecting preferred priorities.
3. To provide information to area groups on the process of proposing Neighbourhood Priority projects

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

4. Note contents of the report to help discuss and select the preferred priorities for 2023/24

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (Please bold one)

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

### BACKGROUND

#### Neighbourhood Working

6. In November 2007 Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook an inquiry into Neighbourhood Working. This led to the creation, adoption and implementation of the neighbourhood working model for Chorley which provided the establishment of neighbourhood teams, a funding mechanism to support local initiatives, reinforcement of the role of the ward Councillor in neighbourhoods, and support for relatively deprived and poorly organised neighbourhoods.
7. A clear definition of neighbourhood working was established in order that the scope and nature of existing, proposed and expected neighbourhood activity and service delivery can be checked. The definition of neighbourhood working was adopted as follows:

**‘Working with our partners to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of all our citizens and improve the environment of the neighbourhoods in which they live’**

This definition emphasised the need to work on a partnership basis and to address wider issues within our communities such as health but recognises that work and activities that improve the environment and quality of life for our communities is also essential.

8. Neighbourhood working delivery is developed from a twice-yearly neighbourhood area meeting whereby neighbourhood area groups submit expressions of Interest to undertake environmental and community ‘Neighbourhood Priority Projects’ in their wards/communities.
9. The neighbourhood meetings in January and February of each year provide the mechanism for the neighbourhood groups to identify and agree preferred priority projects that are important to the residents of each area and will be delivered within that financial year. (Except 2021/22 which took place in September / October meetings due to Ward Boundary changes and impact of Covid))
10. Neighbourhood Priorities are reviewed at the 6 monthly neighbourhood meetings and revised and updated as appropriate with any significant changes being subject to Executive Member approval, i.e. where there is a budgetary impact.

**Neighbourhood Area Footprints**

11. New Neighbourhood Areas was adopted from May 2021 following the ward boundary changes
12. The area model which has been adopted splits the 14 wards across six neighbourhood areas as detailed below

Neighbourhood Area	Wards
Northern Parishes	Clayton West and Cuerden Clayton East, Brindle and Hoghton
Western Parishes	Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock
Eastern Parishes	Chorley North East Adlington and Anderton
Chorley Town East	Chorley East Chorley South East and Heath Charnock
Chorley North	Euxton Buckshaw and Whittle Chorley North and Astley
Chorley Town West	Coppull Chorley South West Chorley North West

**Neighbourhood Working Budget**

- 13. Budget provision for neighbourhood priorities is made as part of the annual budget setting process. There is an annual budget of £50k to support neighbourhood priority project delivery as Neighbourhood working was established as a key project within the council’s corporate strategy
- 14. While the council continues to support the delivery of the preferred priorities through funding and officer time, each neighbourhood area is encouraged to consider what match-funding and support may be available through other partners. This has been a successful development in recent years in enhancing the projects that would otherwise be able to be delivered.
- 15. The Neighbourhood Priority budget will be allocated to each neighbourhood area group as previous year with each area group responsible in allocating the funds accordingly to projects which they agree to deliver. This gives the group opportunity to fund either one large project or allocate to several different projects. No more than a maximum of four projects are chosen to be delivered
- 16. Resulting from the creation of six areas, each Neighbourhood Area group will have a budget of approx. £8,000 to allocate to their chosen priority projects
- 17. This approach will be reviewed annually

**PROCESS FOR AGREEING PRIORITY PROJECTS**

18. Delivery of this year’s neighbourhood priorities will follow the below timescales:

<p><b>Information:</b>                  Selection reports created and sent to each neighborhood area group with project proposal criteria</p> <p><i>Selection reports includes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community insight</i></li> <li>• <i>Guidance to help create priority proposal</i></li> <li>• <i>Priority proposal form</i></li> <li>• <i>Timescales</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>December</b></p>
<p><b>Nomination:</b>                  Deadline for Neighbourhood Priority project proposals to be submitted                  See below table for each area group deadline</p> <p>Proposals collated and circulated for Neighbourhood Area meetings</p>	<p><b>Jan/Feb</b></p>
<p><b>Selection:</b>                  Neighborhood area meetings                  Discuss and agree projects to be delivered for 2023/24 delivery                  Meeting agenda content covered as agreed</p>	<p><b>January/ February/ March</b></p>
<p><b>Approval:</b>                  Produce EMD to get final Exec Member sign off for 2023/24                  Neighbourhood priorities delivery</p>	<p><b>March</b></p>
<p><b>Scoping:</b>                  Assign Lead Officer to projects for scoping and delivery                  Lead officer works with lead member from neighbourhood group to scope the priority – including timescales, costs and funding etc.</p>	<p><b>April</b></p>
<p><b>Delivery:</b>                  Delivery of agreed priority projects</p>	<p><b>April 23 to March 24</b></p>

<b>Update and monitoring:</b> Neighbourhood Area meetings Update on the progress regards selected neighbourhood priorities	<b>June / July</b>
<b>Mid-term Update and monitoring:</b> Update provided by email (in addition to ongoing progress updates on individual projects) on all selected neighbourhood priorities to neighbourhood management groups	<b>October</b>

## PRODUCING YOUR PROPOSAL

19. All information on proposing 2023/24 Neighbourhood Priority projects have been circulated to Neighbourhood area groups. This includes:

- Guidance to support proposing priorities – see Appendix 1
- Community Insight information
- Examples of previous ideas
- Proposal Form – see Appendix 2
- Residents Survey – see Appendix 3
- Central Lancashire ICP – Marmot review - Health inequalities / social determinants of health – see Appendix 4

20. The council continues to encourage projects that focuses on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, as these issues impact on the daily lives of our residents. In addition, the impact that the Cost of Living crisis is having on our communities is set to further exacerbate negative impacts for many residents, widening gaps in inequalities therefore there is an opportunity for Member to consider project that help to reduce this impact and lessen the long term impacts.

21. We would encourage you to think about how the project could help achieve any of the below

- Provide opportunities to make communities healthier
- Provide help to keep neighbourhoods clean and safe
- Provide support for those experiencing financial hardship
- Provide opportunities that address food poverty
- Provide opportunities that address furniture poverty
- Provide opportunities for those experiencing mental health issues
- Provide opportunities to addresses social isolation
- Provide opportunities to enhance life skills of residents
- Provide support to overcome digital barriers and address gaps in provision
- Provide opportunities that help encourage residents to be more active

22. To help aid discussions in the meeting and selection of priorities we are asking if you can complete as best possible the Priority Proposal Form. This looks to gather information and make it easier at the area meeting to discuss, access feasibility and prioritise selection

Form includes

- Detail of Project - what is to be delivered and anticipated actions
- What are expected outcomes/how will it enhance life of people in the community
- Is there a rationale or any evidence that supports why the project is needed?
- What other partners may need to be consulted in order to deliver the project
- What are the anticipated costs of the project?
- What other resources may be needed to deliver the project
- Do you feel the project can be completed within financial year?

23. Proposal forms are recommended to be submitted prior to the meeting in which they can be fully discussed, and final priority projects agreed

#### Deadlines for submitting Neighbourhood Priority Proposals

Neighbourhood Area	Deadline for submitting proposals	Meeting date
Chorley Town East	23 January 2023	30 January 2023
Northern Parishes	25 January 2023	2 February 2023
North West Parishes & Chorley North	2 February 2023	9 February 2023
Chorley Town West	7 February 2023	14 February 2023
Eastern Parishes	13 February 2023	20 February 2023
Western Parishes	22 February 2023	1 March 2023

#### Climate change and air quality

24. The work noted in this report has an overall negative/positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

#### Equality and diversity

25. NA

#### Risk

26. All priority projects will be scoped accordingly, and risks identified through appropriate policies and procedures. Neighbourhood priorities which require external partners may lengthen timescales on delivery or completion, but in these cases all stakeholders will be notified, and alternative solutions will be proposed and agreed

#### COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

27. As detailed above the neighbourhood priorities are supported by a £50k annual revenue budget.

#### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

28. There are no direct legal implications but a scheme on an individual basis might have legal implications, for example the need to comply with best value and contract procedure rules if a contract is awarded.

JENNIFER MULLIN  
DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Report Author	Ext	Date
Bernie Heggarty	5818	11/01/2023

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## **PROPOSING NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES**

Chorley Council continue to support neighbourhood working and sees the benefit of enabling elected representatives and other organisations to work together to improve local communities. Therefore, an annual budget of £50k has been retained to support neighbourhood priority project delivery

At the meetings in the New Year each Neighbourhood Area Group will be asked to select their priorities. To assist in this process, we have provided some supplementary information to help members of the group to prepare for identifying and selecting priorities

### **Producing your Proposal**

The council also continues to encourage projects that focuses on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, as these issues impact on the daily lives of our residents. In addition, the impact that the Cost of Living crisis is having on our communities is set to further exacerbate negative impacts for many residents, widening gaps in inequalities therefore there is an opportunity for Member to consider project that help to reduce this impact and lessen the long term impacts.

We would encourage you to think about how the project could help achieve any of the below

- Provide opportunities to make communities healthier
- Provide help to keep neighbourhoods clean and safe
- Provide support for those experiencing financial hardship
- Provide opportunities that address food poverty
- Provide opportunities that address furniture poverty
- Provide opportunities for those experiencing mental health issues
- Provide opportunities to addresses social isolation
- Provide opportunities to enhance life skills of residents
- Provide support to overcome digital barriers and address gaps in provision
- Provide opportunities that help encourage residents to be more active

### **Submitting your Proposal (Priority Proposal Form)**

To help aid discussions in the meeting and selection of priorities we are asking if you can complete as best possible the Priority Proposal Form. This looks to gather information and make it easier at the area meeting to discuss, access feasibility and prioritise selection

Form includes

- Detail of Project - what is to be delivered and anticipated actions
- What are expected outcomes/how will it enhance life of people in the community
- Is there a rationale or any evidence that supports why the project is needed?
- What other partners may need to be consulted in order to deliver the project
- What are the anticipated costs of the project?
- What other resources may be needed to deliver the project
- Do you feel the project can be completed within financial year?

**Funding Available**

Chorley Council commits a £50k budget investment to support priorities which resulting from the creation of six areas, each Neighbourhood Area group will have a budget of £8000 to allocate to their chosen priority projects

Each area group can allocate the funds accordingly to projects which they agree to deliver. This will give the group opportunity to fund either one large project or allocate to several different projects. It is recommended that no more than a maximum of four projects are chosen to be delivered

While the council continues to support the delivery through this funding and officer time, each neighbourhood area is encouraged to consider what match-funding and support may be available through other partners. This has been successful in recent years in enhancing projects that would otherwise not been delivered.

**Timescales**

The following process will be used to nominate, select, and approve the neighbourhood priorities for each neighbourhood area:

<p><b>Information:</b> Selection reports created and sent to each neighborhood area group with project proposal criteria</p> <p><i>Selection reports includes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community insight</i></li> <li>• <i>Guidance to help create priority proposal</i></li> <li>• <i>Priority proposal form</i></li> <li>• <i>Timescales</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>December</b></p>
<p><b>Nomination:</b> Deadline for Neighbourhood Priority project proposals to be submitted See below table for each area group deadline</p> <p>Proposals collated and circulated for Neighbourhood Area meetings</p>	<p><b>Jan/Feb</b></p>
<p><b>Selection:</b> Neighborhood area meetings Discuss and agree projects to be delivered for 2023/24 delivery Meeting agenda content covered as agreed</p>	<p><b>February/March</b></p>
<p><b>Approval:</b> Produce EMD to get final Exec Member sign off for 2023/24 Neighbourhood priorities delivery</p>	<p><b>March</b></p>
<p><b>Scoping:</b> Assign Lead Officer to projects for scoping and delivery Lead officer works with lead member from neighbourhood group to scope the priority – including timescales, costs and funding etc.</p>	<p><b>April</b></p>
<p><b>Delivery:</b> Delivery of agreed priority projects</p>	<p><b>April 23 to March 24</b></p>

<p><b>Update and monitoring:</b> Neighbourhood Area meetings Update on the progress regards selected neighbourhood priorities</p>	<p><b>June / July</b></p>
<p><b>Mid-term Update and monitoring:</b> Update provided by email (in addition to ongoing progress updates on individual projects) on all selected neighbourhood priorities to neighbourhood management groups</p>	<p><b>October</b></p>

**Deadlines for submitting Neighbourhood Priority Proposals**

<b>Neighbourhood Area</b>	<b>Deadline for submitting proposals</b>	<b>Meeting date</b>
Chorley Town East	23 January 2023	30 January 2023
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Chorley Town West	7 February 2023	14 February 2023
Eastern Parishes	13 February 2023	20 February 2023
Western Parishes	22 February 2023	1 March 2023

**Supplementary insight Information**

At the meetings in the New Year each Neighbourhood Area Group will be asked to select up to four priorities. To assist in this process, the following information is to help members of the group to prepare for identifying and selecting priorities. It is a combination of data across a range of factors and local intelligence

This includes;

- Community Insight Information
- Previous priority project ideas
- Residents Survey
- Central Lancashire ICP - Marmot team review - Chorley selected Health inequalities / social determinants of health

## **Community Insight Information**

### **Changing needs within our communities**

The negative financial, health and social impacts of Covid and the emerging impacts related to the increase in the cost of living is significantly affecting those who were already in vulnerable situations but has also affected those experiencing hardship for the first time who are less likely or familiar with accessing support.

### **COVID-19 impact**

The pandemic has presented a global challenge and the side effects of this on society is of concern. Intelligence suggests that the pandemic will widen existing inequalities and create new ones.

The drastic changes have understandably had a significant impact on the mental health of many residents and effected various groups differently. From the clinically extremely vulnerable to the furloughed fearing future uncertainty, this unique challenge to ordinary life has impacted both those with pre-existing vulnerabilities as well as those who normally enjoy mentally healthy lives.

It has been found that COVID-19 has compounded the “one community” aspect, to provide a well-established network of support, which covers a wide range of areas and early intervention and prevention remains vital in tackling these areas to mitigate the longer-term impacts.

### **Cost of Living Crisis**

Since late 2021, there has been an emerging cost of living crisis that has impacted households. The crisis is characterised by the increase in the cost of everyday essentials, such as food, energy, and transport, which have been increasing faster than the rate of income for many households.

The causes behind this are generally considered to be:

- Rapid increase in energy prices caused by increased demand for gas in Asia, depleted storage supplies in Europe, and disrupted gas supply chains as a result of the war in Ukraine (80% of households in England are heated by mains gas with 33% of electricity generated from gas power stations),
- Increase in prices for commodities and goods as a result of the impact of the Covid-19, which has decreased the rate production due to pandemic shutdowns as well as increased global shipping costs as result of reduced capacity, making imports more expensive. The war in Ukraine has also impacted food prices as a major exporter of agricultural goods.

The impact is forecast to deepen for many:

- The Bank of England forecasts wages to grow by 4.75% in 2022 compared to an inflation rate of over 8%,

- Poorest households have been disproportionately affected by the increases in gas and electricity prices in particular, as they spend a larger proportion of their total household income on gas and electricity (11%) compared to the richest 10% (4%)
- Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) projected that by October 2022, the poorest households could experience an inflation rate of 14% compared to 8% for the richest households
- The National Institute of Economic and Social Research estimates 1.5m British households, 1 in 20, will soon face bills for food and energy which will exceed their disposable income after housing costs.

It is widely known that the current and emerging increases in the cost of living will impact all residents and some will not be able to accommodate the increases without having a detrimental impact on family or individual health, wellbeing and other wider impacts such as loss of jobs.

### **Themes of Support**

In response to the above, the following gives some details of areas of focus that may inform area groups in selecting priorities. These themes have been identified through various themes of work within communities and act as a summary of the key areas of need that have been identified and what support might be required to meet these needs.

### **Cost of Living - Lower income households and those facing financial insecurity**

The cost of living crisis has and will continue to have a significantly effect on many households. Through the engagement within our communities and joint working with our local partners it has been evidenced that residents in need of support has continued to rise following the pandemic. More residents who have previously never accessed support are presenting to services in need of help.

### **Energy**

Data analysis following delivery of Household support fund (phase 1) has highlighted the main root causes residents are experiencing difficulties are:

- Recent rise in fuel bills - Many had seen their monthly outgoings rise by up to 25% over recent months and are worried how they will cope with further increases to fuel costs.
- Reduced income due to reductions in universal credit - affected those who are working as well as those who are not working. People on low incomes are struggling to meet their monthly out goings. Those experiencing reduced universal credit payments reported being behind on direct debit payments for household fuel charges.

### **Debt and Money management**

One of the key themes found as part of the community hub response was households requiring financial support. Help is needed around managing money and debt management.

Feedback from our partners delivering Household Support Fund have identified significant number of people who are using online gambling websites and as a result struggling financially.

During Covid there was an increase in the use of takeaway delivery services. These behaviours have continued, and now become the norm for households. This emphasising on the education and awareness of how people could manage and allocate their money more effectively, along with establishing a healthier lifestyle.

### **Essential living – Food/essential items**

Over the last 2 years we have a significant rise in the need and reliance on emergency food support. (foodbanks/food clubs). There has been a reduction in the perceived stigma previously attached to utilising food banks but still are some reluctance for families new to accessing support to come forward for help via this model.

Working with many local food partners the feedback indicates a growing need for this provision. Residents have reported in the struggles to budget for food and are seeking out food clubs/banks at least once a week. Feedback from HSF has shown that some residents no longer budgeted for food and had become dependent on the extra provision.

### **Furniture Poverty**

Over the last two years and through support programmes delivered there has been a recognised rise in furniture poverty. A significant proportion of families and individuals do not have the financial resource to replace a piece of furniture (beds etc.) or white goods resulting in poor living conditions and poor value for money in how they manage their budgets (food shopping). LCC have commissioned a service across Lancashire, and it is important that this service is fully utilised, along with monitoring where possible to ensure that local demand can be supported.

### **Employability**

As of September 2022, the Universal Credit claimant count in Chorley was 2.5% which compares to a Lancashire average of 4%. However, the economic inactivity rate in Chorley has increased to 23.3%, compared to pre-pandemic levels of 20.1%. This trend is similar nationally and the Office for National Statistics has suggested that this is possibly linked to NHS waiting lists for the over 50s.

Support will need to be around helping residents to get into employment and equipping them with the skills to do so. There are regional and national funding programmes available, and there is an established Chorley Together Employment working group

## Mental health

Social Prescribing team identified that as a direct result of COVID clients have mainly needed help around emotional support, bereavement and experiencing heightened levels of anxiety. The national picture of mental health found post-CoVid confirms higher levels of mental distress for those unemployed or inactive employment.

Categories of Referrals (Service Level)	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Social Isolation/Groups	37	85
Care needs	34	16
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>62</b>
Financial Support	17	22
Bereavement	12	13
Housing/ASB	11	18
Weight Loss/Diabetes/Motivation	10	6
Dementia	7	3
Physical Health/Pain Mgt/Cancer	6	22
Learning Difficulties	6	2

Data from our social prescribing service shows referrals regarding mental health needs have doubled from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 this year.

Since July this year the Social Prescribing Team have had a waiting list of over 100 cases, receiving 170 referrals/Population Health Management contacts in July 2022, 163 in August and 198 in September. This is a significant rise of around approx. 100 compared to last year with figures in July 2021 of 59, August 2021 of 76 and September 2021 of 72.

Feedback from the team of Social Prescribers in Chorley has identified gaps around provision for residents who possibly don't meet the crisis criteria of support from the Mental Health Team and are struggling whilst on waiting lists for Mindsmatter and other talking therapies.

The suggested focus is that support is required for those residents who need a form of a listening ear or more 'informal' drop-in where they can go to speak to a Mental Health specialise or volunteer on a 121 or group basis around their mental health.

In Chorley we have a lot of social activities, however those residents identified above sometimes are not ready to go to a group setting or somewhere they may have to participate in a specific activity.

Support will need to be focused around emotional wellbeing, holistic treatments, counselling and promoting activities aimed at increasing mental and physical wellbeing.

## **Support for parents and families**

A key area that has been affected are parents and families and have been found to be more greatly impacted both economically and in terms of their mental health compared to non-parents. Many children living in deprived areas face “holiday hunger”. This is when the absence of free school meals during the school holidays is compounded by the need to pay childcare costs. Chorley saw an increase in households seeking support for basic food and supplies.

Support for this will need to be wide ranging around some key areas such as managing money, debt management and promoting activities aimed at increasing mental and physical wellbeing for the whole family.

Below are some of the issue's and support needs families reported who accessed Household Support Fund:

- Lack of knowledge and confidence to engage with other services and access available resources
- Trust issues or needed practical support such as help with online applications
- Advocacy/advice with current situation and issues they were experiencing
- Help to put their voice across and heard by agencies such as DWP, GP's CAF & TAF
- Support to prepare and cook nutritional family meals on a budget.
- Provision of nappies & baby milk
- Support to access free childcare
- Support with child behaviour
- Parents whose children were having issues with school
- Development delay of babies and children
- Post intervention and support for those experiencing historic domestic abuse.
- Support to cope with multiple children
- Support for new parents

It has been recognised that if handled in the right way (targeted and through trusted partners) families are willing to attend workshops that help them to develop skills such as cooking on a budget, healthy lifestyle approaches, being more active, looking after their mental health.

## **Older people**

Older people have been adversely affected by Covid-19, not only in terms of the death toll but also regarding negative mental health impacts of the virus due to increased isolation levels and stress caused by the physical threat of the virus.

Loneliness in older people has been an area of increased risk prior to CoVid, as highlighted within the intelligence coming out of the social prescribing service, with a third of cases referred to social prescribing as part of this evaluation involved people feeling lonely.

Residents who would benefit from attending a social activity do not know where to start in terms of finding out where they are and what is available and sometimes need encouragement at first to attend. Cost is a factor in encouraging people to try a group and opportunities to occupy time with other leisure activities is limited for some residents particularly those who are already somewhat isolated or lonely  
Support will need to focus on building confidence, tackling loneliness, and promoting activities aimed at increasing mental and physical wellbeing.

**Previous Neighbourhood Priority Projects**

Below are a range of previous projects / ideas which may help groups

Priority Project	Details	Outcomes
Project to address Social Isolation	Delivery of open sessions to supporting people to connect with others through fun activity. Could be Community based café sessions, bingo activity, etc. Potential to build on what is out there and support	Help address poor levels of mental health and anxiety, and people scared of going out and meeting others. Will support residents to take an active part in their community. Support to Build confidence, Improve Wellbeing, and make connections to become self-sustainable
Provide opportunities that address food poverty	Support for local organisations who are helping provide emergency food parcels or hot food to those who are vulnerable within the community	Ensure that all residents struggling have essential supplies
Provide support for those experiencing financial hardship	Community based hubs to support housing (select move access), digital access benefit support, debt management etc.	Build skills, Improve Resilience Increase Digital Access. People not clear on where to go for help and lack of digital Skills are an issue and doing something face to face will help this support
Project to improve Mental Health	Provide peer support opportunities for those experiencing difficulties. Looking at peer support for anxiety/building confidence.	To address poor levels of mental health and anxiety, with higher levels of trauma, bereavement, domestic abuse, suicide, general impact of COVID-19. Build Personal Resilience, Improve Wellbeing Make connections in community Become self-sustainable

<p>Project to provide physical activity opportunities to make communities healthier</p>	<p>Provide opportunities that help encourage residents to be more active. Inactivity coupled with high levels of mental health and anxiety, have resulted in people not doing exercise</p> <p>“Getting Back to Exercise” sessions to come and try</p>	<p>Build confidence Improve Wellbeing Improve health</p>
<p>Addressing unemployment and supporting people back into work / making work ready</p>	<p>Delivery of series of Confidence Building courses, Interpersonal Skills etc. to provide new skills and Learning. Possible Roadshow of providers for come and try taster sessions</p> <p>Confidence and low-level mental health issues are long standing common barriers to employment.</p>	<p>moving customers closer to employment, but also will reduce social isolation, reduce the impact of poor emotional wellbeing</p> <p>The course will focus on low level Employability and Volunteering related Skills as well as further developing the Confidence and Emotional Wellbeing of the attendees.</p>
<p>Defibrillator Provision</p>	<p>Supply of Public access defibrillator and awareness sessions to increase confidence for community to use. Approx. £2000</p>	<p>Increased defibrillator provision in the area</p>
<p>Healthy Eating Project</p>	<p>Will provide nutritional advice and cooking skills workshops to educate adults / parents / and children around eating healthy and better wellbeing.</p>	<p>Help address levels of obesity and help cooking on budget style work across range of targeted cohorts of residents. Upskill residents and raise awareness of how to cook healthy meals. Educate to make better use of money and shopping on a budget</p>
<p>Community Clean Up Events</p>	<p>Deliver community clean up event with skip and bulky item collections. Also encourage residents to get involved through litter picking</p>	<p>Residents taking pride in where they live and creating cleaner, safer communities</p>

### Neighbourhood Priority – Proposal Form

We would encourage you to think about how the project could help achieve any of the below

- Provide opportunities to make communities healthier
- Provide help to keep neighbourhoods clean and safe
- Provide support for those experiencing financial hardship
- Provide opportunities that address food poverty
- Provide opportunities that address furniture poverty
- Provide opportunities for those experiencing mental health issues
- Provide opportunities to addresses social isolation
- Provide opportunities to enhance life skills of residents
- Provide support to overcome digital barriers and address gaps in provision
- Provide opportunities that help encourage residents to be more active

Please complete all sections with as much detail as available

Neighbourhood Area Group	
Issue you would like to improve through this project (if applicable from above list)	
Suggested Project  Give details of what you think could be delivered	
What are the expected outcomes?  How will it enhance the life of people in the community?	

<p>Is there any evidence you have that supports the outcomes you have identified?</p>	
<p>What other partners may need to be consulted in order to deliver the project</p>	
<p>What are the anticipated costs of the project? Is it achievable within the budget?</p>	
<p>Is there any funding identified from other sources towards the project?</p>	
<p>Do you feel can be completed by March 2024?</p>	
<p>Any other information you feel relevant</p>	

Please return completed forms to [bernie.heggarty@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:bernie.heggarty@chorley.gov.uk)

# Residents' Survey 2021

## Neighbourhood Area: North West Parishes and Chorley North

<b>Wards:</b>	Euxton; Buckshaw and Whittle; Chorley North and Astley
<b>Population:</b>	25,593
<b>Male:</b>	12,539
<b>Female:</b>	13,054
<b>Surveys Completed:</b>	312

<b>Better Than Overall</b>	<b>Within Overall Threshold (5%)</b>	<b>Below Overall</b>
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### Perception of the Council

	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
% of residents are satisfied with the way Chorley Council runs things	74%	73%
% of residents think Chorley Council provides value for money	57%	56%
% of the residents think that Chorley Council act on the concerns of local residents	55%	53%

### Your Local Area

	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	92%	86%

	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
% residents think Chorley Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides	66%	67%

	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
% of residents feel safe after dark	68%	64%
% of resident feel safe in the day	96%	92%

### Satisfaction with Services

Services that residents said they were most satisfied with:	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
Waste and recycling collection	79%	83%
Parks and open spaces	87%	82%
Keeping public land clear of litter and refuse	71%	67%
Sports and leisure facilities	55%	53%

**Life in Chorley**

	Neighbourhood Area	Overall Residents Survey
% of residents think the council are making Chorley a better place to live	76%	78%
% of residents think the council are making their neighbourhood a better place to live	55%	54%
% of residents think Chorley is creating more things for families to do	67%	65%
% of residents think Chorley is making itself a better place to work	50%	46%
% of residents think that Chorley council involves them in decision making	45%	46%
% of residents think that Chorley is well run and efficient	54%	56%
% of residents think Chorley Council staff are friendly and polite	55%	61%
% of residents think Chorley Council are easy to contact	64%	67%
% of residents think Chorley Council listens to the concerns of residents	44%	45%
% of residents think Chorley Council supports appropriate housing for local people.	28%	31%

**Areas where we are performing well:**

- Residents were very satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- When compared to other wards Euxton had the highest satisfaction level with parks and open spaces and keeping public land clear of litter and refuse.
- The percentage of residents that feel safe during the day and after dark, scored higher than the overall borough results

**Areas where we could improve:**

When compared to other wards, Buckshaw and Whittle had;

- The second highest level of dissatisfaction (22%) with sports and leisure facilities
- The second lowest satisfaction with the way Chorley Council runs things.
- The lowest satisfaction with waste and recycling collection

When compared to other wards, Chorley North and Astley had;

- The second lowest satisfaction with waste and recycling collection

**Coronavirus (Covid 19 Pandemic)**

The top three aspects that residents were concerned the most about were:

- The mental health of their friends and family (31%)
- Their own physical health (29%)
- The physical health of their friends and family (28%)

**Environmental Issues**

74% of people think that it's important that the Council and residents work together to tackle climate change and its impact

Things the Council could be doing to move towards a greener Chorley were:

- Improvements to bus and rail services (72%)
- Greener energy, e.g. wind turbines, solar panels (65%)
- Tree planting, including 'Tree Giveaways'(64%)

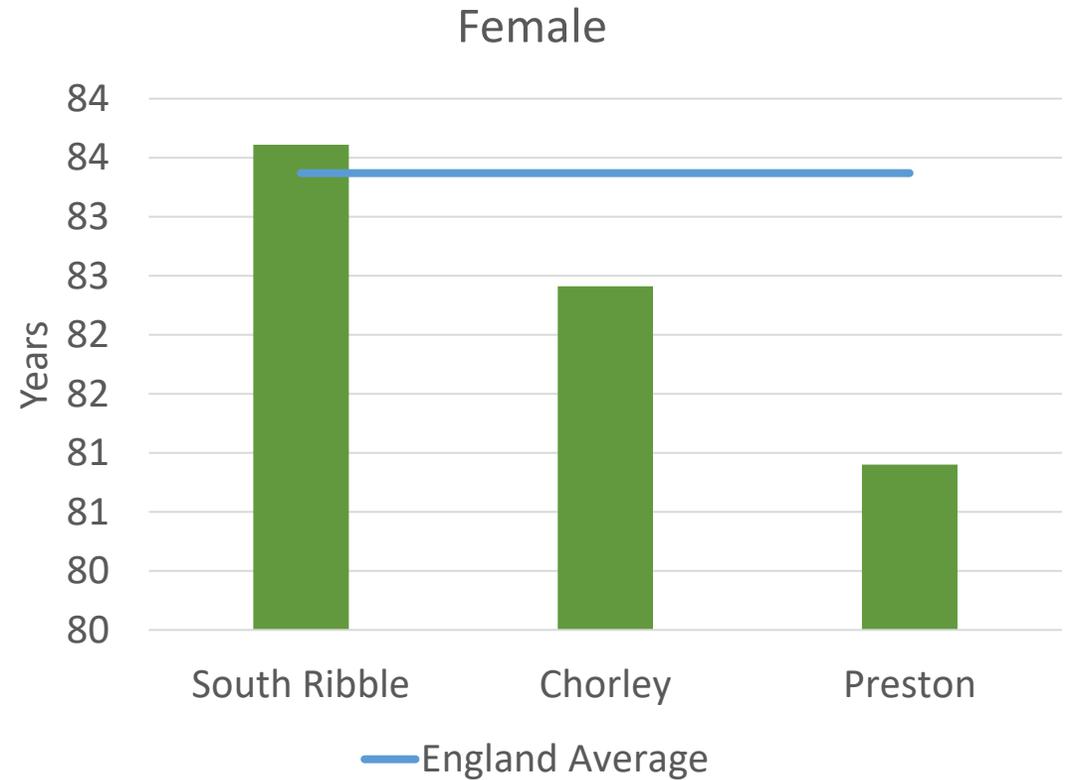
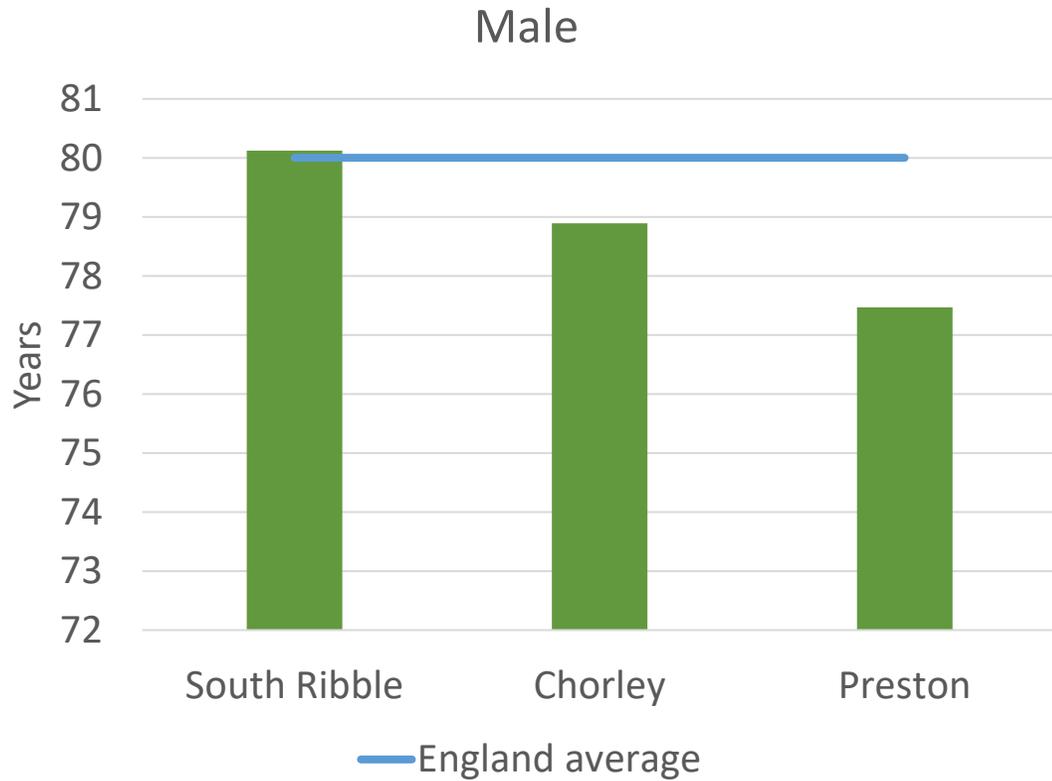
# Central Lancashire ICP

Marmot team review - Chorley selected Health inequalities / social determinants of health



**INSTITUTE** *of*  
**HEALTH EQUITY**

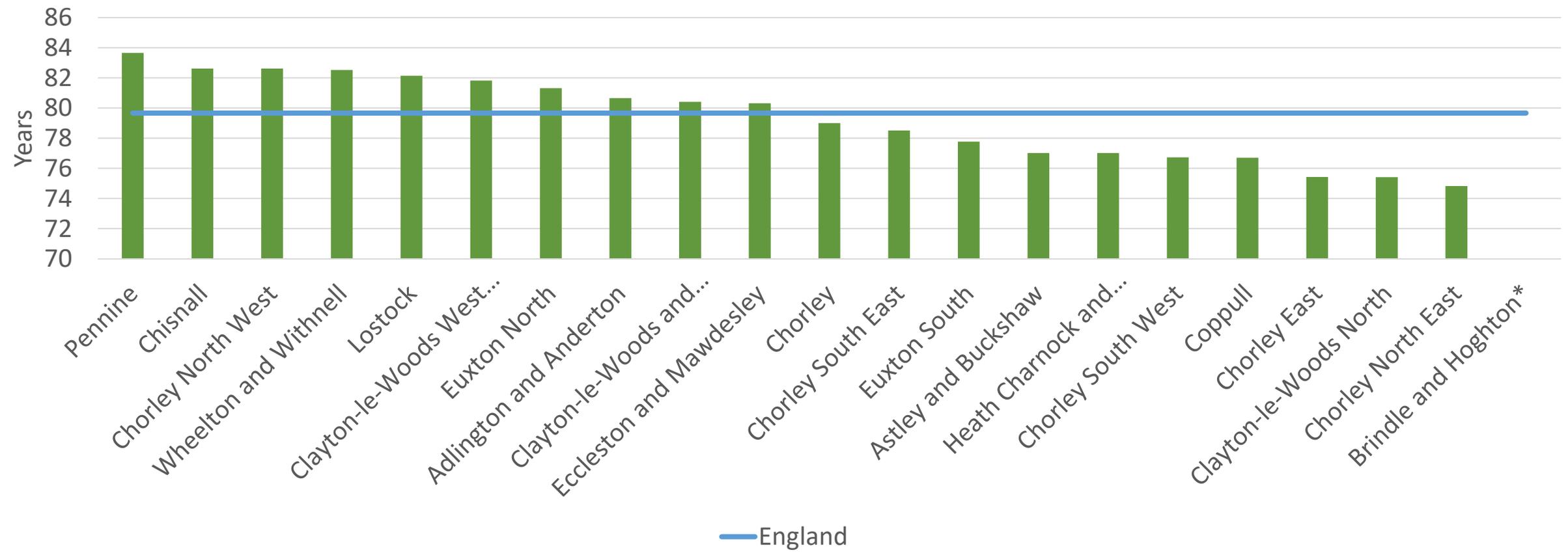
# Life expectancy



Source: ONS

*On average, men in Pennine live 9 years longer than men in Chorley North East*

Life expectancy 2015-19, **Chorley, Male**

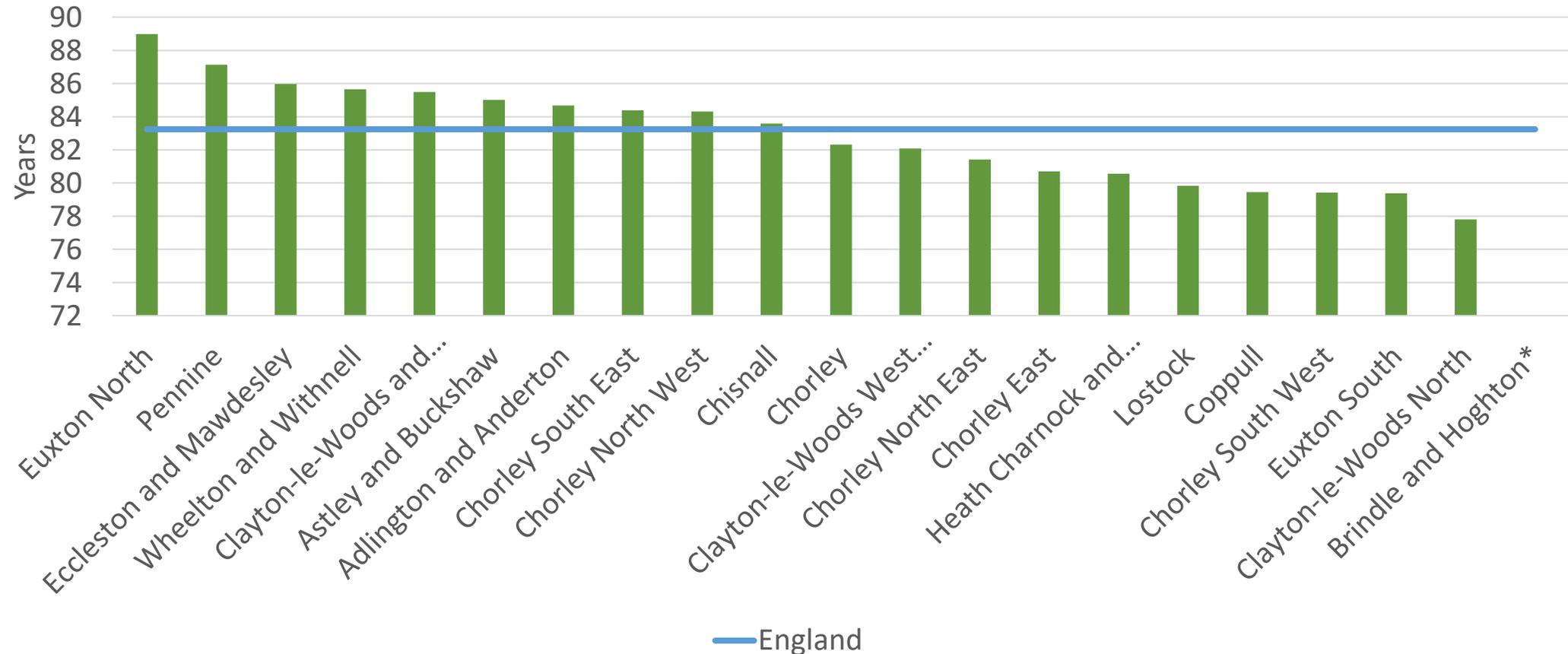


\*data not available

Source: PHE

*On average, women in Euxton North live 11 years longer than women in Clayton-le-Woods North*

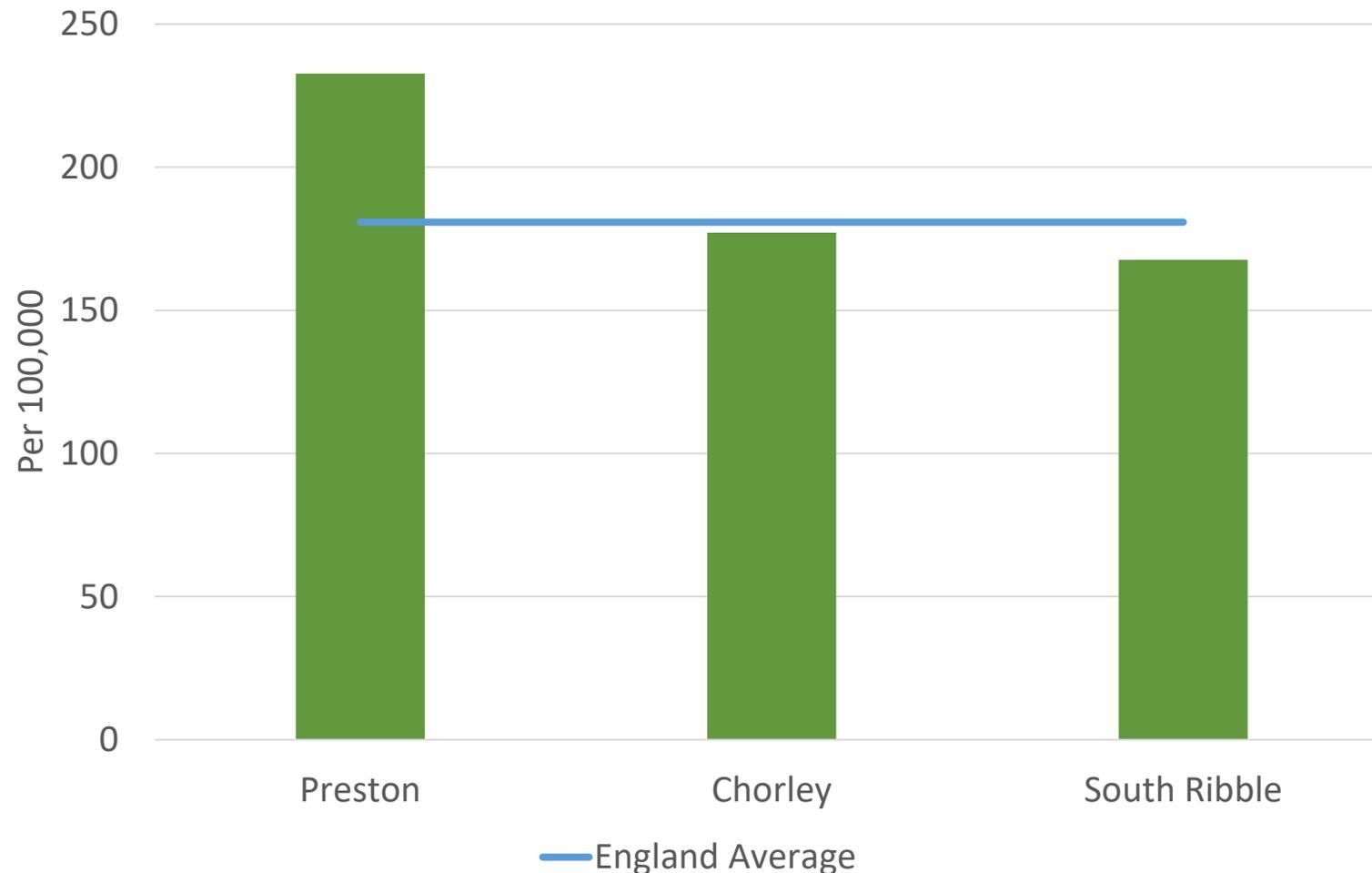
**Life expectancy 2015-19, Chorley, Female**



\*data not available

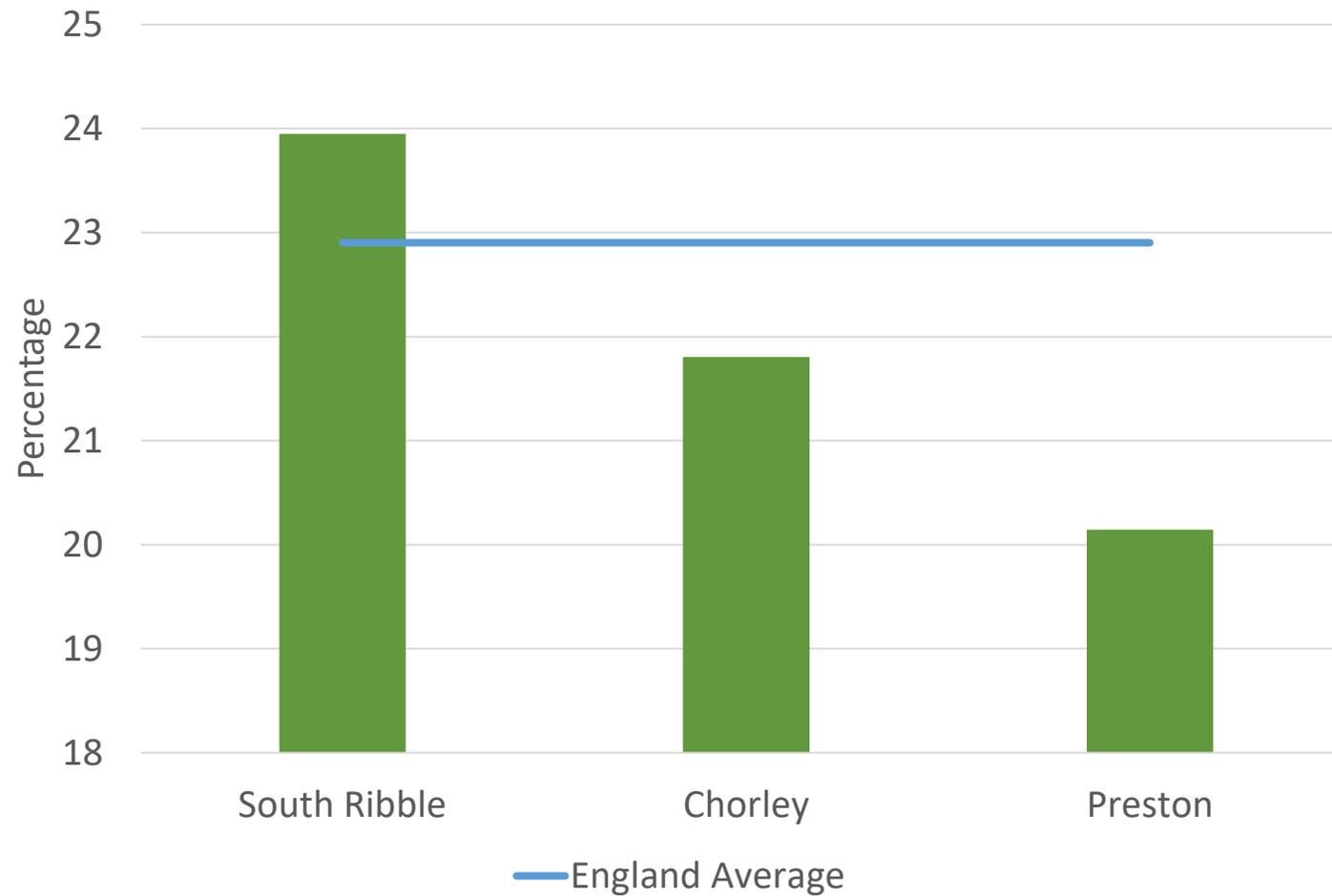
Source: PHE

Mortality rate from causes considered *preventable*, (including cardiovascular, cancer, respiratory, liver diseases)  
Directly Standardised Rate, per 100,000



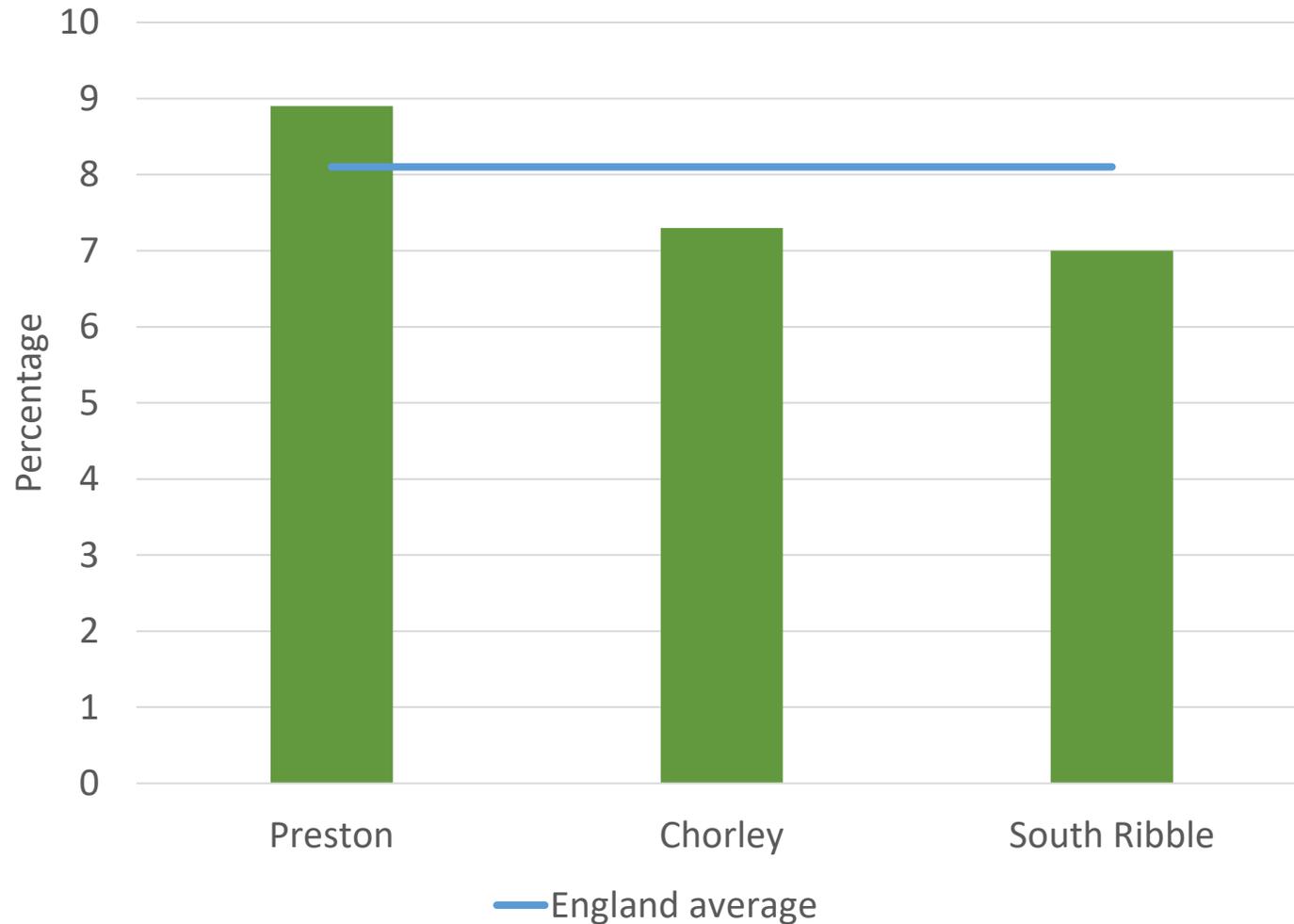
Source: PHE

## Physically in/active adults, percentage



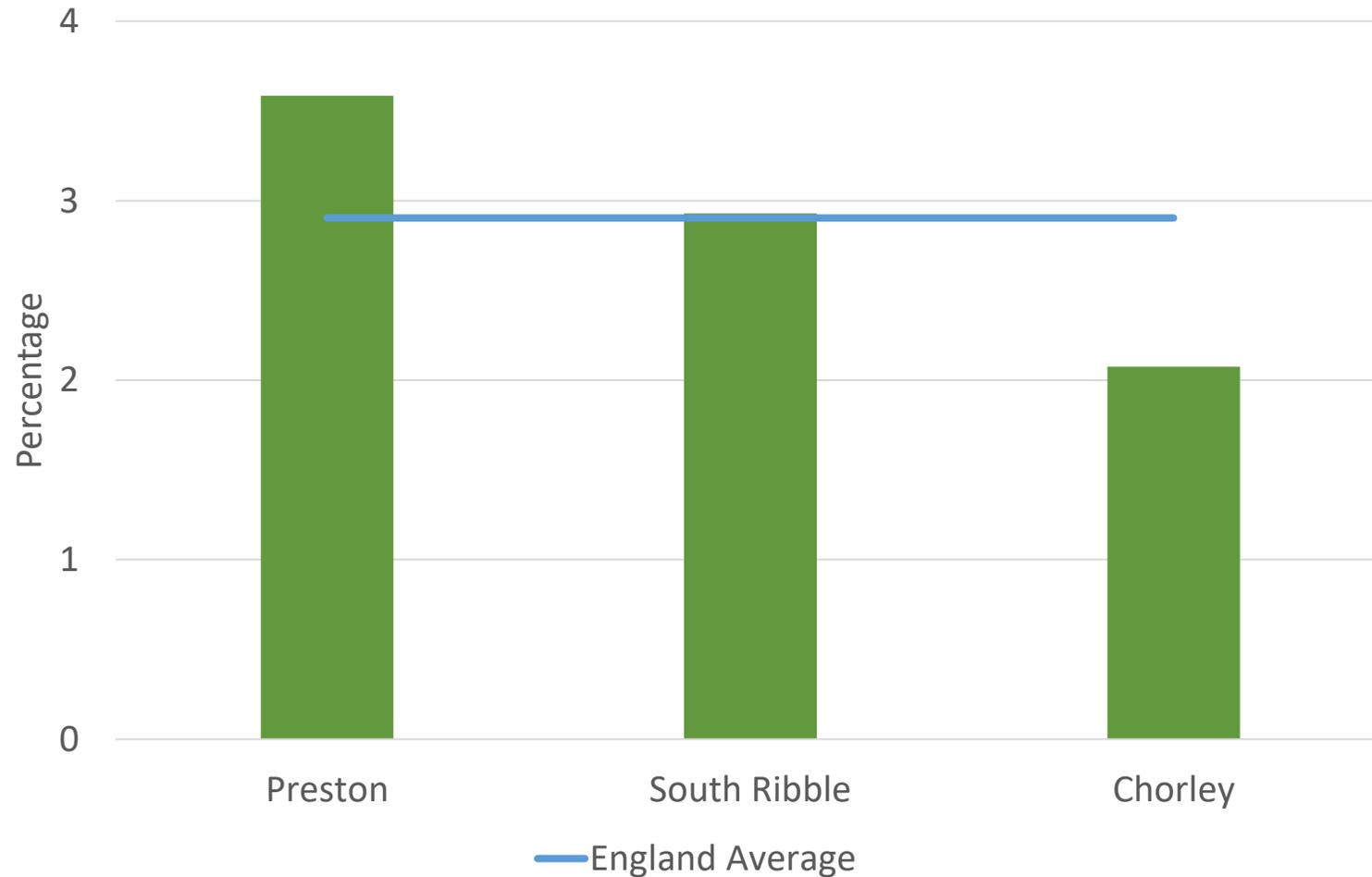
Source: PHE

## Preterm (24-36 weeks) births



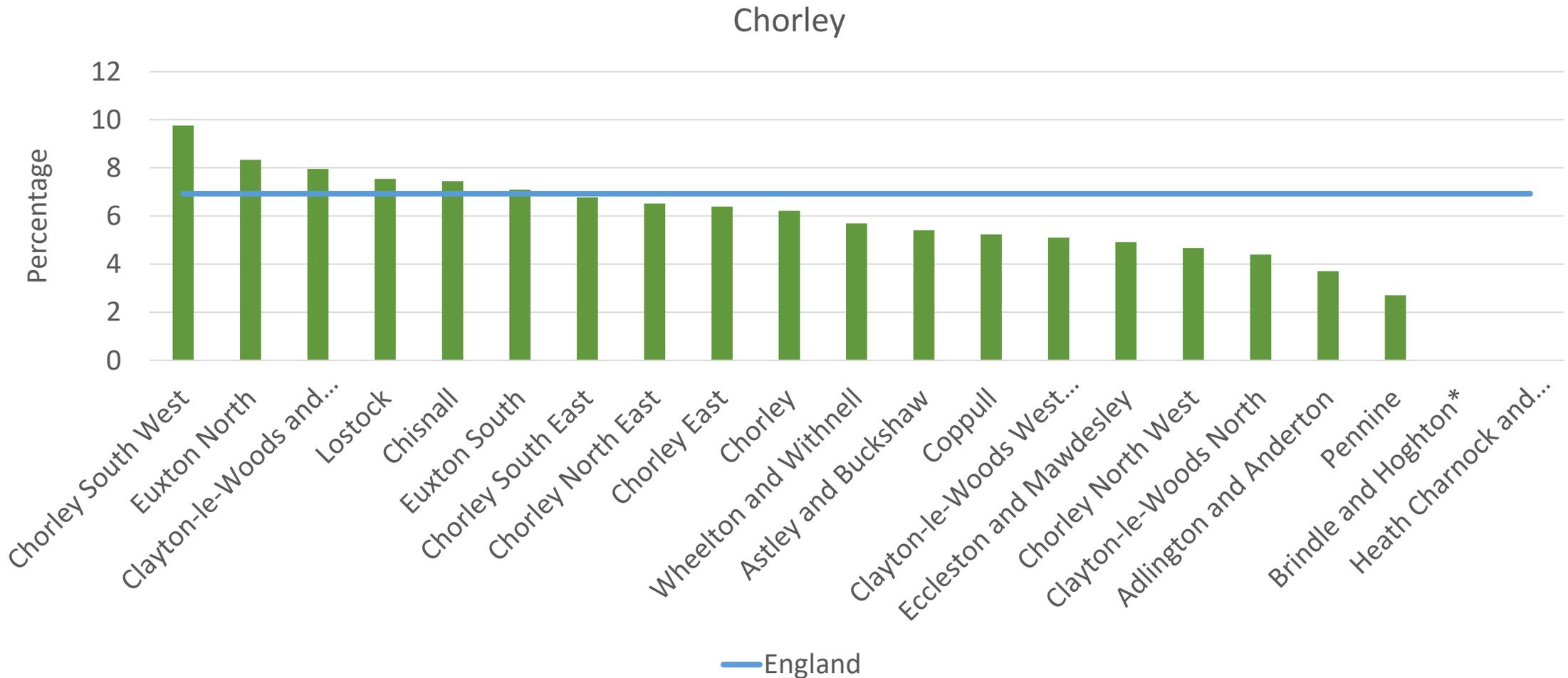
Source: PHE

## Low birth weight of term babies, 2019, percentage



Source: PHE

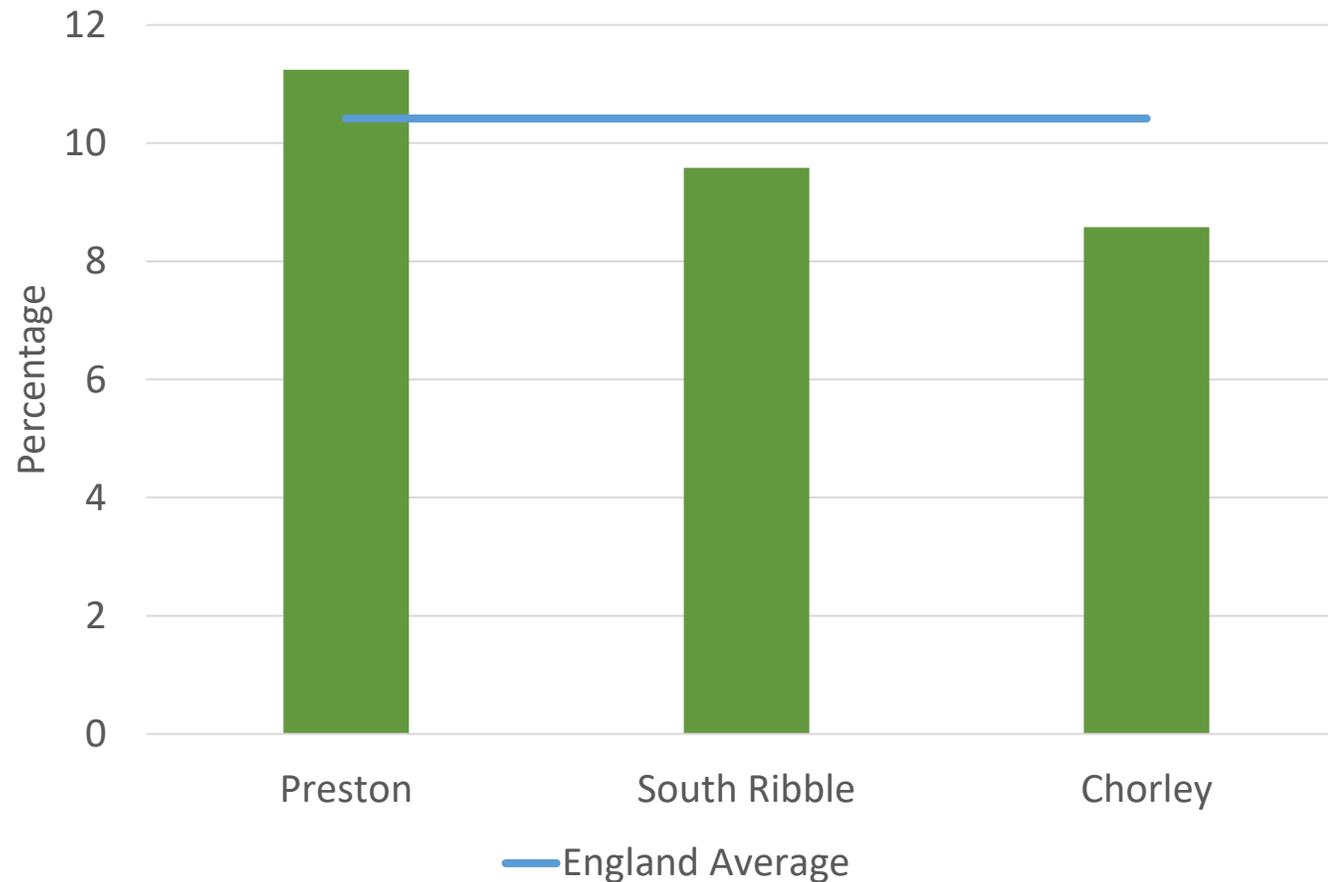
# Low birth weight of term babies, ward level



\*Data not available

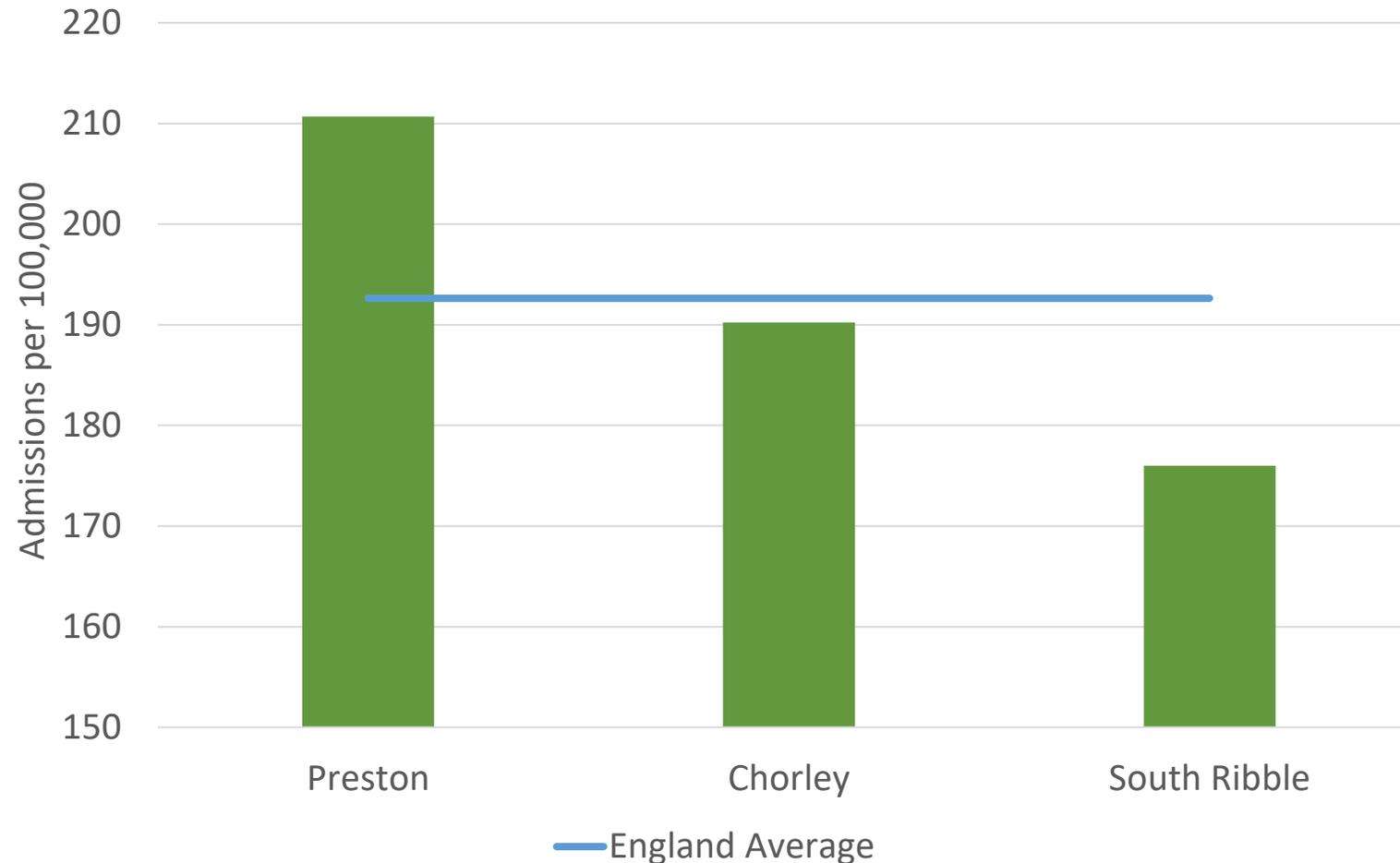
Source: PHE

## Smoking status at time of delivery, 2019/20, percentage



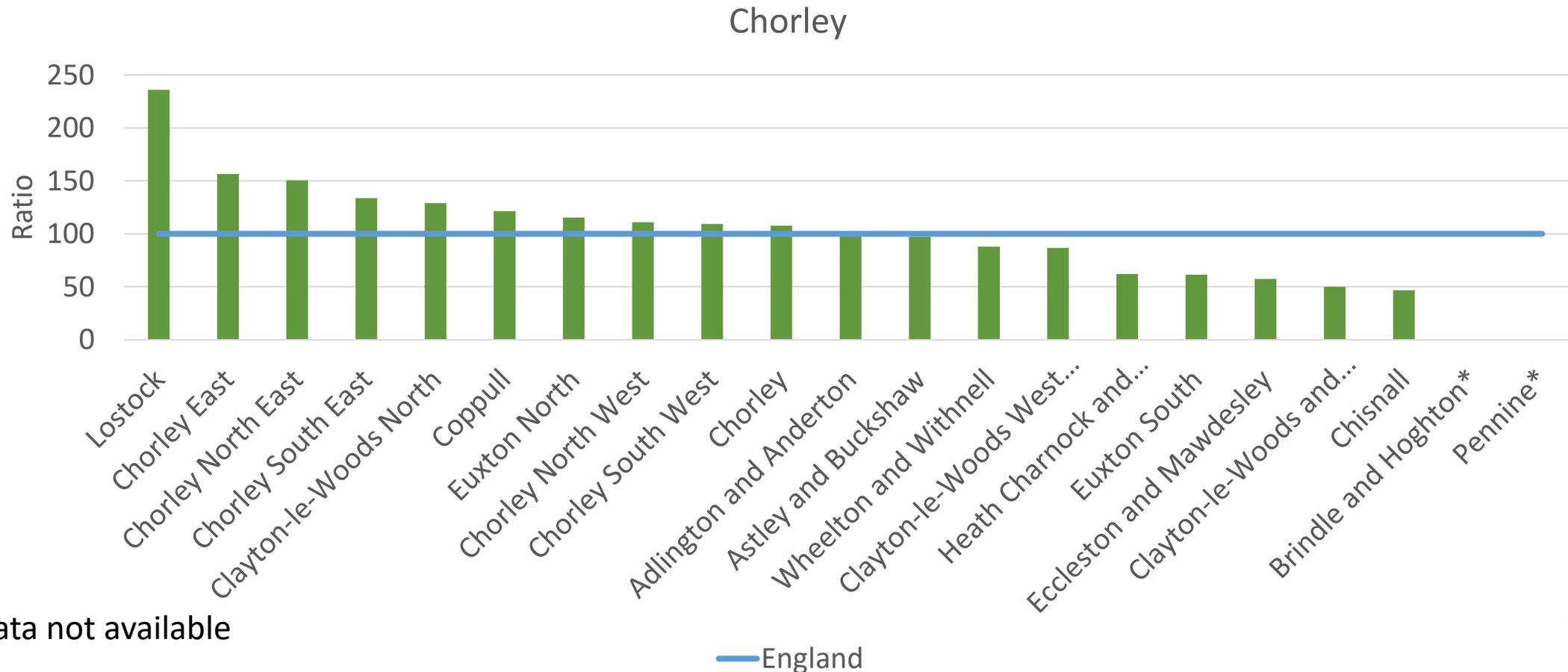
Source: PHE

## Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm Directly standardised rate per 100,000



*The lower the ratio, the lower the likelihood someone is in hospital for intentional self-harm*

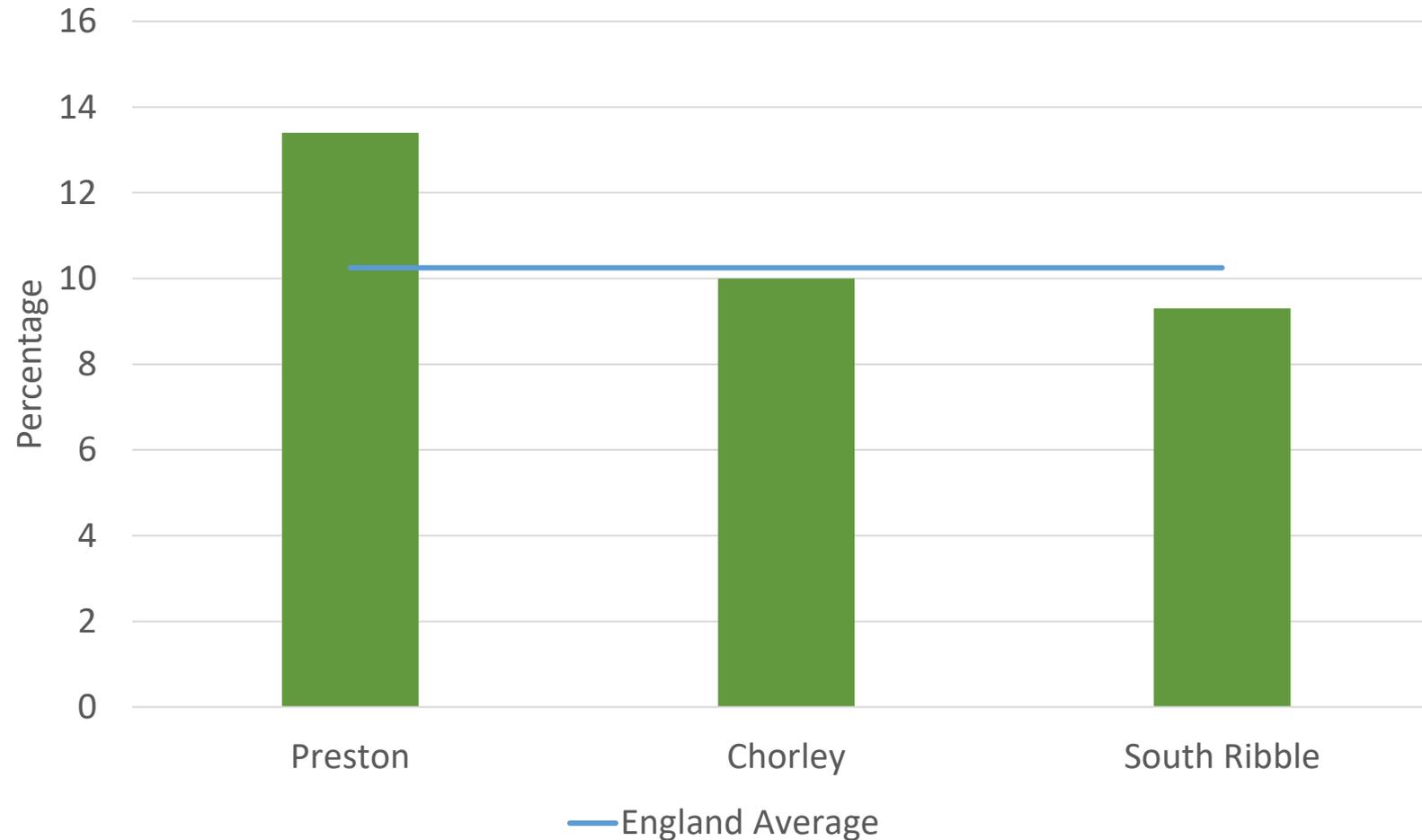
Hospital stays for intentional self-harm, 2015/16 – 2019/20,  
Standardised emergency admission ratio



\*data not available

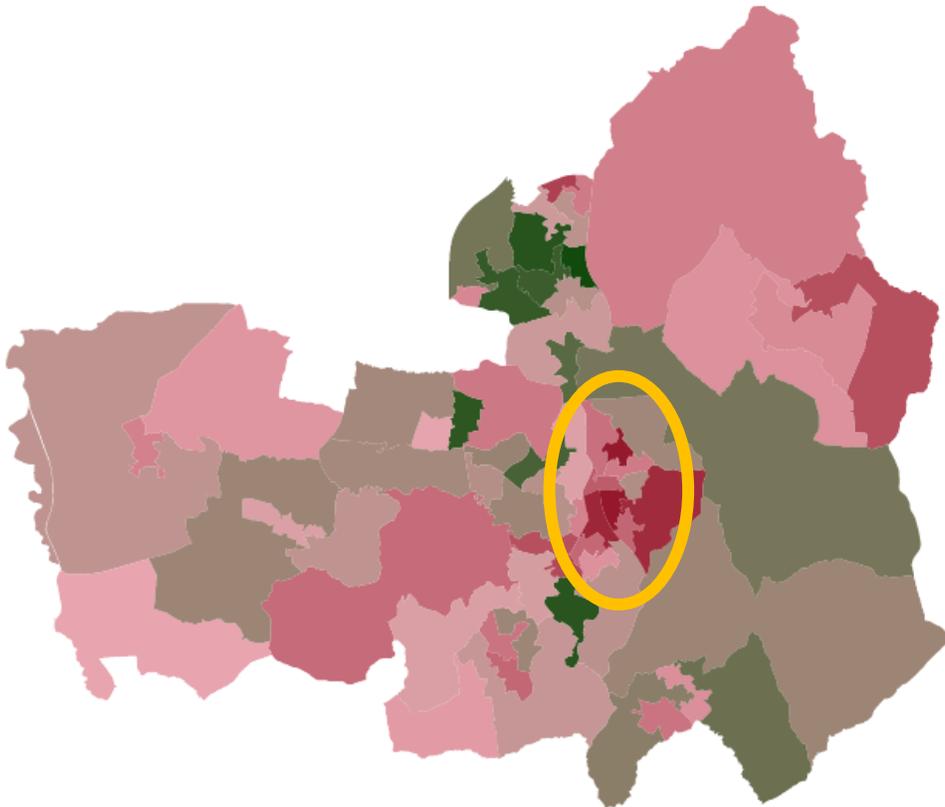
Source: PHE

## Estimated percentage of households that experience fuel poverty



Source: PHE

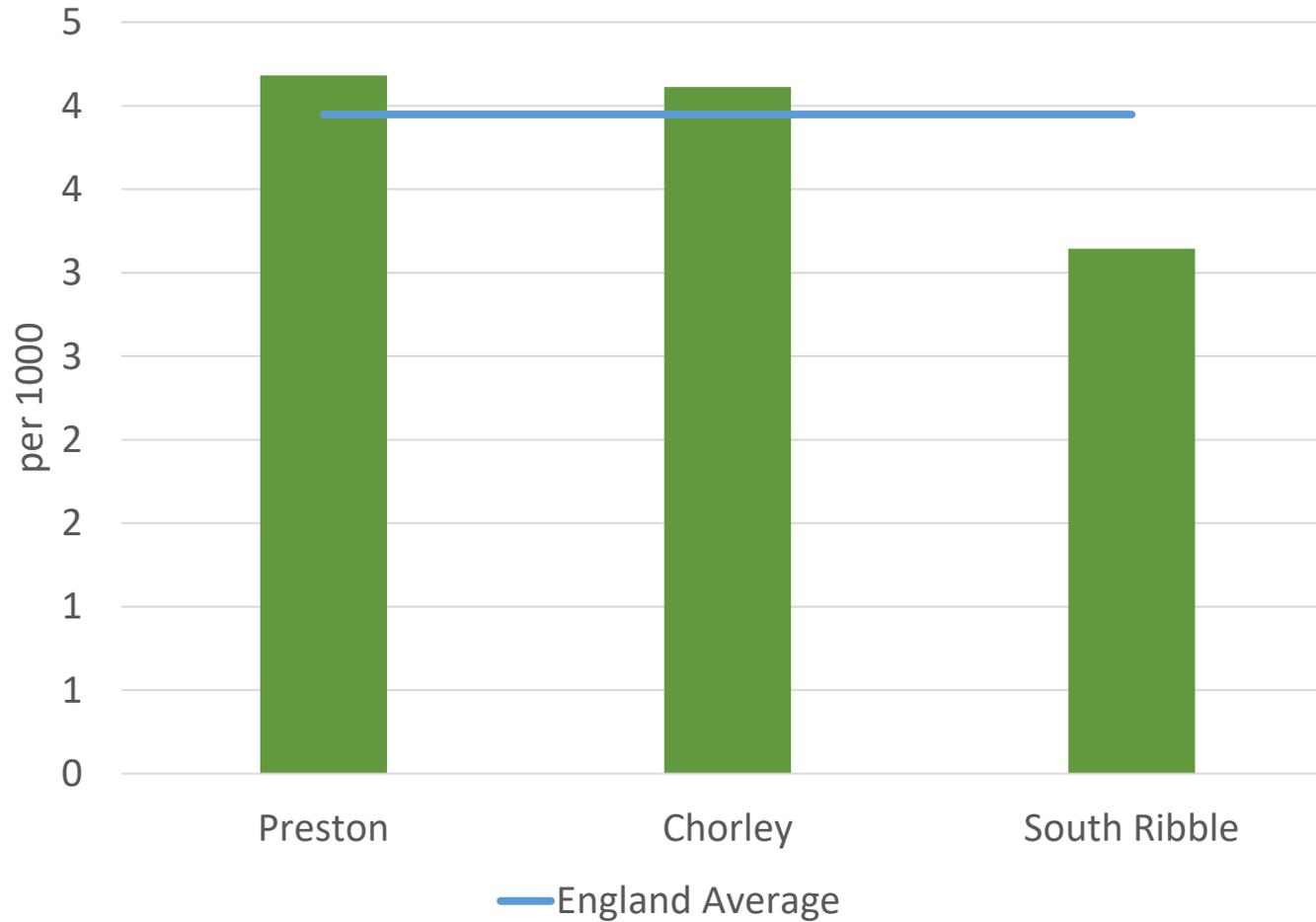
## Estimated proportion of fuel poor households, LSOA 2018/19 – Chorley



Dark red – highest proportion  
In circled area estimated 20% of  
households are fuel poor, 161 homes

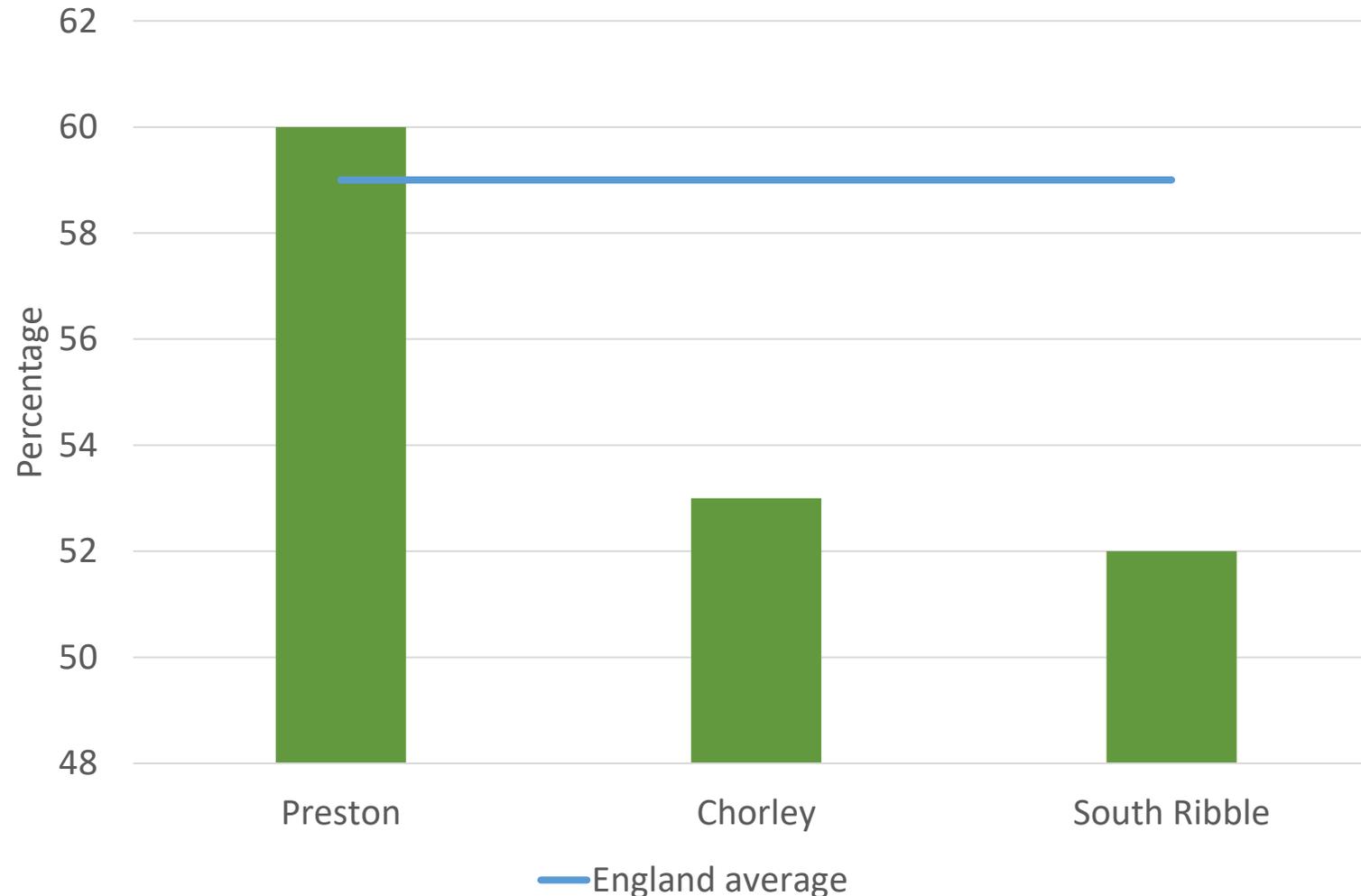
Dark green – lowest proportion – 3.8%

## Infant Mortality Rate, Crude rate per 1000



Source: PHE

## Percentage Uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers, 21/06/21 to 18/07/21



*Uptake is calculated as a percentage of entitled beneficiaries over eligible beneficiaries.*

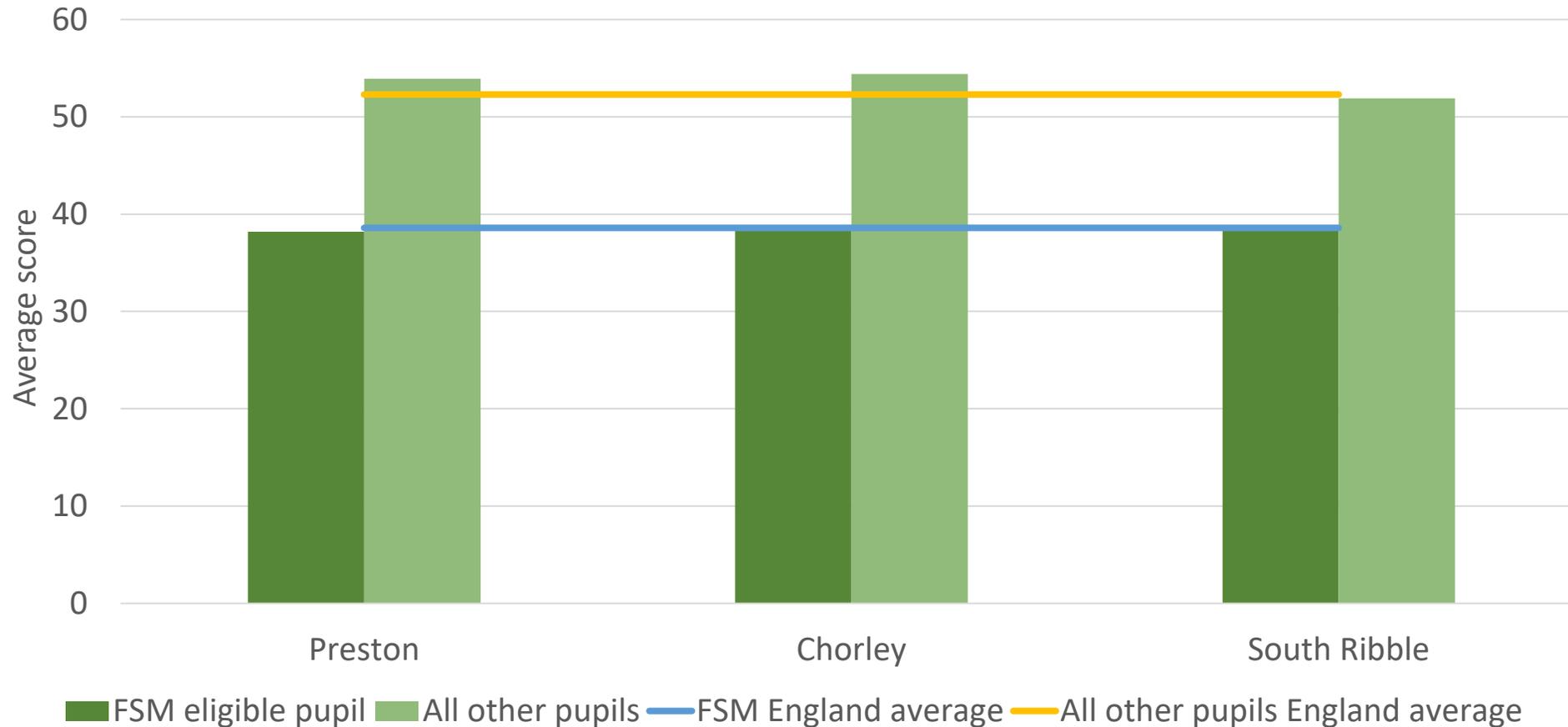
*Eligible beneficiaries are those who qualify to apply for Healthy Start (eg at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old and the family gets: Income Support, or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Child Tax Credit, or Universal Credit).*

*Beneficiaries become entitled once their completed Healthy Start application form has been processed and approved by the Healthy Start Issuing Unit.*

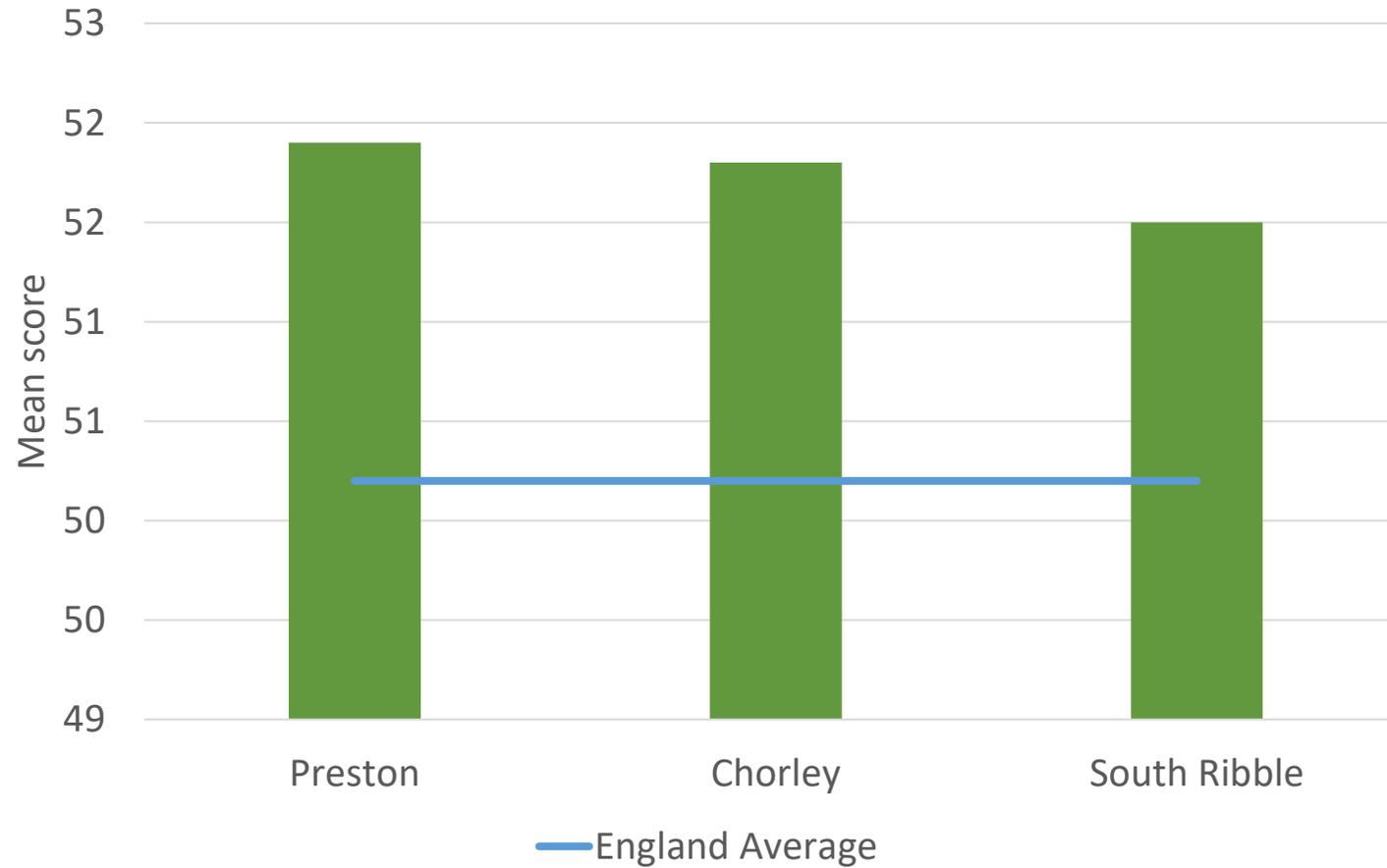
**Source: NHS**

*Pupils eligible for FSM in Chorley perform worse than the England average*  
*Chorley pupils not eligible for FSM outperform the national average*

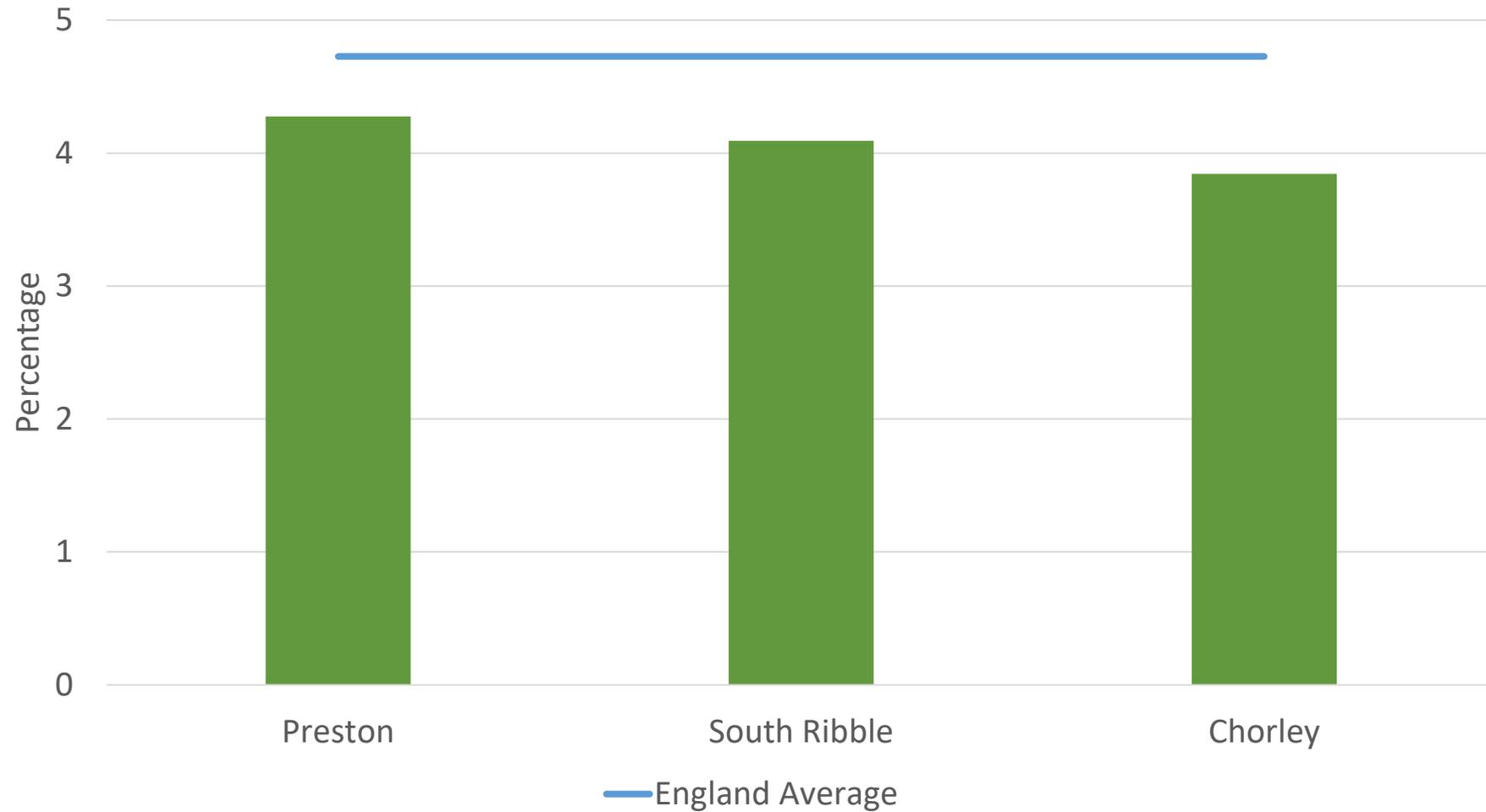
Average Attainment 8 Score per pupil, Free School Meal status



## Average Attainment 8 Score, Mean score

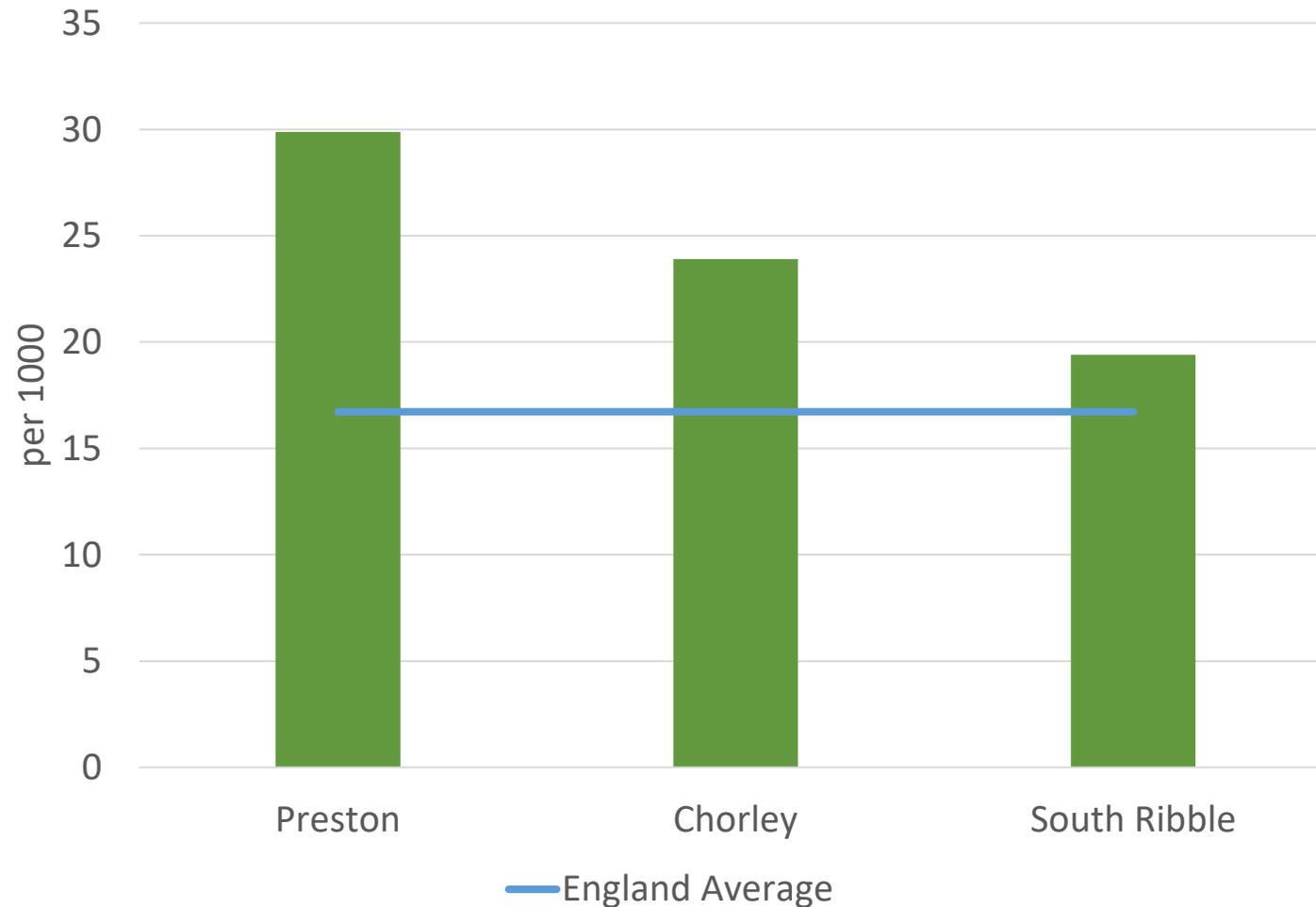


## Pupil Absence, percentage

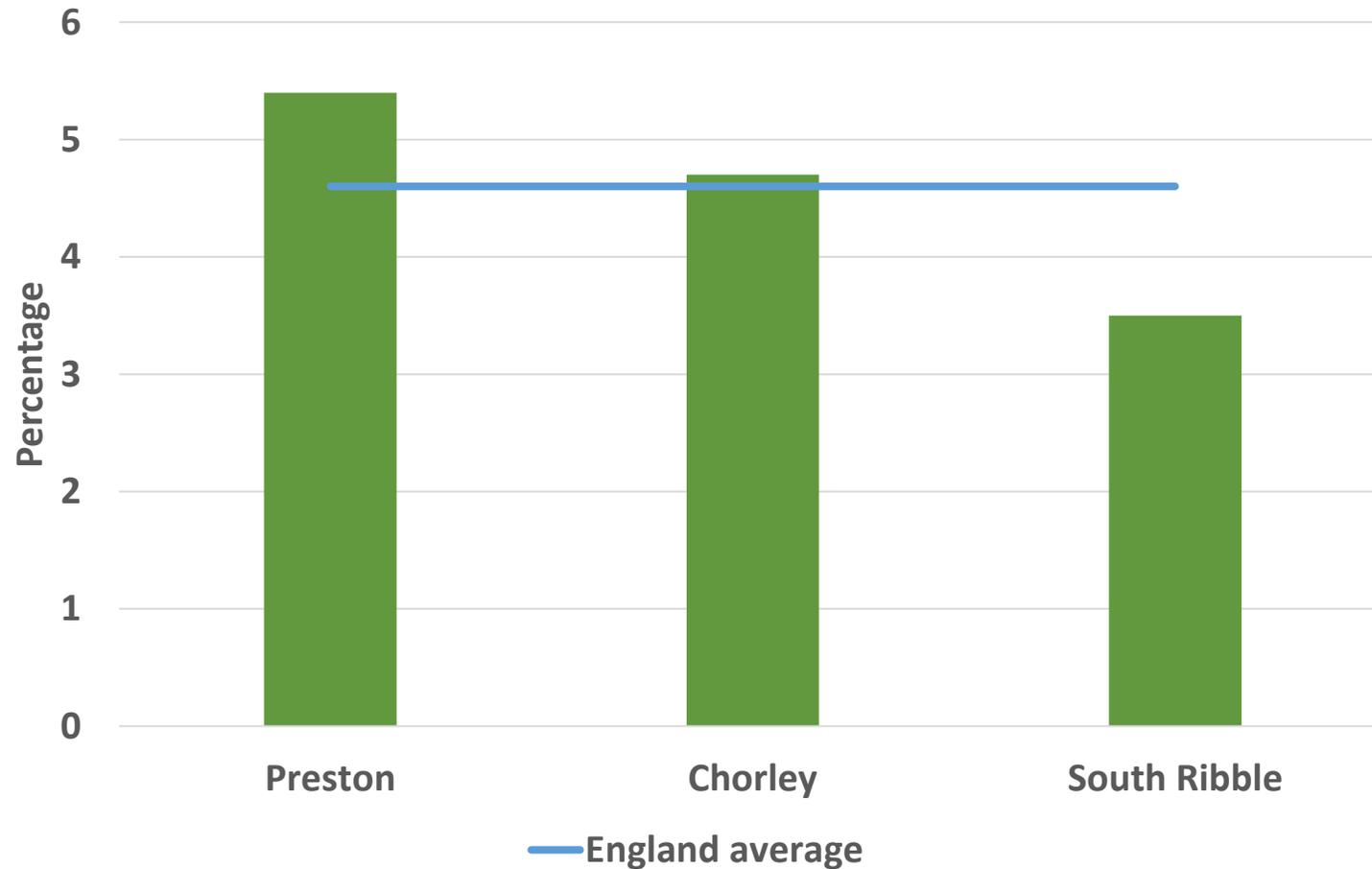


Source: PHE

## Under 18s conception rate/1,000, crude rate per 1000

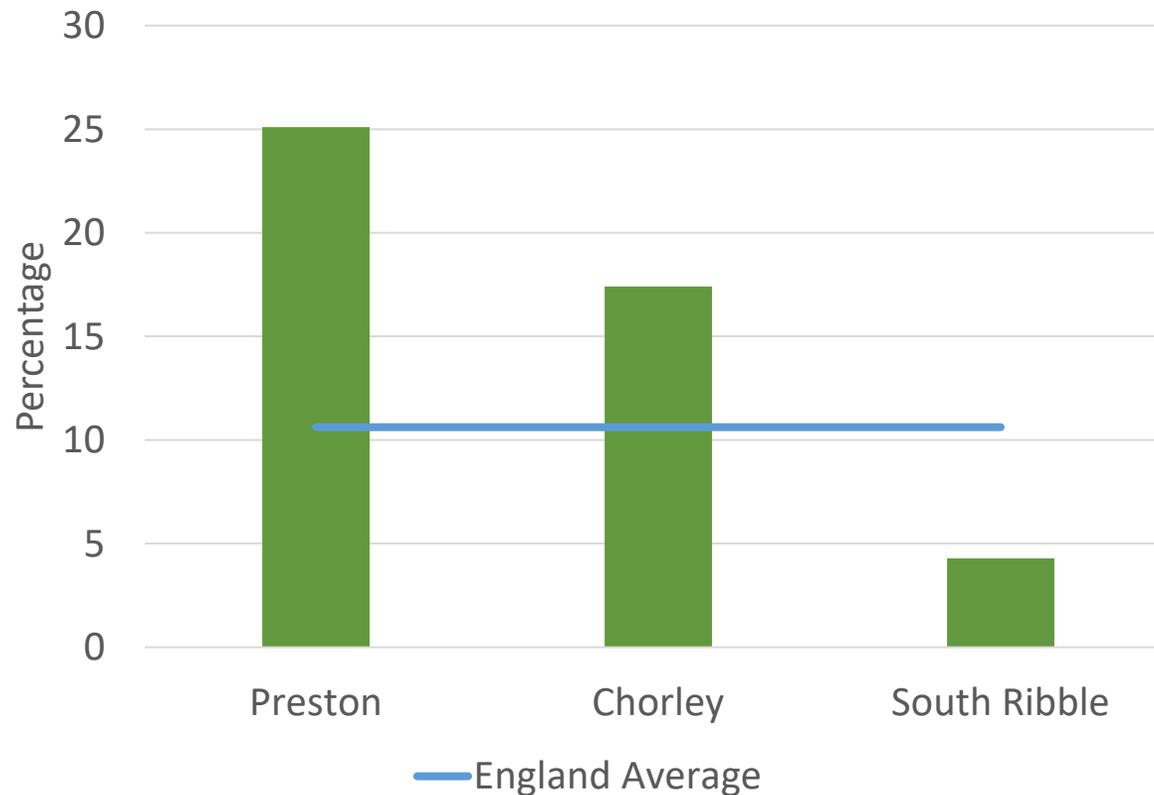


## Unemployment; % of the economically active over-16 population (model based)



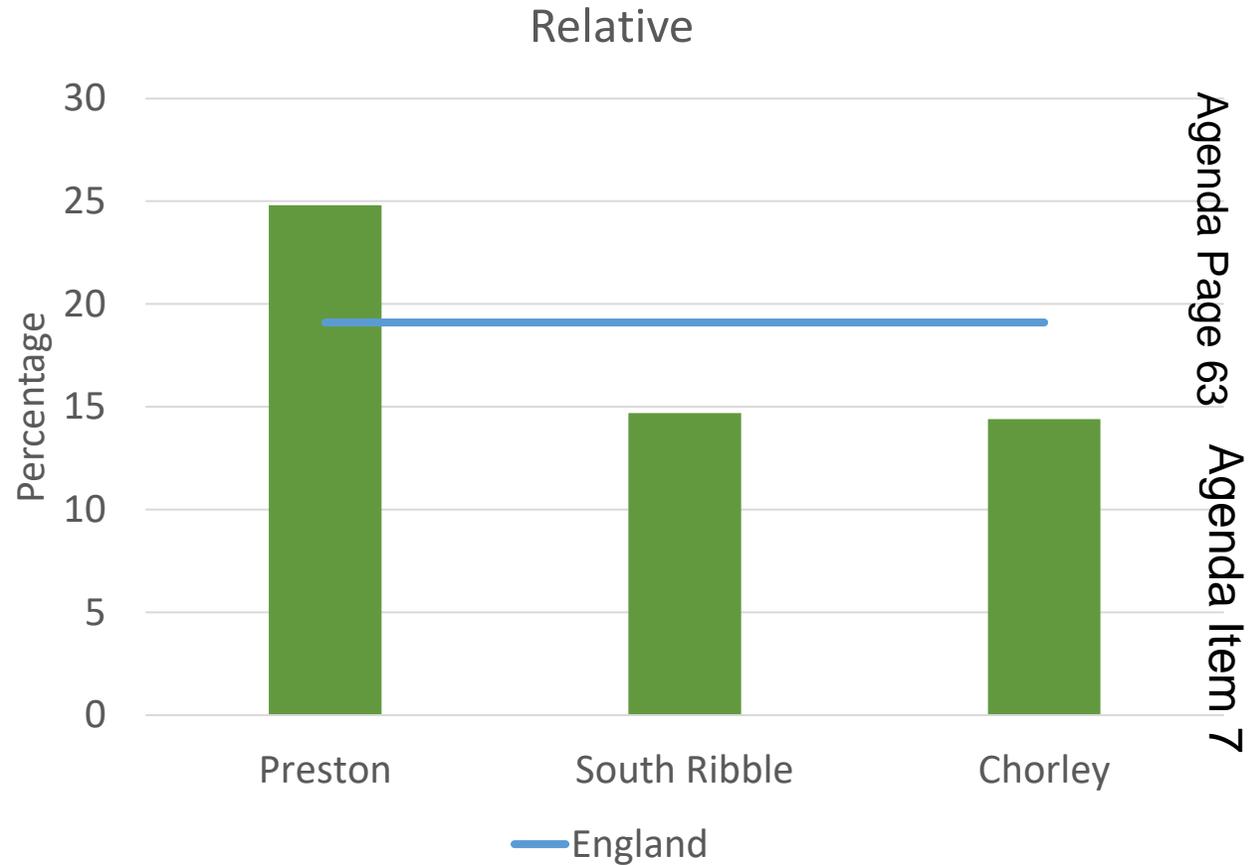
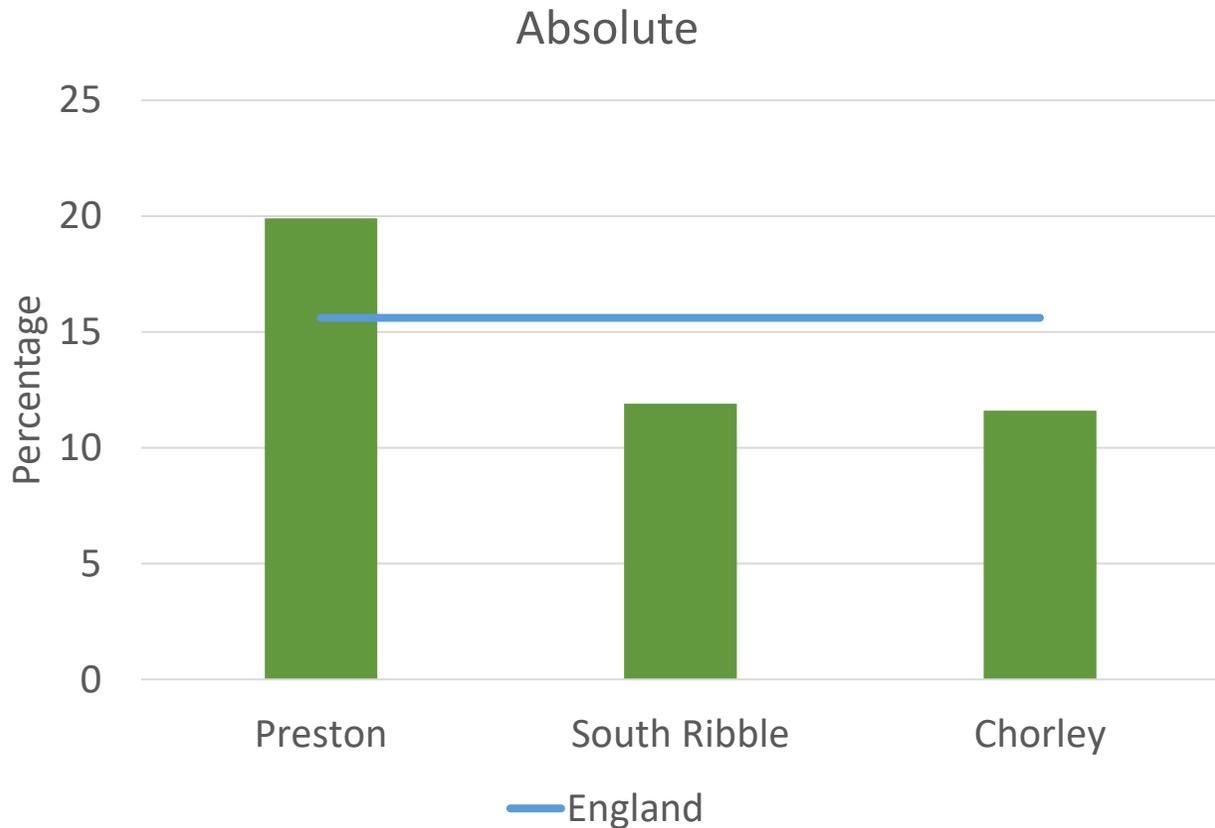
Source: ONS

## Gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the overall employment rate, 2019/20, percentage

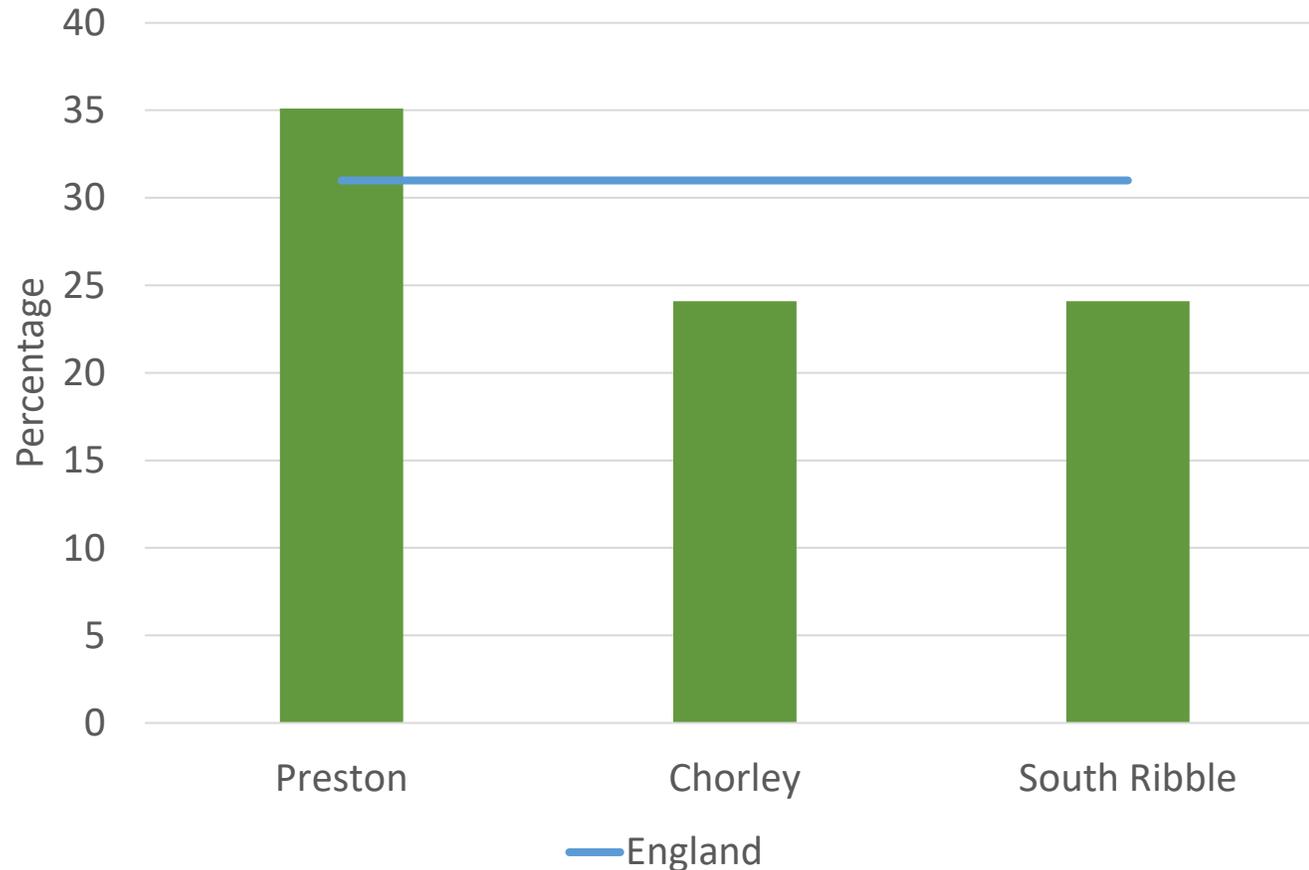


Source: PHE

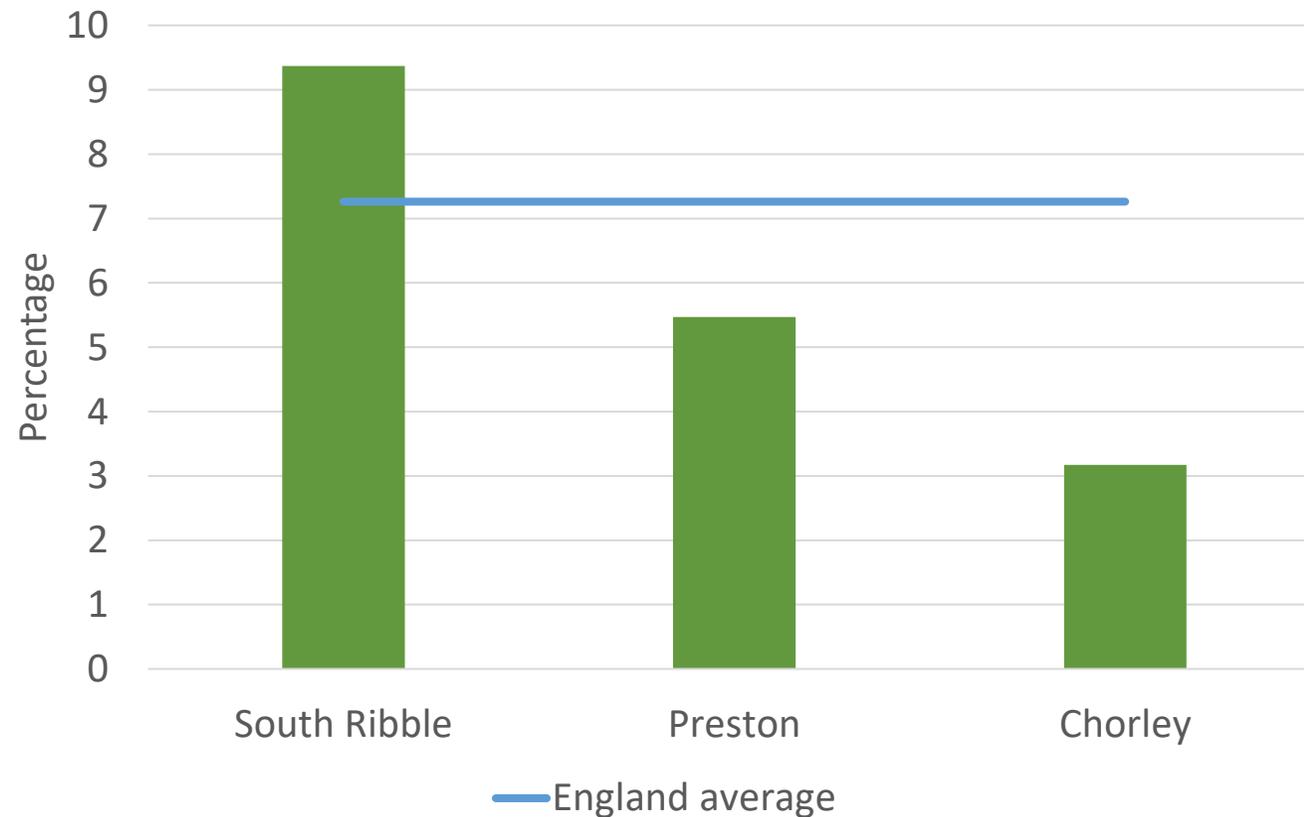
Children in **absolute and relative** low-income families (under 16s), percentage



*The number of children living in poverty increases when housing costs are included*  
 Children living in poverty measured *after housing costs*, 2018/19, percentage

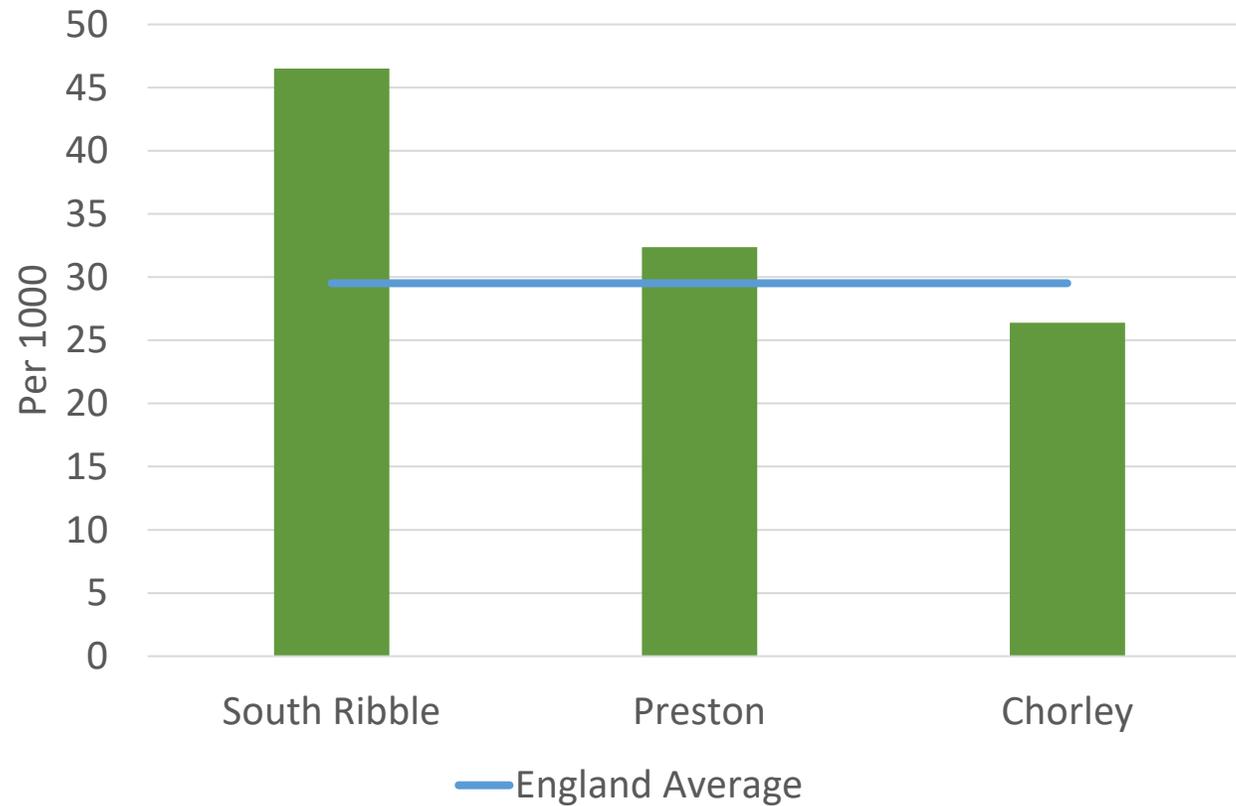


## People who "often or always" felt lonely, Oct 2020 - Feb 2021, percentage

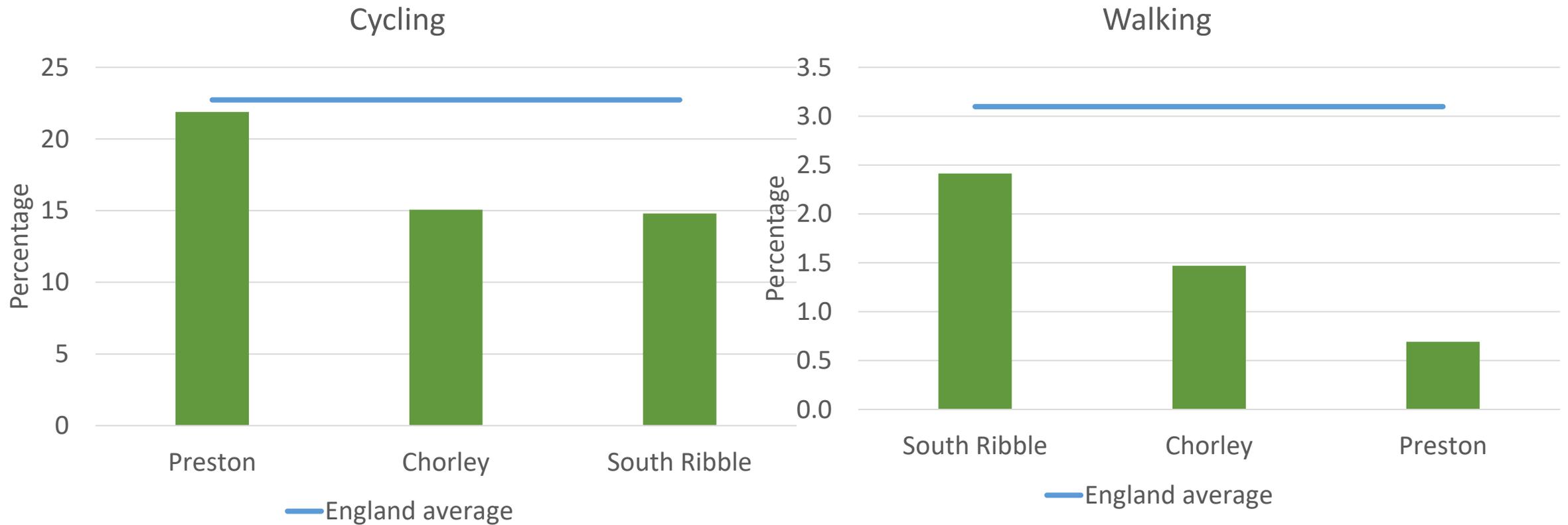


Source: ONS

## Violence offences per 1,000 population



# Adults using sustainable travel at least three days per week, percentage



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