

Protecting your services

Draft budget 2009/10





Continuing to provide quality services and things that matter to you

Our Vision

The Council's ambition is for Chorley to be recognised as the most attractive, caring and vibrant place in the North West to live, to work, to invest and to visit.

Welcome to Chorley Council's draft budget for 2009/10



Councillor Peter Goldsworthy
Leader, Chorley Borough Council



Councillor Alan Cullens
Executive Member for Resources

This document has been produced to help you understand more about your Council, your services and how we're proposing to pay for them.

The emphasis this year is on keeping your Council Tax low, which we hope will help people across the borough during the credit crunch.

The information is provided to give you the chance to think about how the Council is proposing to spend and save money – and have your say before the plans are agreed and put into place.

Please read it carefully, the final budget will not only impact on the way we deliver your services next year, but also on your Council Tax bill.

These proposals have been put together specifically to give you the chance to discuss them and we want to hear your views. It's the only way we can ensure we're focusing on the things that are important to you, your family and your neighbourhood.

All your views will be considered before the final budget is agreed. Please let us have any comments by February 6, 2009.

Councillor Peter Goldsworthy
Leader Of Chorley Council

Continuing to provide quality services and things that matter to you

The Council continued the highest score possible for providing 'value for money'

We have saved £2m through our award winning efficiencies

In the last two years we have put more resources into important services - This year we want to keep your tax low instead

Although Chorley Council collects all your Council Tax - it keeps about £3 a week for local services

Chorley's proposed increase in Council Tax will be below inflation

If you agree or disagree with any of these proposals, let us know!

The Council continued the highest score possible for providing 'value for money'



Understanding the budget process

Draft budget plans – which relate directly to Chorley Council’s share of the overall Council Tax bill for the borough – are put together each year by the group of councillors in charge of the Council, known as the ‘administration’.

In Chorley, the Conservative Party currently has the most members and has formed the ‘administration’. They are able to make decisions and control the Council’s activity because they have the most councillors and therefore the most votes.

The ‘administration’ makes decisions about the Council and its services through a committee called the Executive Cabinet, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and made up of leading councillors within the party. Each Executive Member has a specific area of the Council known as a ‘portfolio’ to oversee.

The draft budget outlines what the ‘administration’ would like to do in the following year and how

those activities should be paid for on behalf of local people, who have elected the councillors to represent them.

The proposals are then published to allow local people to have their say. All feedback is considered by the ‘administration’ in setting their final budget for the year ahead.

Those proposals are then considered at a meeting of the Council, where every elected councillor can vote on whether to accept it or not. It is common practice for the second largest party, known as the ‘opposition’, to put forward alternative proposals about where money should be spent and how it should be raised.

Councillors usually have a lengthy discussion about the budget, before it is put to the vote. Once a budget is agreed, the Council issues Council Tax bills to residents.

Low council tax rises, high quality services

Chorley Council is recognised among the very best in the country when it comes to providing high quality, value for money services. At the same time, Council Tax increases have been well below inflation during recent years, with average rises of about 2.00 per cent or around 10p a week, over the last two years.

One way we have been able to keep Council Tax low and provide quality services is through our award-winning ‘efficiency’ work. Efficiencies come when the Council works out a better way of doing things, which costs less time or money but

delivers the same high level of service. Chorley has had lots of success – saving around £2m since 2006 by:

- Looking at the way we buy services and goods from suppliers to make sure we get the very best deal

**We have saved £2m through
our award winning efficiencies**



- Looking at the way we actually provide services to see if a specialist private company or other local authority could do it better and cheaper than we can ourselves
- Working in partnership with others to share costs
- Looking at the number of staff we have and restructuring where necessary
- Reducing our assets and selling those we don't need

These areas of work have resulted in massive savings for the authority and massive improvements for local people. Good examples are our partnerships in the leisure sector, where by working with organisations such as Community Leisure Services (CLS) and Glendale Golf we've passed the responsibility for the cost to another provider and encouraged millions of pounds of improvements for local people.

They're not easy decisions to make - especially where cuts in staff are involved - but we're committed to making hard decisions to ensure we provide the very best services at the very best cost possible. The Audit Commission agrees that the Council uses its resources wisely and provides value for money for its residents.

However it is not just about saving money – it's about making a difference by focusing on the things that matter most to you. You told us what was important to you through consultation in two important documents:

- The Chorley Sustainable Community Strategy, put together in consultation with local people and organisations and outlining the priorities for the future of the borough
- The Council's Corporate Strategy, which mirrors the same high level objectives to reflect what you have said is important to you

You can find a copy of both on our website www.chorley.gov.uk

The Council's high level objectives, known as our corporate priorities are:

- People
- Place
- Prosperity
- Performance

Put simply, these priorities help focus our work on the areas that really matter – you and your family, where you live, your quality of life and opportunities and how we perform as a Council for you.

Last year the Council invested over £250,000 into services and enjoyed success in many areas including:

- Being officially rated as an 'excellent' Council by independent government inspectors from the Audit Commission.
- Improving services across the board, with about a third of services among the top 25 per cent in the country.
- Being named as a national 'Beacon' for transforming services in line with customers needs.
- Introducing a new way of working in your neighbourhood to make sure we focus on the things that matter to local people.
- Winning a national award for working with traders on Chorley Markets on a major investment and marketing campaign to boost trade.
- Gaining North West in Bloom awards for the third year running, a Green Flag for Yarrow Valley Country Park and a prestigious Charter Mark for customer services.
- Helping to reduce crime by 26 per cent by funding Police and Community Support Officers and holding targeted action days and weeks in hotspots.
- Investing in 'clean up teams' and tackling anti-social crime like fly-tipping and litter. Our streets were named the 'Cleanest in Lancashire'.
- Providing more for youngsters to do with more get up and go activities and an increase in our sports coaching programme.

**Although Chorley Council
collects all your Council Tax
- it keeps about £3 a week
for local services**



Where the money comes from - and where it goes

It's a popular misconception that Chorley Council receives all the money from the Council Tax it collects.

The truth is that Chorley is required by the Government to collect it all, but keeps only a small proportion of the final amount - usually about 12p in every £1.

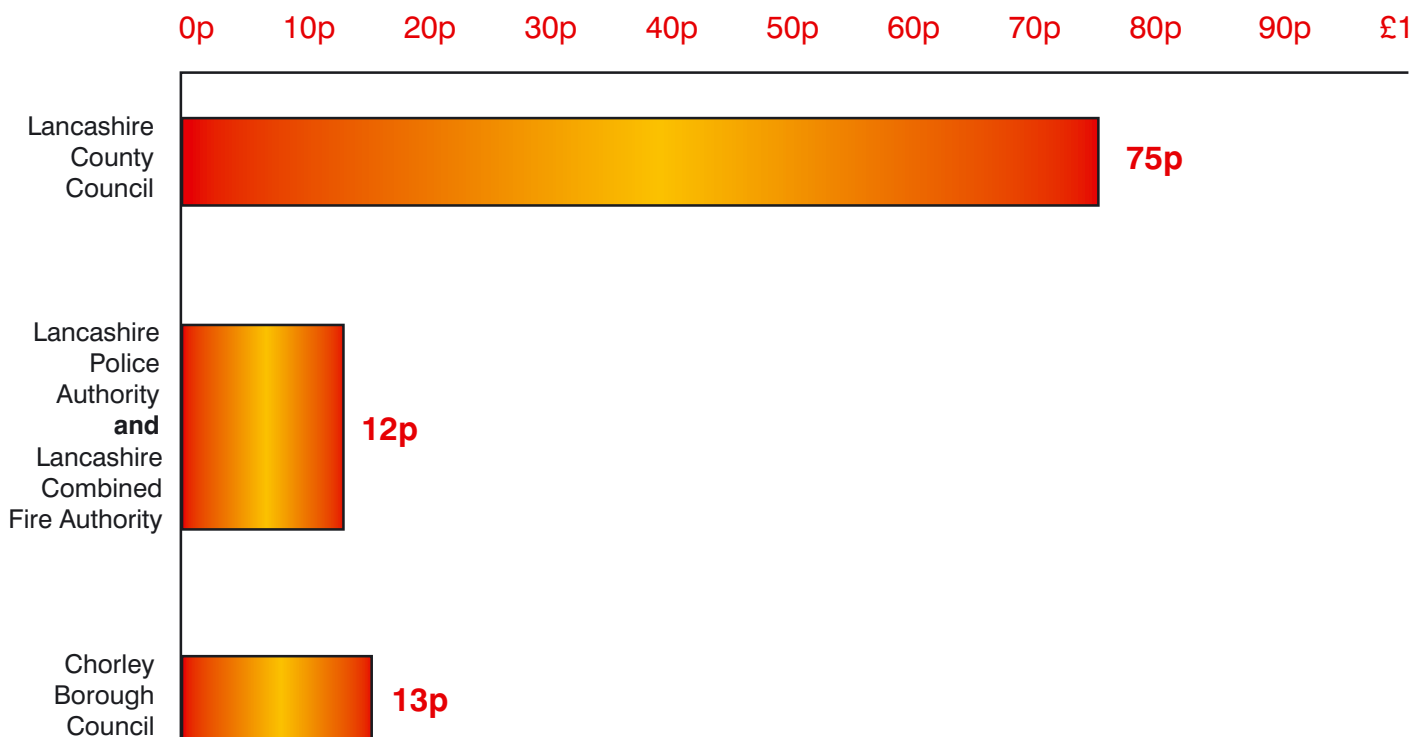
The majority of your Council Tax is passed on to Lancashire County Council - about 75p in every £1. The remainder – about 13p - is shared by the

Police, Fire service and parish councils near you.

Our share of the money equates to about £3 a week for most residents - or about £12 a month. For that we provide a wealth of community based services and facilities as well as carrying out functions for the wider good of the area.

We spend less than £1 a week per house emptying bins and providing recycling services.

How your Council Tax is divided:



Chorley's increase in Council Tax will be below inflation



Looking ahead to 2009/10

This year, the proposed rise in Council Tax is again, less than inflation.

That means that the cost of the running the Council and paying suppliers for goods and services will rise by more than the amount we collect from residents.

In addition, the Council is suffering from increases in fuel and heating costs as well as low interest rates on investments, which usually support our spending.

This means we need to make savings – which we're determined to do without cutting front line services – and there are details of how we hope to achieve that.

- 1 The Council has carried out a line-by-line review of all existing budgets to see where savings can be stripped out without affecting services. This included re-considering where every penny is spent, whether that amount could be reduced and if we could change the way we work to do the same thing for less money.

This exercise alone has enabled us to make savings of more than £254,000 without affecting front line services. In total we've saved well over £1m to keep your tax low.

- 2 The organisation also looked carefully at how much is spent on each activity and whether it should continue. Options to stop or reduce activities were considered, using the Council's priorities and customer information to shape decisions on the future of services.

This exercise included a list of things the Council could stop doing, the impact that would have on customers and services and how much money would be saved if agreed.

- 3 The Council has also looked at the level of money coming into the organisation, such as income from our car parks, pest control and licensing, from rent and from chargeable services such as those offered in our cemeteries.

Normally, the Council will put forward areas for investment as part of the draft budget. In the past these have included areas like providing more children's activities, improving facilities or opening hours at places like Astley Hall or investing in improvements to your neighbourhood.

This year, due to the financial climate, the Council has opted to maintain high level services rather than invest any extra money from you, because we know you're feeling the pinch too.

But that doesn't mean we'll be standing still - we'll be maintaining high quality services and continuing to provide things like:

- Free swimming for over 60s and under 16s
- Spending money on more affordable housing
- Improving waste and recycling with new containers
- Completing the £2m Astley Park project with the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Working better in your neighbourhood
- Protecting local businesses and local people from the effects of the recession

It's over to you...

Please let us know what you think of these proposals.

- Is the Council right not to raise the Council Tax more to invest in extra or improved services?
 - Are you happy with the approach outlined in this document?
 - Is there something we should be doing that we have missed?
 - Is there anything we should stop doing?

You can let us know if you agree, disagree or have any suggestions you would like to see included by:

Writing to:

**Budget Consultation, Chorley Council, Civic Offices
Union Street, Chorley, PR7 2EL**

Email to:

contact@chorley.gov.uk

The closing date for feedback is February 6, 2009. You can find out more about the Council and its services by logging onto www.chorley.gov.uk

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515325 to access this service.

આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

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

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