

# Chorley and South Ribble Partnership Economic Summit 2021

## Executive Summary

The first Summit of Chorley and South Ribble Partnership brought together a range of partners and businesses to:

- a) Understand the post Covid environment
- b) Establish a collective ambition to develop an inclusive economy, where there are opportunities for all
- c) Identify the regional and national opportunities and barriers

A body of evidence was gathered prior to the summit discussions and on the day key stakeholders shared their insights across a range of themes. Broadly the evidence and the input from stakeholders corroborates the initial assumptions of challenges and opportunities around employment and skills, land and assets and businesses doing good within the context of Covid recovery. A summary of feedback is included at Appendix A. Key points include:

- Businesses and public sector need space to come together to understand more deeply local needs as well as making strong connections with other businesses in the area
- Shift of power to employees whether its choice of work and career path, greater demands for agile and home working and offers from global and national employers
- Businesses need to be more involved in local curriculums to drive employability
- A commitment to supporting local businesses through procurement and opportunities

## Next Steps

The aim of the summit was to identify a number of shared high-level priorities that all partners across Chorley and South Ribble recognise as relevant and important to economic recovery and future growth. This shared recognition of what's important will drive our collective activity in the same direction.

As councils, the proposal is to use this feedback and high-level priorities identified by partners and stakeholders to guide and inform the development of our local economic strategy which will be independent and reflective of each council's ambitions.

To continue and deepen relationships with the business community the Partnership will commission a series of facilitated round table discussions to focus on the themes set out in Appendix A. Delivery is expected to commence from May and last for approximately six months.



## Summary of Key Findings by Panel

### Employment & Skills:

Themes	Description
<b>Shift in dynamic towards the employee and the ability to 'choose' their working conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In certain sectors where home working is feasible; how far is there growing competition amongst younger working age groups from international or London competition offering London salaries but ability to work from home either all or significantly most of the time.</li> <li>▪ Recruitment in sectors with historically poor conditions, unsociable hours or pay i.e. hospitality, driving etc. – shift to more stable and employment and better sociable hours.</li> </ul>
<b>Disconnect between school curriculum and businesses' needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding the needs of businesses to develop a locally based curriculum that provides the skills for businesses locally leading to additional courses (such as the Centre of Digital Excellency, CODE).</li> <li>▪ Skills for the future to meet demand on changing sectors for cyber and low carbon industries.</li> <li>▪ Apprentices &amp; other recently qualified jobseekers leave college but seem unaware of the opportunities available with businesses locally.</li> </ul>
<b>Economically inactive local people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The vacancies and gaps in recruitment, coupled with increase in minimum and living wages provide opportunity for economically inactive people to get back in to work.</li> </ul>

### Land and Assets:

Themes	Description
<b>Lack of available land in the area causing a shift in local businesses forcing them to source work outside the area subsequently weakening the local economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Due to lack of land some businesses will work outside the area damaging the local economy.</li> <li>▪ Council need to work with Lancashire county council to free up the land in Cuerden to be used by local businesses.</li> <li>▪ One option to solve this could be seeking out greenbelt land that can be built on if it doesn't compromise sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and networking lacking between businesses and something that the council could assist with</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Networking needs improving, connections and communications are key for businesses to expand and continue to be successful.</li> <li>▪ More events like the summit being hosted by the council can facilitate this growth with local businesses and create connections.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting the everchanging needs of the local area and those within it</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being a part of planning the local area, development, housing – meeting the needs of a workforce that employers want to attract. The more lucrative the opportunity the more likely it is that the workforce will be attracted to these businesses.</li> <li>▪ Competitive tendering as a deterrent for local businesses, as they found it focuses more on price than quality.</li> </ul>

**Businesses for Good:**

Themes	Description
<p><b>Emphasis on keeping it local</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promoting local businesses and celebrating heritage and business success.</li> <li>▪ Hosting larger events, geared towards a national audience (such as G7 Speaker’s Summit) as pivotal in creating a larger awareness of the area.</li> <li>▪ Facilitating/Enabling businesses to remain local through cross-sector communication.</li> <li>▪ Sustainability rooted in supporting local businesses, to help produce the effect noted above.</li> <li>▪ Create more facilities like Strawberry Meadows for businesses to be based out of so they can keep business local.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making sure sustainability is being maintained</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help link businesses together to create communication networks between local businesses.</li> <li>▪ Educating people of the smaller behavioral changes that can lead to collective reduction in carbon footprint.</li> <li>▪ Considerations need to be taken into the balance between energy efficiencies and costs associated with sustainability.</li> </ul>

**Summary of key points by theme:**

Employment and Skill	Land and Assets	Business for Good
<p>Meet the challenge of shifting work habits and opportunity of ‘choice’ available to the employee</p>	<p>Supporting growth and development through supply of land that supports business growth and a housing supply that meets the needs of the borough’s population</p>	<p>Strengthen and grow the dialogue between businesses and public sector bodies to support and understand their needs; working collaboratively to build back better</p>
<p>Everyone has access to appropriate work and skills development opportunities regardless of age</p>	<p>Supporting local infrastructure which is a key enabler for growth</p>	<p>Building Back Green, supporting businesses to become more sustainable both economically and environmentally</p>
<p>A local curriculum informed by employers, based on what businesses need – not what we ‘think’ they need</p>		<p>Local First – Think local first when procuring or buying goods/services to support a dynamic local supply chain and business community</p>