

Chorley Council
**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2018/19



Welcome to Chorley Council's annual report

This report presents Chorley Council's annual report for 2018/19. It provides an overview of activities and achievements over the last year, outlining the key steps that we have taken to ensure that we continue to deliver our vision and priorities as outlined below:

Our vision:

A proactive community leader, supporting the borough and all its residents whether in rural or urban areas, to reach their full potential through working in partnership to deliver services that achieve the best outcomes for local people and protect vulnerable people



Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



A strong local economy



Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities



An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area



Council Leader's Introduction

From Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of Chorley Council and Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform

In May this year, I was proud to run alongside 1300 residents and visitors in the first ever Chorley 10K. The event not only demonstrated our commitment to wellbeing but also showcased what our borough has to offer, taking in the beautiful Astley Park and vibrant town centre where we've seen some big changes over the past 12 months.

The extension to Market Walk is now built and ready to be fitted out with six screen cinema, food hall and leisure facilities; the first residents are expected to move into Primrose Gardens extra care facility over the coming months; and the Strawberry Fields Digital Hub is ready for business. These are high quality spaces that will help to meet the future needs of the borough.

We're also thinking ahead to our future workforce with events like the Chorley Hack digital event attended by over 100 pupils from local schools and the Chorley Skills Board which brings partners together to get the right skills in place for Chorley.

We're leading the way for Lancashire and more people than ever are visiting to experience our attractions with a 1.5% increase compared to the same time last year.



Overview of Resources

From Councillor Peter Wilson, Deputy Executive Leader, Executive Member (Resources)

Despite financial challenges, we remain committed to not only maintaining services but improving them through working with our partners to enable and involve our communities. Our teams are working in new ways to help residents make improvements to their local area and we've invested a further £50,000 in neighbourhood projects.

Our Youth Zone also goes from strength to strength with 5,548 members signed up in April 2019 against our original target of 3000 which is fantastic. We now want to build on this through outreach work to make sure that young people from across the borough can benefit from this facility. Also, this year, over 1000 people have been supported to get online with basic digital skills training and we continue to invest in local bus routes to make sure that residents from across the borough are able to access council services.

"This year has delivered a lot of positive change for our borough, but we won't stop there in making Chorley an even greater place to live, work and visit."

Achievements in 2018/19

We have continued to not only deliver but improve our high-quality services for residents across the borough

An 11% reduction in the number of long-term empty properties across the borough

1.2million visits to Council leisure centres

A 42% decrease in the number of missed collections of household waste

202 affordable homes delivered across the borough

More than 69,000 attendees at events organised by the Council

21 community groups supported through small community funding

An additional 488 residents earning time credits

108 residents attended training to support their employment prospects

1041 residents successfully completed digital skills training

£130,000 funding provided to commission vital services for the residents of Chorley

104 community groups supported and developed by the Council

892 people supported by the council who were at risk of being homeless/ potentially homeless

Customer dissatisfaction with the service received from the Council reduced by 10.8% year on year

An average of 4 days to process new claims and changes to Housing and Council Tax benefits (an annual reduction of 1 day)

29 parks, open spaces and playing pitches improved across the borough

77 projected jobs created through Council support or intervention

A 37% increase in the number of service requests received online

 Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



The first HACK coding event was attended by over 100 young people from 13 schools across the borough, challenging them to create games and apps to educate about cyber bullying and social media safety, as well as fascinating information on the day about online security and 3D printing.

The event aimed to encourage and support our young people to develop the digital skills that will enable them to meet future workforce demand.

 Small community grants were awarded to voluntary community and faith sector groups from across the borough, including much needed help and support to promote a local befriending service, to develop the junior section of a cricket club, and to set up a local parish parent and toddler group.



The Time Credits programme which provides support to volunteer within the local community has 128 groups signed up, with over 24,000 hours earned this year. It has been proven that volunteering reduces feelings of isolation, encourages skill sharing and improves mental health

 Clean up days have been held in Adlington, Whittle-le-Woods, Withnell and Wheelton, Brinscall and Abbey Village, Health Charnock, Chorley Town East and Bretherton. Residents have been supported with tools and equipment to tidy up their local neighbourhood. This activity will be developed into a more structured offer with the aim of enabling residents to improve their local environment.

 Clean safe and healthy communities



In 2018/19 the council's largest contract; waste and recycling collection, was re-tendered resulting in savings for the council of £1.249m a year.

The new in-cab technology and real time information will improve communications with residents and allow us to provide them with more

 Neighbourhood priority projects were completed in 2018/19 these include; a planting scheme along Euxton Lane, creation of a civic pride entrance stone at Heapey Chase Estate, a lighting scheme at Adlington War Memorial, increased defibrillator provision in Withnell and Wheelton, and surface improvements to Meadow Street Play Area in Wheelton



In 2018/19 improvements have been made to various play, open space and playing pitches across the borough to help create safer and healthier communities.

These improvements include:

- Coronation Recreation Ground - two new play areas installed as well as many other improvements
- Harpers Recreation Ground - a new play area, artificial grass, improved paths, new railings, a refurbished bowls hut and toilets.
- Astley Park - the creation of the Garden of Reflection, drainage works, and additional car parking
- Yarrow Valley Access Improvements - existing and new footpaths through the Country Park to improve access, safety and use
- Creation of a new bowling green at Euxton Greenside
- Two new community gardens in Heskin and Whittle-le-Woods



A strong local economy



We have delivered numerous events across the year which have allowed us to engage with residents whilst raising the profile of Chorley as a destination and encouraging visitors from further afield. More than 69,000 people attended our events in 2018/19 including the Chorley Flower Show, Chorley Live, Picnic in the Park and the Christmas attractions.



Latest information available shows that visitor numbers to Chorley have increased by 1.5% meaning that more than 3.6 million tourist visits were made to Chorley in 2017. This is also better than all Lancashire which saw an increase of 5%



Choose Chorley Events to help local businesses grow and potential businesses to choose Chorley for business attracted over 320 businesses. These events included the Choose Chorley BIG Event, Choose Chorley Networking Event and the Workplace Wellbeing Expo.

A range of seminars were organised and attended by more than 70 local businesses to help them operate effectively; continuing to grow the local economy. These included tax going digital, health and safety in employment, bookkeeping and a start-up workshop.



In 2018/19 over 800 referrals were made by the Council with local businesses



An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area



A new referral system for partnership working has been introduced called Refernet; this is a safe, secure and local online referral system which enables advice agencies to find services and support available, make referrals securely, and understand what support is available at an early point of intervention. Since going live in January 2019 almost 300 referrals have now been made.



The multi-agency group (PIVOT) have managed 235 cases in 18/19 to provide joined up support for vulnerable individuals. The cases managed have had 92% positive interventions, reducing duplication and achieving better outcomes for wellbeing.



We have continued to fund and protect some bus routes across the borough to support services were at risk of withdrawal enabling our residents continued access to vital services such as the hospital and town centre.



We have continued to transform our ways of working, aiming to do more for less, whilst retaining a high level of service. Our transformation programme has seen budget efficiency savings and increased income totalling £345k.

A strong local economy

The Market Walk extension is just one of a number of exciting schemes we have helped to bring to Chorley. 2018 was an exciting year for the extension with construction started in October, as well as a new crossing over the by-pass and the new two-level Friday Street car park creating 300+ spaces.

Ensuring that Chorley has a strong and vibrant local economy is one of the Council's key priorities, and the extension will offer a new attraction and provide a sustainable asset in the town centre to support longer term growth.

By growing the local economy, Chorley will become a better place for everyone living here, with more jobs, more houses and better leisure opportunities.

The Market Walk extension which is due to open in time for the 2019 Christmas shopping period will include a six screen Reel cinema, an M&S Foodhall, as well as retailers, food and beverage outlets, and leisure facilities.





Providing clean, safe and healthy homes and communities

Primrose Gardens was constructed and handed over to the Council by the developers in 2018/19 providing accommodation for those aged 55 and over which is ideally located and will provide a unique, modern space for residents to enable them to live independently, integrate with the local community and gain access to support and care when needed.

Residents will have the benefit of living independently in a stylish apartment whilst having 24-hour access to care and support.

All the flats are dementia friendly and built to Homes England standards, incorporating HAPPI principles.

Primrose Gardens will include:

- 65 modern and accessible apartments
- Fully equipped dance studio
- Comfortable shared quiet lounge
- High quality café
- Stylish and relaxing hairdressers and beauty salon



A strong local economy

The Strawberry Fields Digital Hub is a brand new, state of the art, hi-tech business centre for digital and creative businesses, providing collaborative space and bespoke office suites, from new start-ups to growing Small to Medium Enterprises.

This prestigious Digital Hub will have:

- Super-speed broadband capacity vital for digital and creative businesses
- A range of office environments which include hot-desking and micro pods, offices for companies seeking flexibility and growth to larger office suites
- Access to training and meeting rooms, presentation facilities and cloud storage
- On site business support with links to academia

As well as the **£673k** of investment funding built into the base budget, the Council identified one-off provisions to fund projects to further deliver the Council's corporate strategy priorities during 2018/19.



Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



£750k investment in modernising ICT infrastructure including improving to web-based services for Chorley residents



£500k investment in Astley Hall and the surrounding park, as well as the improvements to Hallgate car park. The Astley 2020 project will renovate Astley Hall, as well as the parks events infrastructure and footpath lighting.



An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area



£250k invested in the continued development of pedestrianised areas in the town centre including the bus and train station subways and Steeley Lane routes



Chorley Council is facilitating the **£2.2m** Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) investment in the redevelopment of Bank Hall, Bretherton. The proposals will completely restore the building's external envelope for Chorley residents to enjoy.



A strong local economy



The completion of the Market Walk extension project that includes an enhanced town centre parking offer - **£15.3m**



The completion of the Digital Office Park, a new prestigious development that will provide 5,000 m² of Council owned bespoke digital office and start up accommodation - **£8.1m**



Clean safe and healthy communities



The completion of Primrose Gardens retirement living, the council's **£10m** extra care facility



Continued delivery of c. **£600k** per year of home adaptations to enable Chorley residents to continue independent living



£2.5m investment in the council's play and open spaces



The completion of the Chorley Youth Zone offering a purpose-built facility for the borough's young people aged 8 to 19, and up to 25 for those with disabilities.

A **£224k** investment fund was also created for 2018/19 to support a range of projects including food provision schemes, assisting young people at risk of homelessness and helping communities to access funding.

Future Challenges

As in previous years, managing the impact of public service budgets cuts and balancing the increasing demand for services continues to be the biggest challenge facing the organisation. This, alongside ongoing Lancashire County Council budget cuts (£442m by 2021/22) puts pressure upon the Council to consider supporting services or assets that have been removed or reduced.

Over the next year we will need to continue to consider:

New ways of working

Developing our use of technology to change the way that we deliver services has huge potential to transform the way we do things for the better. We need to continue to respond to increasing customer expectations by making sure that our services can be easily accessed online by everyone.



Uncertainty

Financial and political uncertainty at a local and national level, including Brexit, mean that we need to plan for a range of scenarios so that we can continue to provide high quality services for our residents.



Partnership working

All of our partners face the same financial challenges and we have to work together to mitigate their impact and ensure the longer term sustainability of public services



Resources and capacity

The council has plans in place to meet the financial challenges faced, and we will continue to transform services to deliver efficiencies as well as investing in income generating projects such as the Market Walk extension and Digital Office Park, whilst continuing to make Chorley a better place for everyone.

Looking ahead to 2019/20

Looking forward to 2019/20 we will continue to focus on delivering positive outcomes for residents against our corporate priorities, this will include the following:



Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



Develop Astley Hall and park as a visitor destination



Support people from across the borough to be digitally included



Develop a framework for building community resilience and delivery of identified projects



A strong local economy



Bring forward key sites for development



Deliver the Market Walk extension



Deliver the Digital Office Park



Clean safe and healthy communities



Deliver the Housing Company



Deliver improvements to the playing pitches in the borough



Deliver the Primrose Gardens retirement village



An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area



Transform the way the council delivers services



Deliver a borough wide programme of improvements to street services



Deliver a review of our approach to partnership working



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