

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director Policy and Governance (Introduced by the Leader)	Council	23 July 2019

CHORLEY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide a summary of the Council's achievements during 2018/19 as well as highlighting both the challenges and opportunities facing the Council in 2019/20 and beyond.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Overall performance against the Corporate Strategy in 2018/19 was very good, delivering significant progress against the councils' key priorities:
 - 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
- Despite a challenging financial climate, the council has continued to not only deliver but improve services for residents from all areas of the borough including grass cutting, waste collection and overall satisfaction. In 2018/19 a number of high-profile initiatives were further progressed including Primrose Gardens, Market Walk and Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park which will shape the future of the borough and help sustain council services.
- Looking ahead, financial and political uncertainty will continue to present significant challenges, as will the need to work differently in partnership with our communities and other organisations. This report outlines key achievements, challenges and opportunities.
- The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force in April 2017, which put in place provision in the Trade Union Act 2016 requiring relevant public sector employers, including councils, to publish specific information about time provided to trade union officials to undertake trade union duties. This information is provided at Appendix A of the annual report.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

7. N/A

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	✓
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

10. The annual report is a key mechanism for presenting information about the Council's performance to residents, partners and key stakeholders. The report provides information regarding the key activities which have been delivered over the past 12 months to meet our vision and corporate priorities.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

11. The Chorley Council Annual Report is provided alongside this paper. The key headlines from the report include:

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

The first Chorley Hack coding event was held this year and attended by over 100 young people from 13 Chorley schools, supporting the development of key digital skills and building our future workforce in this sector. As part of ensuring that everyone is able to access our services and supporting digital inclusion, over 1000 residents have taken part in digital skills training with groups supported by the council in venues across the borough including: Eccleston, Mawdesley, Charnock Richard, Adlington and Clayton Brook. The council has offered even more support for communities to get involved in their local area, providing small grants to 21 local organisations and assisting 104 community groups. Over 24,000 time credits hours have been earned this year with a total of 128 groups signed up and an additional 488 residents earning time credits compared to the same time last year. This year the council also continued to provide £130,000 funding for vital services to support residents in Chorley including advice and guidance, family support and food provision schemes.

b. A strong local economy

Over 69,000 people attended events in Chorley this year including the Flower Show, Bonfire and Christmas attractions, showcasing Chorley as a great place to live, work and invest. The number of visitors to the borough increased by 1.5% compared to the rest of Lancashire which only saw an increase of 0.5%, demonstrating the impact of marketing activity such as Check Out Chorley. We continue to create the conditions for businesses to thrive through the

successful completion of the Strawberry Fields Digital Hub which will provide state of the art facilities for key sectors and emerging enterprises. Over 260 attendees attended Choose Chorley events to network, and a range of seminars to help with tax, book keeping and health and safety were attended by more than 70 local businesses. Job creation remains a key priority with 77 projected jobs created through council support or intervention and 108 residents attending training to support their employment prospects. The construction of Market Walk has made excellent progress and is on track to open for Christmas 2019, providing an exciting new leisure and retail offer in the town centre.

c. Clean, safe and healthy communities

In 2018/19 the council committed to invest £2.5m to improve parks and open spaces provision. Developments included: two new community gardens in Heskin and Whittle-le-Woods; two new play spaces installed on Coronation Recreation Ground; a new play area, artificial grass and improved pathways on Harpers Recreation Ground; and the creation of the Garden of Reflection in Astley Park. For 2018/19, the number of missed bin collections reduced by 42% compared to the same time last year and the councils waste contract was re-tendered which will introduce new technology to drive a more efficient waste and recycling service for residents. Chorley is an even better place to live with an 11% reduction in the number of empty properties, delivery of 202 affordable homes and the completion of Primrose Gardens retirement village providing high quality extra care accommodation for older residents. In 2018 the Integrated Community Wellbeing Service was fully established as part of a joint initiative with Lancashire Care Foundation Trust to drive forward a borough wide preventative approach to health and wellbeing.

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

Council services are more efficient with new benefit claims and changes to housing and council tax benefit now processed within 4 days on average, a reduction of 1 day compared to the same time last year. It's easier to access council services with a 37% increase in requests received online compared to the same time last year. The council also continues to fund some local bus routes that were at risk of withdrawal due to county wide cuts to ensure residents in all areas of the borough have access to vital services. Overall customer satisfaction with the council is high with the number of dissatisfied customers decreasing by 10.8% year on year. As an organisation, the council has worked hard to transform the way that it works to be as efficient as possible, implementing new technology, generating income and working closely with key partners.

e. Council spending

In 2018/19 the council committed investment of £897,000 in strategic priorities including specific activity to:

- Reduce crime and improve feelings for safety across the borough
- Support people to use and benefit from being online
- Improve local neighbourhoods across the borough

The council also invested over £24m in capital funding to support improvements to Astley Hall and Park; restoration of Bank Hall; new play spaces across the borough; improvements to the town centre including new parking provision; and the large developments: Primrose Gardens Retirement Village, Market Walk Extension and Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park.

f. Future challenges in 2018/19

As well as managing the impact of public service cuts and increasing demand for services, 2019/20 presents significant political and financial uncertainty both nationally and locally, including a change in government leadership and potential Brexit outcomes. Locally we continue to see cuts to services provided by Lancashire County Council in response to budget challenges and strive to protect important provision for local residents.

The council has been proactive in its response and has strong financial and transformation plans in place including developing opportunities to generate income such as the Market Walk extension and putting in place new ways of working as an organisation and with our partners like the Integrated Community Wellbeing Service. In 2018/19 the transformation programme achieved increased efficiency and income generation totalling £345k.

We will need to build on this in future years, making the most of local assets through the development of a wholly owned company, creating employment opportunities, and finding new ways to deliver services through the Public Service Reform Partnership and future shared services to ensure that the borough continues to thrive.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	✓	Policy and Communications	

REBECCA HUDDLESTON
DIRECTOR (POLICY AND GOVERNANCE)

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Victoria Willett	5248	11.7.19	Chorley Council Annual Report 2018,19