

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive	Council	21 July 2020

## **CHORLEY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide a summary of the Council's achievements during 2019/20 as well as highlighting both the challenges and opportunities facing the Council in 2020/21 and beyond.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. That the report be noted.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

3. Overall performance against the Corporate Strategy in 2019/20 was very good, delivering significant progress against the councils' key priorities:
  - a. Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all
  - b. Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities
  - c. A strong local economy
  - d. An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area
4. 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. This year has also seen the successful completion of several high-profile initiatives that will shape the future of the borough and help to sustain council services such as Primrose Gardens, Market Walk and Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park.
5. Looking ahead to 2020/21, there will be both financial and political uncertainty which will present significant challenges, as will the need to work differently in partnership to deliver sustainable public services. In addition to these continuing, there will be a new challenge around delivering the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, helping our communities and businesses. This report outlines key achievements, challenges and opportunities.
6. Appendix A of this report provides the Trade Union Facilities time for 2019/20 as required by regulation from 2017. It shows the amount and cost of trade union facility time within the council over the last 12 months.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

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

## BACKGROUND

8. 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.
9. The annual report also looks ahead and the report identifies some key challenges faced by the Council in order to meet residents' needs, and sets out a number of key initiatives for 2020/21 which we will be undertaking to ensure that our organisation remains in a position to meet these needs.

## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

10. The Chorley Council Annual Report is attached to this paper as an appendix. The key headlines from the report include:

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

We continue to improve digital inclusion across the borough, supporting 790 adults to gain digital skills through free courses held in venues right across the borough in partnership with Lancashire Adult Learning and Citizens Advice which has enabled residents to have easy access to high quality public services online. This year we have enabled residents of Chorley to take pride in where they live by investing £890k on home adaptations, enabling residents to live independently for longer and £40k on bus stops around Buckshaw which have improved accessibility to transport, enabling equality of access for all. We have continued to work with residents to take an active part in their local and wider community, with 135 groups signed up to the Time Credits programme and 23,771 volunteer hours earned over the last year. Some of the work which has been delivered in partnership with volunteers and partners from across the community includes successfully launching an intergenerational project with elderly residents in the community which has now been embedded as a regular initiative, refurbishing the Clayton Brook Village Hall to create a Community Café and creating the Adlington Friendship group to combat social isolation, all of which have involved residents in improving their local area.

### b. Clean, safe and healthy communities

We have continued to contribute to ensuring clean, safe and healthy homes across the borough this year with 81 affordable homes delivered and a 1.4% reduction in the number of long-term empty properties across the borough. This year saw the first year of the Youth Zone, run by the charity Inspire, and supported by the council in a partnership with other businesses, individuals and communities. Membership has reached 5,400, with 1 in 3 young people across Chorley now members and 65,000 visits made to the £5 million development to enable young people to access a wide range of quality recreational activities. There has been great progress made as part of the neighbourhood priority project programme with some of the highlights being increasing public access to defibrillators across the borough, delivery of the intergenerational cooking classes in partnership with local schools to address the cycle of poor nutrition and obesity and delivery of the various enhancements to the environment across the borough to provide clean and safe streets for

all residents. We have continued to improve play and open spaces with 23 play, open space and playing pitches improved to help create safer and healthier communities with £300k of investment and £2.3m allocated for the Westway sports hub development to create a first-class sports facility for Chorley.

**c. A strong local economy**

We have delivered numerous events this year as part of our events programme which have contributed to a vibrant town centre with more than 71,000 people attending our events in 2019/20. This has included the Chorley Flower Show, Chorley Live, Picnic in the Park and the Christmas attractions all of which have allowed us to engage with residents whilst raising the profile of Chorley as a visitor destination. This year we have continued to expand our strong business sector with the completion and opening of both the Market Walk Extension, a key asset in the town centre with the extension now filled with businesses and the Strawberry Fields Digital Hub which has provided a state of the art business centre for digital and creative businesses. We have continued to provide access to high quality employment and education opportunities across the borough through creating more than 570 projected jobs through our Business Grant programme as well as our Digital Creative scheme, acquisition of the 300,000 sq. ft warehouse at Buckshaw Village which will allow us to continue to invest in and improve services whilst supporting the local economy and job market and through the work delivered by the business and development team with 961 business supported by the Council.

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

We have continued to ensure that continually strives to improve by delivering a 7% year on year improvement in the average time to process new benefits claims and change events to 3.72 days and seeing a 13% increase in the number of service requests received online. This year we have continued to transform our ways of working, aiming to do more for less, whilst retaining a high level of service with significant progress made to share services across Chorley Council and South Ribble Council to provide more resilience and opportunities to improve services and better value for money. We have also built on the work last year around the multi-agency group (PIVOT) which has managed 138 cases in 19/20 to provide joined up support for vulnerable individuals to reduce duplication across public services and improve wellbeing for residents. We have continued to fund and protect bus routes across the borough to support services that were at risk of withdrawal enabling our residents continued access to vital services such as the hospital and town centre to ensure we retain cohesive communities in and around our rural and urban areas.

**e. Council spending**

The council has continued to invest in improvements right across the borough that have helped deliver better long-term outcomes for residents in 2019/20; £300k to deliver the improvements to play and open spaces across the borough, £724k investment in the purchasing of homes for refugees as part of the Syrian Refugee Programme, £8.5m Strawberry Fields Digital Hub was launched and has placed Chorley at the centre of the rapidly expanding digital sector in Lancashire and £2.7m allocated for the Westway sports hub.

**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 nationally including potential Brexit outcomes and further financial challenges on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic. The council has been proactive in its response and has strong financial and transformation plans in place including the return of previous investment such as the Market Walk Extension, Strawberry Fields Digital Hub and Primrose Gardens.

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

In addition to these challenges, over the next 12 months, there will be a focus on delivering our recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The council has a clear plan to sustain support for the most vulnerable residents, get council services back on track, protect local businesses and deliver the projects and improvements that matter most to our residents. We will support employability and work proactively to return to local economic growth.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

11. 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	x	Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

12. No comment.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

13. No comment.

CHRIS SINNOTT  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Report Author	Ext	Date
Rebecca Aziz-Brook	5348	21.07.2020