

ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY

2006 - 2021



Foreword

Welcome to the refreshed Economic Regeneration Strategy for Chorley. First published in 2006, the Strategy proposed a number of key actions to maximise economic opportunity, drive up value added activity and boost economic inclusion in order to achieve sustainable growth over the next 10 – 15 years.

This refreshed edition has been compiled as a result of changing economic circumstances and also emerging new national, regional and sub-area economic strategies including the Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement. Considerable progress has been made in delivering the Strategy and it is timely to define future key priorities and actions over the next 3 – 5 years.

We have achieved a lot. The significant increase in employee job growth places Chorley in the top 20% of districts nationally. Similarly unemployment is at one of the lowest levels in Lancashire. We are achieving record levels for business start up and survival. In many respects the prognosis for Chorley's economy continues to be bright.

Through feedback with partners and other stakeholders, this year we have refreshed our Strategy and set four Strategic themes which will guide the work of Chorley Partnership and the Economic Regeneration Group over the coming years.

This Strategy demonstrates the commitment to and success of partnership working in Chorley. Together we can ensure the continued long-term prosperity and regional importance of Chorley.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan W Jones', with a horizontal line underneath.

Allan W Jones
Chair, Chorley Partnership and Economic Regeneration Group

Introduction to Chorley's Economic Regeneration Strategy and Aim

The Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy was produced in 2006 by the Chorley Partnership, in consultation with partners and key stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sectors in Chorley. The Strategy was designed to facilitate sustainable economic growth over the next 10 – 15 years. Since then, economic circumstances have changed and there are many emerging new national, regional and sub-area economic strategies, including the Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement.

We have also achieved a great deal since 2006 against our original set of priorities and actions. With this in mind, we have decided to refresh the Economic Regeneration Strategy to reflect the priorities for the Borough from 2010 onwards and to celebrate the progress we have made since 2006 in achieving the aims of the original Economic Regeneration Strategy.

A thriving and vibrant economy is a top priority for Chorley Partnership and partners recognise that the economy is central to and impacts on housing, health, crime, community and life chance opportunities. The refreshed Strategy will provide the structure for the development of shared priorities and actions to be delivered in partnership across public, private and voluntary sector over the next 3 – 5 years.

Aim

By 2021 Chorley will have capitalised on its premier location as a place to do business, complemented by a thriving contemporary market town. Chorley will have attracted big named employers to its key employment sites, and with a strong local business base, residents will have greater opportunity to gain well paid employment locally. Chorley will be a thriving 'Contemporary Market Town' where people can enjoy a wealth of stores and attractions to complement neighbouring cities and shopping centres in the North West.

This strategy will maximise economic opportunity, drive up value added activity and boost economic inclusion to achieve sustainable growth and strengthen Chorley's economic position in both Central and Mid-Lancashire.

What this Strategy means for Chorley.

- Private sector investment worth £270 million
- The creation of 8,800 new jobs, with more than 3,000 new jobs in higher value sectors
- Achieving greater prosperity for all – raising the value of economic activity per head of population

An Economic Success Story

Chorley has many of the key components of economic success – a premier location at the heart of the North West motorway network with great access to the M61, M6 and M65 and only 35 minutes from Manchester International Airport; market catchments of Manchester, Liverpool and Preston; a highly skilled workforce; top performing schools; glorious countryside; high quality of life and a strong economic structure orientated towards growth.

The prognosis going forward is very bright – Chorley offers considerable economic growth potential and can make an effective contribution to sub-regional, regional and national economic growth objectives.

A Thriving Economy

Economic indicators show a robustness of the Chorley economy in weathering the current economic downturn. The Borough can boast:

- A strong economic structure aligned with the Central Lancashire sub-regional economy, which has significantly out-performed surrounding areas.
- A diverse economy with a range of sector strengths within the knowledge based and high growth sectors promoting economic stability – Business and Professional Services, Food and Drink, Digital and Creative, Advanced Engineering and Materials, Manufacturing, Construction and Retail.
- A recent significant increase in employee job growth by 23.4%, compared to a regional average of 5.7%
- A high business density of 45 per 10,000 resident adults which equates to the county average.
- A good skills profile with levels of NVQ2 and higher qualifications above the county and regional levels.
- High labour force economic activity at 80.4% of the working age population, which has remained constantly above the regional and national averages.
- Good educational attainment – five out of six secondary schools in Chorley achieve higher GCSE pass rates than the national average with 75.3% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE A* – C grades compared to 69.8% nationally.
- Balanced housing stock – with a higher proportion of detached and semi-detached housing than regional / national benchmarks and a more modern housing stock than many other parts of Lancashire.



Key Challenges

While recent trends indicate further strong economic growth potential, there are some key challenges facing the Borough which need to be addressed. The key challenges are:

- Commuting patterns: addressing the mass out migration of the workforce on a daily basis.
 - Low workplace-based earnings: addressing the difference between work-based earnings within the Borough and in surrounding authorities which currently provide an incentive to commuting.
 - Ensuring a continuous supply of employment land for inward investment: overcoming supply-side constraints to economic development and the demand side of attracting inward investment into the Borough.
 - Chorley Town Centre: maintaining Chorley's position in the retail hierarchy, growing the quality of its offer and providing a distinctive town centre environment.
 - Economic structure: putting in place measures to lesson economic dependence upon more vulnerable sectors which are influenced by globalisation, maximising potential from knowledge-based sectors and links with University of Central Lancashire, Higher Educational Institutions and Further Educational Institutions.
- Deprivation: addressing pockets of multiple deprivation, reconnecting deprived areas with the evident opportunities which exist and addressing entrenched employability difficulties.



Chorley's Economy – Defining the Future

There are a number of new and emerging strategies within which local economic development is being shaped. Primarily these are the Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement (MAA), Blackpool and Central Lancashire Housing Growth Point and the Central Lancashire Economic Development Strategy.

The Mid-Lancashire (MAA) intends to promote economic development across Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire districts, and has as its strategic objectives:

1. Maximising the potential of our key economic development and regeneration attributes.
2. Ensuring our infrastructure is capable of supporting our challenging economic growth opportunities.
3. Capitalising on our unique educational attributes to support and sustain our commitment to a knowledge-led economy.

These objectives are critical to maximising the potential of Mid-Lancashire to act as a catalyst for accelerated growth across the sub-region and to become a key contributor to leading the UK economy out of recession.

In recognition of the growth potential of Central Lancashire, the Blackpool and Central Lancashire Housing Growth Point aims to accelerate levels of new house building and associated infrastructure provision in the area.

An economic regeneration strategy has been prepared for the economic footprint of Central Lancashire, which covers Chorley, South Ribble and Preston districts. By 2026 Central Lancashire will be recognised as a highly sought after place to live and work in the North West. Central Lancashire will play a leading role in Lancashire's world class economy and have sustainable economic growth based on the area's unique assets.

The Strategy – Our Priority Themes

Although we are hopeful that the worst part of the recession has ended, Chorley Council and partners will continue to deliver bespoke responses to support businesses and the community during this challenging economic climate.

The Chorley Partnership has refreshed its priority themes, which will focus on achieving the vision and identifying the actions required to achieve this over the next 3 – 5 years. Key targets that will indicate how well we are performing have also been identified and agreed by partners and key stakeholders:

- Promoting knowledge-based inward investment.
- Creating a thriving 'Contemporary Market Town'.
- Supporting a strong indigenous business base.
- Ensuring residents and communities reach their full economic potential.



PRIORITY 1 Promoting knowledge-based inward investment

Attracting large inward investors in recognised knowledge based sectors will strengthen Chorley's economic base and provide better paid jobs locally.

SUCCESS STORY: The Revolution, Buckshaw

The Revolution is Chorley's Strategic Regional site and provides a 128 acre (52 ha) high quality logistics and industrial park, and has attracted high profile occupants Multiport and Encon, creating 450 number of jobs locally.

The involvement of Helio Slough – developers of The Revolution – has generated further investment at neighbouring site 'Buckshaw Link' to provide a highly prestigious 15 acres (6 ha) site of 20 speculatively built warehouse/industrial units developed to a high specification.

This is a flagship project, not only for Chorley, but for the Region as a whole, and has been brought about with relatively little public sector funding.

Adjacent to The Revolution is Buckshaw Village which is currently being developed as an urban village consisting of housing, employment and green space.



Whilst The Revolution is a positive story for Chorley, there are a number of challenges ahead. The current economic downturn has stalled the rate of investment at Buckshaw and needs to be reversed. We also need to ensure a quality supply of sites for inward investment in the medium to long term.

Priorities for Action

1. Ensure the implementation of Buckshaw Railway Station.
2. Bring forward development at Botany/Great Knowley.
3. Develop a succession strategy for major inward investment; identifying sites for the longer term.
4. Develop and deliver an inward investment plan building on Chorley's knowledge-based and high growth sectors.
5. Maximise opportunities for Chorley to grow as a location for Government and agency-based institutions, and USA professional services.
6. Lobby for a new Lancashire inward and international investment body.

Economic Regeneration Group – Choose Chorley for business

The new inward investment brochure 'Choose Chorley for business' showcases the Chorley offer to attract new investors to the area.



PRIORITY 2 Creating a thriving 'Contemporary Market Town'

This priority is about maintaining Chorley's position in the retail hierarchy, growing the quality of its offer and providing a distinctive and attractive town centre environment.

Chorley Town Centre is well known throughout the North West for its famous markets. The Town Centre boasts a diverse mix of traditional streets, markets, fine buildings and newer developments like Market Walk.

New multi-million pound shopping and leisure developments at Market Walk and Market Street, along with re-invigorated markets, are vital to Chorley's future, to create a contemporary market town, where people can enjoy a wealth of stores and attractions to complement neighbouring cities and shopping centres in the North West. Its redevelopment will take place over the next 10 years and will attract new retail and commercial investment, bringing thousands of new jobs and increased visitor levels.

SUCCESS STORY: Chorley Covered Markets

During 2009 Chorley Covered Market, owned and managed by Chorley Council, has been completely revamped with grand entrances to welcome shoppers to the market, a roof over the central aisle for the first time to improve the shopping experience, new lighting making it much brighter, full redecoration, and a new floor surface and layout for easier access.

These improvements have helped to boost trade and continue to attract visitors.



The 2008 Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy provides a detailed guide to future Town Centre interventions and thus providing direction for our Priorities for Action.

Priorities for Action

1. Securing the redevelopment of the Pall Mall Triangle, and Market Street public realm.
2. Look into the feasibility of a shop front improvement scheme.
3. Develop and deliver proposals for improvements to the Flat Iron area as a multi-functional market, civic amenity and car park.
4. Progress Market Walk Phase II shopping development.
5. Develop a strategy and identify a new phase of development opportunities in the town centre to attract larger multiples.
6. Develop a scheme to support high quality independents into vacant premises.
7. Develop and deliver a marketing package for the town centre, markets and Chorley as a whole.
8. Improve pedestrian routes from car parks into the shopping centre.
9. Promote the night time economy.
10. Developing our visitor offer by connecting local attractions to the town centre.
11. Develop a town centre improvement fund.



Economic Regeneration Group – Town Centre and Markets Manager

Chorley Town Centre is fairly unique in having its own Town Centre and Markets Manager to ensure the effective day to day smooth running of the Town Centre for our customers, traders and stakeholders.

PRIORITY 3 Supporting a strong indigenous business base

Chorley has a diverse economy with a range of sector strengths including knowledge based and high growth sectors - Business and Professional Services, Food and Drink, Digital and Creative, Advanced Engineering and Materials, Manufacturing, Construction and Retail. This theme is about supporting existing local businesses to survive and grow and maximising potential from links with UCLAN, Higher Educational Institutions and Further Educational Institutions.

SUCCESS STORY: Chorley Council and Business Link North West Partnership

Chorley Council working in partnership with Business Link North West has been supporting businesses as we head towards recovery – providing independent business support and information to businesses which is totally free to access and use.

Paul Hindle, Director of Lumenata Lighting Design Ltd who provide energy saving commercial and domestic lighting applications, has this to say about us:

“The guidance and support given has enabled me to make my vision a reality. I know I can always ask for my Advisors’ opinion and can trust the response – which has been essential in such challenging times”.

Priorities for Action

1. Supporting follow-on premises for university-led incubation and spin-out companies, and supporting university knowledge exchange.
2. Ensuring a supply of land and premises for a range of uses.
3. Supporting the delivery of the Lancashire West Local Development Scheme to grow and diversify rural economies.
4. Co-ordinating the delivery of environmental support to business.
5. To promote local supply networks by developing an electronic business directory.
6. Develop and deliver an action plan of shared business support with Business Link and other partners.
7. Develop and deliver a strategy to maximise local food production in Chorley.
8. In partnership with Business Link, strengthen economic trade and university linkages with India, China and USA.
9. Maximise Chorley’s position on the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership.

Economic Regeneration Group – Sustainability and Climate Change.

‘Going Green’ is a top priority for the Economic Regeneration Group. Working in partnership, businesses are being supported with free environmental diagnostic reviews, Council funded grant assistance packages, climate change business club, breakfast events and other forms of financial support.



PRIORITY 4 Ensuring residents and communities reach their full economic potential.

Despite Chorley being a relatively wealthy borough, there are pockets of multiple deprivation and residents in unemployment with low skills and low educational attainment. This theme is about linking deprivation to economic opportunity, removing barriers to employment, enhancing local skills, and maximising opportunities for our budding entrepreneurs.

SUCCESS STORY: Generating and Sustaining new business starts.

Business Venture Group, a local enterprise agency, are the appointed local supplier of new business start up and support service in Central Lancashire; with Chorley Council acting as Accountable Body.

In a recent article by the Sunday Times, Chorley was ranked as one of the best places to start a business in the UK. The performance table demonstrates our year on year success.

Chorley New Business Starts and Survival Performance						
Measure	2007/2008		2008/2009		2009/2010	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
New Businesses Established	53	74	53	82	53	74
Sustained for 12 months	82%	81%	81%	96%	82%	91%
Sustained for 24 months	76%	79%	76%	94%	76%	89%

Economic Regeneration Group – Redundancy Task Force.

A team of committed professional public/private sector organisations have been established to provide quality advice, information, guidance and support to businesses and their staff within a redundancy situation.

Priorities for Action

1. Continue to exploit new opportunities and to support existing employment initiatives such as Chorley Employment Charter, Redundancy Task Force, Connect to Work and Future Jobs Fund.
2. Look into the feasibility of a Chorley based 'Coaching Academy' to provide an enhanced full-time jobs club.
3. Maximising potential to develop a shared employment and skills infrastructure with Business Link, Mid Lancashire Employment and Skills Board and other partners.
4. Develop strong links between the Children's Trust and the Economic Regeneration Group to develop the employability of young people, including those not in education, employment or training (NEET), and to reduce child poverty.
5. Managing the delivery of the Central Lancashire Intensive Start-Up Support Programme.
6. Developing opportunities in the third sector; including volunteering and social enterprise.
7. Promote the provision of managed workspace and incubator units.
8. Improving local transport accessibility, the provision of a new railway station at Coppull, improving car parking at Chorley and Adlington railway station, Chorley-Wigan quality bus corridor and innovative rural transport solutions.
9. Sub-regional transport enhancements including the electrification of Manchester-Blackpool rail line and Chorley/South Ribble/Preston express bus service and quality bus corridor.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Indicator of Success	Baseline 2010	Target March 2011	Target March 2012	Target March 2013
NI 151 Employment Rate (%) (Sept 2009)	75.9			
NI 152 Working Age Benefits (%) (Aug 2009)	11.1			
NI 163 Working Age Population at NVQ Level 2+ (2008)	71.1			
NI 165 Working Age Population at NVQ Level 4+ (2008)	28.4			
NI 166 Average Workplace Earnings of Employees (%) (2008-09)	428.2			
NI 171 Enterprise: VAT Registrations (Rate) (2008)	59.5			
NI 172 Small Businesses Employment Growth (%) (2008)	14.5			
Visitor Expenditure (£ millions) (2008)	172.00	172.50	173.00	173.50
No. of New Businesses Established (Mar 2010)	74	53	53	53
No. of New Businesses Established and Sustained for 12 Months (Mar 2010)	91%	91%	91%	91%
No. of New Businesses Established and Sustained for 24 Months (Mar 2010)	89%	89%	89%	89%
Town Centre Visits – Pedestrian Passes (Apr 2010)	33,800	34,814	35,858	36,933
Vacant Town Centre floorspace (Apr 2010)	7.94%	7.5%	7.0%	6.5%
Occupancy of Covered Market (%) (Mar 2010)	87%	89%	91%	93%

KEY

	Better than or Equal to Regional and National Average / Exceeding Targets
	Better than or Equal to Regional Average but Worse than National Average / Meeting Targets
	Worse than Regional Average / Below Targets



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