

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery Introduced by Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Resources)	Council	Tuesday 28 January 2025

Destination Management Plan for Chorley

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	NA
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Purpose of the Report

- To seek approval of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Chorley.

Recommendations

- That the Destination Management Plan be approved.

Reasons for recommendations

- Production of a Destination Management Plan is a project within the Corporate Strategy 2024-2025. The DMP is an ambitious framework to support the council in working with stakeholders and local businesses to put Chorley on the map as a premier visitor destination and inspire pride in those who call Chorley home.
- The recommended actions ensure a clear path towards achieving the plan objectives.

Other options considered and rejected

- None

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

6. Last year, an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement was undertaken, the results of which have been used to create this plan.
7. The plan sets out an ambitious framework to drive forward Chorley's vision of enabling strong communities, a resilient economy, excellent services, a greener future and successful people.

Aims and objectives

8. Primary objectives of the plan are to:
 - Increase visitor footfall
 - Increase visitor time spent in the borough
 - Positively impact the borough's visitor economy
 - Work with businesses to better promote Chorley's offer
 - Improve pride of place for residents
9. The actions within the plan fall into four main areas of work:
 - Action area 1: Define Chorley's offer to visitors and develop Chorley's brand and image
 - Action area 2: Create themed campaigns and offers to appeal to a range of different audiences
 - Action area 3: Support businesses in the tourism sector and enable a joined-up offer and cross promotion
 - Action area 4: Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits
10. A new positioning statement has been developed which builds on the consultation feedback received from Chorley's tourism businesses, visitors and other key stakeholders. It builds on the notion that Chorley's USP is in fact, the sum of all its parts. Chorley has lots of strong selling points and compelling reasons for people to visit. There's a lot happening in lots of places, which could appeal to many different people, however none of these elements appear strong enough to transform perceptions of the town quickly. Whilst no one feature is strong enough to create a surge of visitors, put together there's an awful lot to explore, all within easy reach across the borough.
11. More than just a badge or a strapline, the following proposition has been conceived to be a guiding principle for the council and key stakeholders which should help to define, articulate and shape Chorley's overarching placemaking and investment offer going forward:

Chorley – the best of Lancashire, all in one place
12. It is envisaged that this positioning can be used alongside the existing Check out Chorley and Choose Chorley brands to pull together all that Chorley has to offer, be that through published itineraries, refreshed events, new marketing campaigns or future tourism initiatives. The branding will be reviewed and modernised to establish a new look and feel for our tourism marketing.

13. The plan outlines Chorley's visitor attractions and assets as well as a number of themes under which to promote these, expanding on the agreed positioning statement including:
 - The best of... Chorley stories
 - The best of... outdoor escapes
 - The best of... foodie finds
 - The best of... retail therapy
 - The best of... arts and culture
 - The best of... chills and thrills
 - The best of... dog friendly fun
 - The best of... accessible adventures
 - The best of... family fun
 - The best of... events
 - The best of... business

14. Target markets have been reviewed and the following audiences have been identified to focus on:
 - Early retirees/empty nesters
 - Grandparents on family days out
 - Families with young children
 - Couples
 - Outdoor explorers
 - Pet owners looking for dog friendly options
 - Chorley residents
 - Local businesses

15. A number of actions have been identified to be delivered in the short, medium and long term. Key actions include:
 - Developing a communications plan based around the themes and positioning statement identified
 - Creating itineraries to promote to coach companies and visitors
 - Clarifying roles within the Communications and Visitor Economy service to increase capacity and encourage joint working
 - Establishing a tourism network following a Destination Management Organisation model
 - Creating a sense of place toolkit and promotional assets that can be shared with local businesses to use
 - Improved partnership working with Marketing Lancashire
 - Increased sponsorship income and bidding for future funding
 - Reviewing the council's events calendar and promoting external events to provide a full picture of what's on
 - Improving infrastructure at our parks and open spaces to allow for more events to take place
 - Promoting our assets as places to film
 - Creating a tourist information service at either the bus station or Astley Hall

- Creating a data strategy to make better use of new and existing information to inform future work
 - Conducting an accessibility audit to identify opportunities for accessible visits
 - Reviewing the customer journey and promotion of Astley Hall
 - Developing a cultural strategy
16. Work has begun with a number of actions already taken forward including:
- A service review is underway within the Communications and Visitor Economy Service to ensure sufficient staffing is in place to deliver this plan. This will include the introduction of a Tourism Marketing Lead, a Tourism Marketing Officer and a Business Development Team.
 - In addition, there has been a review of budgets, with a proposal to create a Check out Chorley marketing budget of £20,000 and a marketing budget of £10,000 for Astley Hall, to ensure delivery of exciting and engaging campaigns that promote Chorley as a visitor destination.
 - The current offer at Astley Hall is being reviewed, taking in opening times, wedding packages, cultural and heritage events to make best use of this key destination.
 - Meetings have been arranged with Marketing Lancashire and Film Hub North to explore opportunities for utilising and marketing our assets.
 - A new website has been created for Check out Chorley and a new Facebook page set up to complement the existing Instagram page.
 - Digital screens have been installed across the town centre featuring promotional content about what's on in Chorley.
 - A Check out Chorley marketing campaign has been delivered over the last four months using UKSPF which has included advertising in visitor guides distributed throughout the north west, distribution of the Astley Hall and Check out Chorley leaflet at key locations across the region, Spotify advertising, bus shelter advertising and paid advertising campaigns on social media. We have also secured PR coverage in a wide range of press for our recent events including the Manchester Evening News, BBC Radio Lancashire, the Lancashire Post, The Lancashire Evening Telegraph and the Bolton News.
 - A Cultural Strategy has been commissioned for Chorley which will complement the DMP, looking at how art, heritage and culture can help shape our people and places.
 - The plan will be launched at the next Choose Chorley business networking event on 21 February where key objectives and actions will be presented and ways to work together discussed.
17. Implementation of the Destination Management Plan will be ongoing, with regular monitoring and reporting against the critical success factors as identified in the plan.

Climate change and air quality

18. There are significant links between tourism and environmental impacts such as increased traffic, noise and waste pollution, disruption to habitats and ecosystems in tourist hotspots. It will be important for the council to focus on sustainable tourism when implementing the Destination Management Plan. Sustainable tourism takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the tourism industry, the environment and host communities. This links to the Carbon Pathways Project and could include things such as encouraging greener travel by promoting public transport links, using tourism for environmental education, or support and incentives for green businesses.

Equality and diversity

19. The Destination Management looks to promote Chorley to different target audiences including families, parents and grandparents, people of different ages, people with different interests and those looking for an accessible place to visit. Actions outlined within the plan will create a positive impact by highlighting attractions, events and things to do for residents and visitors to the area. In addition, events form a key part of Chorley's offer and with many free events, there will be positive opportunities for communities to come together.
20. An Impact Assessment has been completed.

Risk

21. Key risks associated with this plan have been included on the council's risk register, including mitigating actions. These include ensuring sufficient staff and budgetary resource is allocated to carry out the actions outlined and networks put in place to allow stakeholders and businesses to play their part in the plan.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

22. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

23. As set out within the report the Destination Management Plan will contribute to the delivery of the council priority "An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas".

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report

Appendices

List the appendices in the order that they are attached to the report with titles as appropriate. Any spreadsheets/diagrams should be in pdf format and be headed up.

Appendix A – Destination Management Plan for Chorley

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