

Chorley

The best of Lancashire all in one place

Destination Management Plan 2025 - 2030



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Introduction

01

Introduction

Chorley Council is dedicated to ensuring the borough is in the best possible position for the future.

The visitor economy plays a hugely important role in this with a total of £183 million generated within the local economy through visitor and tourism business expenditure in 2022.

Over recent years the town centre and wider borough have been developed to create a welcoming and vibrant place to visit. Further exciting developments to transform the town centre are planned for 2025 and beyond thanks to a successful funding bid of £20m from the Government, which will see the creation of a new civic square inclusive of event, residential and commercial space.

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) has been developed in collaboration with key visitor economy sector stakeholders and provides an ambitious framework to drive forward Chorley's vision of:

**Enabling strong communities,
a resilient economy,
excellent services,
a greener future and
successful people.**



This plan is a bold vision to enhance what makes Chorley special — its rich history, stunning natural landscapes, and community spirit — while strategically addressing opportunities for sustainable growth.

The actions outlined will move us close to achieving Chorley's corporate priority of creating an enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas. It will set out ways in which we can celebrate and unlock the full potential of the borough, ensuring its status as a vibrant, welcoming and thriving destination.

This is about more than just attracting tourists; it's about creating shared value for everyone in Chorley. The Destination Management Plan is a roadmap to align efforts across local businesses, tourism providers, and residents, elevating Chorley as a must-visit location that attracts visitors and inspires pride in those who call it home. By 2030, Chorley aims to position itself as a leading destination for short breaks and day visits in Lancashire, celebrated for its tourism initiatives, vibrant events calendar, and high-quality visitor experiences.

The borough will embrace its unique assets to attract a diverse range of visitors, offering a balance of cultural exploration, outdoor adventure, and community-led experiences.

Key aspirations include:

Establishing the borough of Chorley as the go-to destination for outdoor enthusiasts, leveraging its proximity to the West Pennine Moors and the Lancashire countryside.

Refining and effectively promoting the year-round programme of cultural and family-focused events, attracting repeat visitors from outside the borough, a more diverse demographic, and boosting both the daytime and evening economy.

Becoming a hub for authentic experiences, from artisan food and drink to hands-on workshops and guided tours that showcase Chorley's heritage and community spirit.



Chorley will continue to **innovate** and **adapt** to changing visitor trends, leveraging technology and insights to **enhance** digital marketing, visitor **engagement**, and **accessibility**. By building on our **strengths** and addressing identified gaps, the town centre of **Chorley** and its surrounding villages will secure its place as a **vibrant, sustainable**, and **memorable** destination for generations to come.

Background

O2

Context

At a national level, the UK Government has created a Tourism Recovery Plan, which emphasises building a sustainable and resilient visitor economy.

Regionally, a Visitor Economy Growth Plan for Lancashire has been developed. The plan to extend the reach and benefits of Lancashire's Visitor Economy commits to strengthening the north's place proposition, optimising green tourism and maximising the economic benefits of Lancashire's tourism offer, promoting a diverse place with urban, coastal and rural economies.

Lancashire has recently been granted LVEP status (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). Led by Marketing Lancashire, Chorley is a member of this partnership. A Combined County Authority (CCA) is being established to devolve further powers and funding from national government to the county.

Chorley's visitor landscape

At the heart of Lancashire, Chorley is steeped in history, with a bustling town centre, vibrant villages, historic halls, beautiful countryside and a sense of innovation and pride.

With a strong market town heritage Chorley provides quality shopping opportunities from big brand names to local independent businesses, as well as a wealth of fantastic leisure and entertainment venues to enjoy. Sitting on the fringe of the West Pennine Moors, Chorley offers outstanding countryside for carefree cycling or wonderful walks.

Visiting Chorley is easy, being located close to major motorways plus plentiful free or low-cost parking in the town centre, which is also accessible by bus or rail with regular train services from Blackpool, Manchester and the Lake District.

Visitor data

The visitor economy is already big business for Chorley, generating a total of **£183 million** in 2022 alone.

The latest STEAM data generated by Marketing Lancashire shows that Chorley benefitted from **3.09 million tourism visits** throughout the year, with **2.78 million of those being day visitors** to the district. Furthermore, visitors to Chorley supported **1,921 active full-time equivalent jobs**.

2.78 million
tourism visits
made by day visitors
to the district

0.31 million
visits
were made by visitors
staying in Chorley as part
of a holiday or short break,
generating 0.8 million
nights in accommodation
across the district

Day visits generated
£115 million
for the local economy of Chorley in 2022

A total of
3.09 million tourism visits
equating to 5% of all tourism visits
to Lancashire

3.58 million
visitor days
and nights
generated by
visitors in 2022

Staying visitors
generated a total of
£68 million
for the businesses
and communities
of Chorley

Visitors to Chorley
supported
1,921
active full time
equivalent jobs

A total of
£183 million
was generated within the
local economy through
visitor and tourism
business expenditure

When adjusted against
inflation, Economic impact
was down on pre-Covid
levels by
-15.5%
(2018 v 2022)

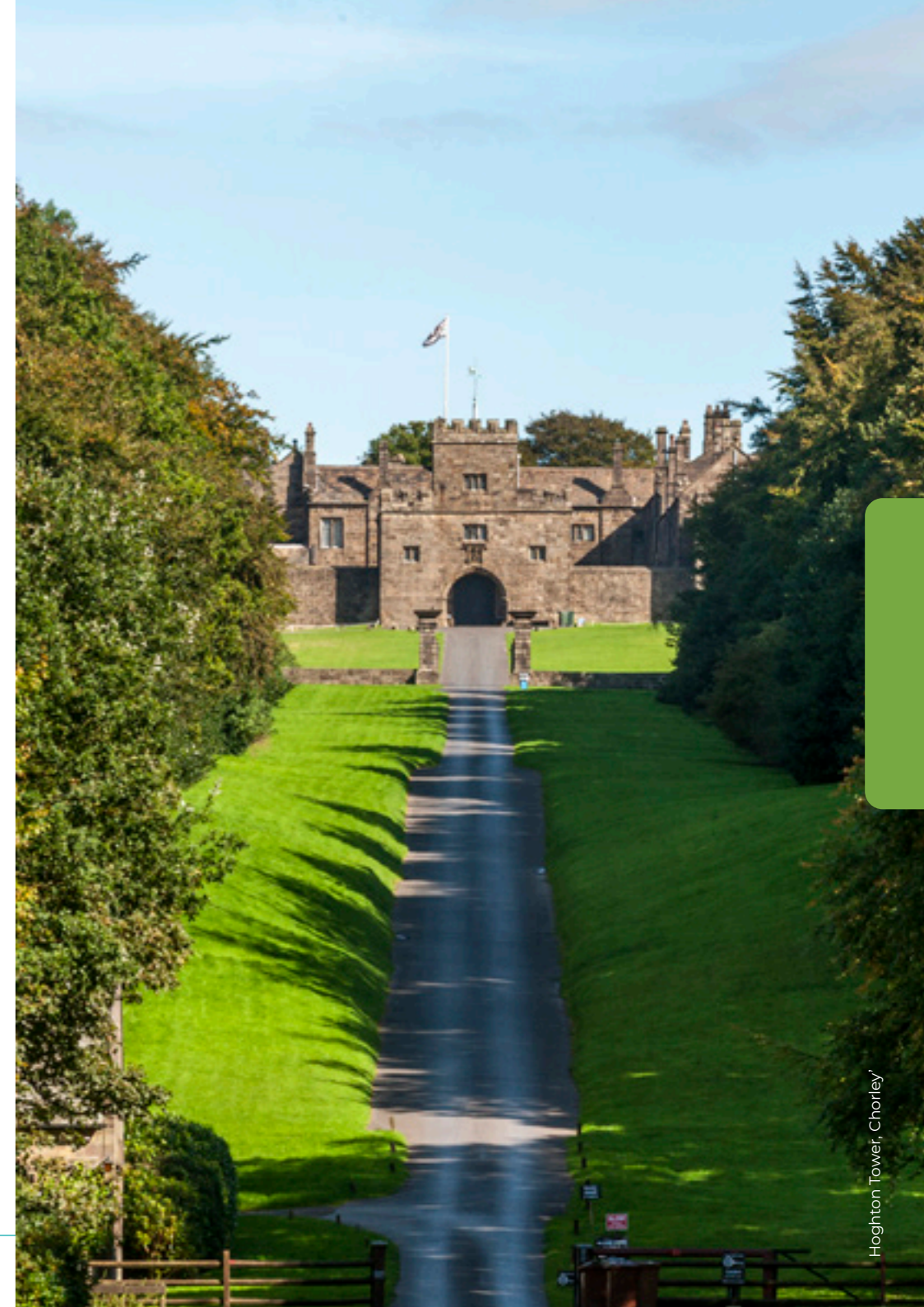
Visitors numbers
were down
14.4%
on pre-Covid levels
(2018 v 2022)

Chorley's assets

Chorley benefits from a diverse range of visitor economy assets situated around an accessible borough. Below are businesses we have identified, many of which have been part of the development of this strategy.

Historic and cultural venues:

- **Astley Hall:** 16th-century Grade I listed house with stunning architecture, period furnishings, and historical displays.
- **Astley Park:** A beautiful park surrounding Astley Hall, known for its paths, lake, and family-friendly events.
- **Heskin Hall:** A Tudor manor house featuring antique shops, events, and a historical atmosphere.
- **Hoghton Tower:** A fortified manor with historic ties to Shakespeare and King James I, offering tours and events.
- **Liverpool Castle:** A replica of the original, medieval Liverpool Castle, this folly offers views over the nearby reservoir.
- **Pigeon Tower:** Originally called the Lookout Tower, offers spectacular views of the surrounding countryside.



Hoghton Tower, Chorley

Chorley Market:

- **Historic Tuesday Market:** Known for its roots dating back to the 15th century, offering a traditional market experience.
- **Saturday Outdoor Market:** Aiming to create a lively and vibrant shopping atmosphere with modern additions.

Art:

- **Hepplestone Fine Art:** Renowned for its gallery showcasing contemporary and collectable artworks.
- **Bygone Times:** A large antiques centre perfect for collectors and vintage lovers.

Retail:

- **Astley Hall, Coach House and Park:** Featuring Barrica In The Park and Astley Hall gift shop.
- **Booths:** High-end supermarket selling the best produce available.
- **Cedar Farm:** An unrivalled selection of independent shops and popular cafe.
- **Independent stores** including:
 - Ebb and Flo book shop
 - Reeds Refillery
 - Malcolm's Musicland
 - Anise Gift shop
 - Maidens clothes shop
 - Nigel Clare menswear
 - The Rail Weigh Adlington
- **Heskin Hall Shopping Village:** A wide range of unique retail shops all under one roof.
- **Market Walk** featuring high street names including M&S Food, Sports Direct, JD Sports, Boots and more.



Food and drink:

As well as a large range of restaurants, cafes and places to eat, Chorley is home to a number of unique food and drink businesses including:

- **The Bee Centre:** A visitor centre dedicated to bees, offering honey-tasting and educational experiences.
- **The Bees Country Kitchen:** Famous for hearty homemade meals in a cosy atmosphere.
- **Brindle Distillery - The Cuckoo's Nest:** Distillery and home of the award-winning Cuckoo Gin.
- **The Café at Cedar Farm:** Offers fresh, locally sourced dishes in a rustic and creative environment.
- **Chorley Market and 1498:** Lots of stalls selling local produce to enjoy in or takeaway.
- **Frederick's Ice Cream:** A family-run creamery known worldwide for its award-winning Italian-style ice cream.
- **Hoghton Tower Vaio Tea Room:** A charming café in the historic Hoghton Tower, known for its afternoon teas.
- **Lockdown Kitchen and Bar:** Serving the best gourmet burgers around.
- **Lucianos and Lucianos at the Millstone:** Authentic Italian cuisine.
- **Majestic Coffee Lounge:** The ideal place to meet for a coffee and an indulgent slice of homemade cake.
- **Massa's Dessert Cafe Bar** (part of Frederick's): Serving decadent desserts and fresh home cooked food.
- **McLeod 9 Private Dining:** Fine dining experience at Spring Cottage in Rivington.
- **Rivington Brewing Co - Brewery and Taproom:** Unique beers in a relaxed setting.
- **Sun and Salt by Time for Meze:** Mediterranean inspired eatery.
- **Old Soul Bakery:** Deliciously indulgent bakes.
- **Old Stable Vintage Tea Rooms:** Award-winning quirky, vintage tea shop.
- **Whins Kitchen:** Dining in the heart of the beautiful Wheelton countryside.



Outdoor adventures:

- **Anderton Centre:** Activity centre and outdoor education facility.
- **Boatel Party Cruises:** Offers scenic and festive canal cruises.
- **Ellerbeek Narrowboats:** Provides canal boat hire for excursions and events.
- **Go Ape Rivington:** A treetop adventure park with zip lines and rope courses.
- **Healey Nab:** A local hotspot for mountain biking and nature walks.
- **The Ridges Gardens:** A tranquil private garden known for its vibrant plant life and open days.
- **Rivington Pike:** A landmark hill with stunning panoramic views and popular hiking trails.
- **Rivington Terraced Gardens:** Historic gardens with stonework, waterfalls, and scenic paths.
- **Yarrow Valley Country Park:** Known for its picturesque trails, lake, and wildlife habitats.

Entertainment:

- **Adventure Golf at Duxbury Park**
- **Chorley Theatre:** A hub for local arts, showcasing plays, films, and live events.
- **Euxton Karting:** A 300 metre outdoor circuit for all ages from 3 years old upwards.
- **Gamer X at Park Hall Hotel:** Retro and modern arcade games and more.
- **Reel Cinema:** Showing all the latest blockbusters.
- A vast array of **independent pubs**.
- Upcoming – the **new Civic Square** in the town centre, a location with new food and beverage businesses, retail and a dedicated space for events.

Creative spaces:

- **Cedar Farm:** A hub for independent artists and crafters, with shops, studios, and workshops.
- **Chorley Theatre Studio:** A flexible arts space that can hold around 100 guests.
- Exhibition space at **Astley Hall**.



Leisure and relaxation:

- **Brinscall Baths:** A charming Victorian-era swimming pool with a nostalgic feel.
- **Contours Day Spa:** A relaxing retreat set in beautiful countryside on the same complex as Whin's kitchen.
- **Duxbury Park Golf Course** – Golf course plus driving range, play area and dining.
- **Euxton Park Golf Centre:** Known for its driving range, lessons, and golf facilities. This centre also offers outdoor crazy golf.
- **Park Hall Hotel and Spa:** A tranquill retreat set within a 7th Century monastery.
- **Shaw Hill Golf and Spa Hotel:** A beautiful, peaceful location, above an 18-hole championship golf course.

Unique Mormon location:

- **Preston England LDS Mormon Temple:** A striking spiritual centre and landmark for the LDS Church. Dedicated in 1998, the Preston England Temple is the second Mormon temple in the United Kingdom (after the London England Temple) and serves members of the LDS Church across Northern England, Scotland, and parts of Ireland.

Interesting features such as:

- The 'original' flat iron measurement sheet at the Police Station.
- The cenotaph in Astley Park was dedicated on 31 May 1924. It is a replica of the Chorley Market Cross which stood on the town's green for centuries.
- The Astley Walled Garden: First mentioned in the Brooke family accounts in 1757.
- Connections to celebrities including Jack Catterall (boxer) Steve Royle (comedian and BGT finalist) Boyzone and Chorley FC, Pole vaulter Hollie Bradshaw and Olivia Broome Paralympian.



Join our Tourism Network

There are so many more brilliant things to do and enjoy in Chorley and we want to hear all about them. We are looking to create a Tourism Network so that we can work together to shout about all that Chorley has to offer.

To find out more email: tourism@chorley.gov.uk



Strengths, challenges and opportunities

An extensive programme of stakeholder engagement has taken place to better understand how Chorley is perceived as a destination, and what opportunities and challenges lay ahead. As part of this research, interviews have been conducted with a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Key visitor economy sector businesses in Chorley
- Council staff working across different elements of the visitor economy agenda
- Senior councillors
- Influential external partners and stakeholders
- Visitors to the borough

In addition, Marketing Lancashire's STEAM data and official council footfall figures for the market, town centre and events have been reviewed.



This research demonstrates that Chorley as a destination has many considerable strengths, as well as a number of challenges. Looking forward, there are a number of exciting opportunities that can be developed:

Strengths

- Large number of high-quality attractions, events and things to do in the area, all within easy reach
- Secured funding for town centre regeneration
- A desire from local businesses to work together to improve Chorley's visitor offer
- Good public transport links and a convenient location close to the motorway network
- Civic pride, when interviewed, local people are proud to be from the area. Chorley has also recently been named by Rightmove as the second happiest place to live in the North West, ranking 17th overall across Britain!
- Strong political commitment and ambition
- High-quality heritage asset in Astley Hall
- Chorley Markets, an existing popular visitor attraction at the heart of the town centre
- Varied geography including both town centre and countryside
- Existing destination for coach trips
- Extensive events calendar
- Existing social media presence and new Check out Chorley website which can be further developed

Challenges

- Defining what makes Chorley special and why should people visit
- Access to and use of data to help monitor the visitor economy
- Maximising the potential and profile of Astley Hall
- Engagement and interaction with private businesses and external stakeholders
- Choice and number of accommodation options for overnight stays
- Nearby competition from bigger destinations – Manchester, Lake District, Blackpool, Liverpool City Region
- Accessibility of facilities and services for people with disabilities



Opportunities

- The potential to develop a new positioning statement to strengthen Chorley's offer and place in the visitor market
- Enhancing the offer at Astley Hall and Park to increase visitor numbers
- Better exploitation of existing visitor data and utilisation of other data sources and systems to understand quiet periods, and gaps in the calendar to create targeted programmes
- Working with attractions across the borough, it is possible to build clusters of attractions to form customer focused itineraries and campaigns
- Events are a key strength, Chorley has one of the largest events calendars in Lancashire. There is an opportunity to introduce new themes for existing events and look to enhance the year-round programme. In addition, Chorley Flower Show is a growing flagship event and represents a huge opportunity to build on the borough's profile
- Seeking external funding and working in creative partnership to support events and the cultural offer across the borough
- Targeting people who would ordinarily look to other destinations and becoming the undiscovered/alternative place to go
- Promoting Chorley as a great day out destination or an ideal stop off to other destinations in the North West, becoming a valued part of a wider trip
- Working with businesses to promote eco-tourism options, highlighting resources such as electric vehicle charging stations, sustainable transport links, and eco-conscious visitor experiences to align with the growing demand for sustainable travel
- Enhancing physical and digital accessibility and promoting accessible opportunities
- Encouraging businesses to create a sustainable offer and showcasing eco friendly businesses to boost Chorley's green tourism offer

Key objectives

03

The primary objectives of this 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

This will be achieved through the delivery of four key areas of work:



Action areas

1

Define Chorley's offer to visitors to develop Chorley's brand and image

- Develop a positioning statement for Chorley based on stakeholder engagement
- Develop a campaign and series of assets around this to promote Chorley as 'The Best of Lancashire, all in one place'
- Review marketing channels and assets to increase awareness of Chorley throughout the North West and beyond

2

Create themed packages to increase visitors and dwell time

- Use data to inform decisions around itineraries for visitors
- Develop themed packages to help inform marketing campaigns
- Create reasons to visit Chorley based on different target audiences

3

Support businesses in the tourism sector

- Create a destination management organisation model to better connect with local business
- Identify opportunities for enhanced promotion for businesses
- Cross promote businesses to create a full offer for Chorley
- Create a sense of place toolkit to allow for a consistent and shared approach to promoting Chorley

4

Improve the visitor experience

- Create improved tourist information for visitors
- Enhance events to grow audiences
- Provide opportunities for visitors to give feedback to inform future plans and to allow continuous improvement to continually improve
- Bid for external funding and work in partnership to deliver an improved offer

Where next –
defining Chorley's
future as a top
visitor destination

04

Branding -
cementing Chorley's position

The most successful
places are those
who know
who they are.

Marketing Lancashire

Stakeholder engagement has identified a number of opportunities to improve the way Chorley is promoted as a destination.

As part of the research for this plan, every business and individual consulted with, was asked to think of three words which they believed define Chorley. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive - a fantastic testament to the town's standing in the eyes of key stakeholders.

Some of the most frequent and reoccurring qualities were:

- Friendly
- Nice
- Vibrant
- Safe
- Accessible
- Green
- Compact

Chorley's identity is rooted in its heritage, its connection to nature, and its reputation as a welcoming, family-friendly destination. It is a place where history and tradition meet modern vibrancy, providing visitors with experiences that are both enriching and relaxing.

Furthermore, the borough offers a mix of historic treasures, such as the iconic Astley Hall, alongside vibrant local markets, countryside retreats like Yarrow Valley Country Park and Rivington Pike, family-friendly attractions and places to eat and drink. Its central location in Lancashire, combined with excellent transport links, makes it an ideal destination for day-trippers, outdoor enthusiasts, and families seeking a memorable escape.

Research has demonstrated, that whilst Chorley has a lot of strong selling points and compelling reasons for people to visit, there is no one feature strong enough to create a surge of visitors. There is lots happening in many places, which could appeal to many different people, which when put together has the potential to form a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and transform perceptions of the town. Chorley has an awful lot to explore, all within easy reach across the borough. Indeed, Chorley's USP is the sum of all its parts.

A new placemaking proposition

Based on this, a new positioning proposition for Chorley has been developed.

More than just a badge or a strapline, this proposition has been conceived to be a guiding principle for the council and key stakeholders to help define, articulate and shape Chorley's overarching placemaking and investment offer going forward.

The best of Lancashire all in one place



This message of driving forward Chorley as a go-to destination will co-exist with and complement the existing Check out Chorley visitor brand, and the business brand of Choose Chorley without conflicting or diluting the wider call to action.

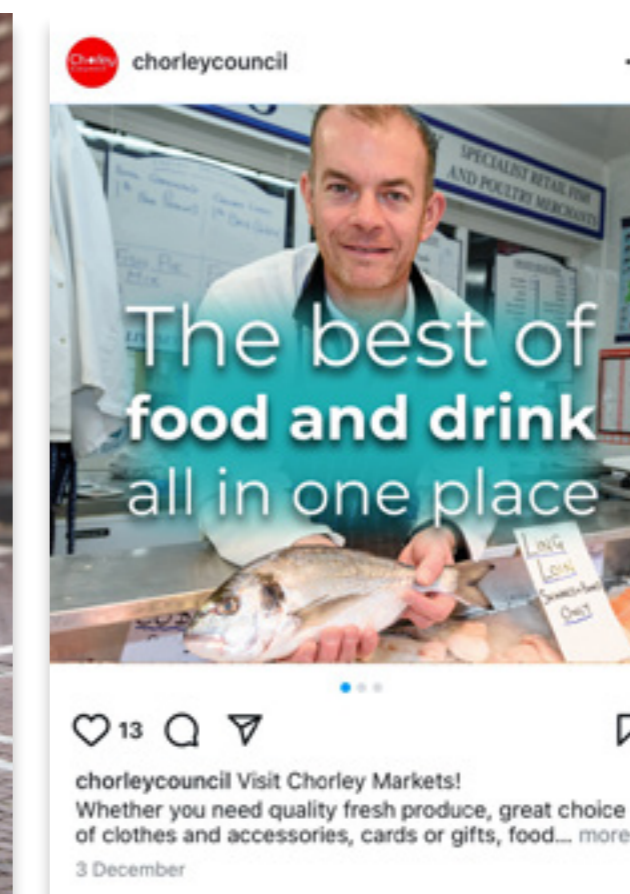
The holistic nature of the proposition means it can be used as an overarching placemaking statement, and support inward investment and quality of life campaigns, in addition to visitor economy activity.

The proposition is aspirational. It paves the future for Chorley, whilst being flexible enough to weather future changes. It will be incorporated into future campaigns as a golden thread, and used to highlight the full range of Chorley's offer.

- It is the guiding principle for visitor economy content and messaging going forward, which in turn will constantly reinforce the proposition.
- It demonstrates the proximity and accessibility of things to enjoy in Chorley, both within the town centres and connecting to attractions across the borough.
- It emphasises the independent/family run nature of Chorley businesses and highlights local Lancashire produce and supply chains
- It places Chorley as a top Lancashire destination
- It reflects the positive Lancastrian traits of being warm, friendly, down to earth and authentic
- It denotes the quality of place associated with the county such as countryside and green spaces, great produce and craftsmanship, history and heritage, value and affordability as a gateway to the north.

The brand in use

This new positioning statement will be used throughout the existing Check out Chorley visitor campaign to demonstrate all that's on offer. Below are some examples of how this could look in practice.



Brand values

Key messages that underpin this position include:



A themed approach

There is an opportunity to strengthen the visitor proposition through the use of themed packages and itineraries.

By curating Chorley's permanent and seasonal assets, cultural strengths, hidden gems and quirky angles, together as themed packages - and devising both formal and informal itineraries underpinned by useful, clear and updated visitor information - Chorley's diverse and dynamic visitor offer can be presented much more creatively and targeted more strategically.

Having more defined itineraries on different Chorley experiences available across the whole borough could help develop new/extended coach tour packages, keeping more coach visitor spending in Chorley for longer, something which coach operators and traders/venues have said would be welcomed. It also provides an opportunity to bring businesses together and cross promote what's on in the area.

Identified themes to explore include:

- 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**

The best of... **Chorley stories**

In addition to encouraging more history buffs and stately home enthusiasts to visit, there is a clear opportunity to leverage the tales of Chorley's history and heritage and engage with wider audiences.

Anchor heritage assets including Astley Hall and Hoghton Tower can be combined with cherry-picked elements of Chorley's rich and fascinating history for example St Laurence's Church, Myles Standish the Lancashire man who played a leading role in founding modern America and Charles Lightoller, the second officer aboard the ill-fated RMS Titanic

This theme can combine curious facts and local lore for example Cromwell's bed at Astley, Beavis the hero dog of Duxbury, Hoghton's claim to the "Arise Sir Loin" origin, the infamous 'Beware' town motto, the stars and stripes flag debate and the Jacobite rebels 'cheese eating' legend from Chorley Chapel to add more colour.

Elements of previous trails and guides such as The Astley Park Curiosities Trail, the Chorley Heritage Trail, Chorley Cinema Entertainment Tour and The Leo Baxendale Bash Street Trail could be repurposed to support the narrative, as could existing content relating to Myles Standish, and other notable historic personalities.

Residents and visitors could be encouraged to share their own interesting Chorley Stories and 'did you know...' content to build a richer picture of the borough.

The best of... **outdoor escapes**

Chorley has a wide range of green and natural assets which are geographically scattered. In addition, the borough's outdoor and nature-based visitor experiences are predominantly marketed as standalone activities.

Through a new Great Outdoors narrative, Chorley could combine several different offers and opportunities which would appeal to the adventurer alongside more general audiences who enjoy nature and the countryside.

This theme would look to combine Chorley's hero green spaces including Rivington, Astley Park and Yarrow Valley Country Park with popular outdoor and nature-based activities such as Go Ape, the Bee Centre and Cedar Farm.

Water-based experiences including the Anderton Centre and Ellerbeck Narrowboats alongside leisure-based activities with an outdoor link such as camping at Rivington Brewing Co and Boatel would also be included.

Walking and cycling trails, and emphasising Chorley's rich rural heritage and wider countryside setting, would further underpin this narrative.



The best of... foodie finds

Food and drink continue to be a great driver for visitors, but there can be a tendency for destinations to overly focus on what they consider to be its 'best' establishments.

Establishments striving for Michelin Stars have value, but for every fan of fine dining there could be 50 wanting a food truck.

Choice of cuisines, value for money, meeting different dietary needs - even opening times - are all key considerations.

From Lucianos to Lockdown Kitchen and Bar, 1498 to Fredericks Ice Cream, Whittle Tearooms to Whins Kitchen; Chorley's food and drink narrative needs to highlight quality, diversity and affordability.

Many places also neglect to highlight their food and drink retail offer when promoting their restaurant and bar scene.

Bringing Chorley's impressive restaurant, café and bar offer together with its high-quality F&B retailers, artisan suppliers and regular market traders such as Rivington Brewery, Gobins Family Butchers, Brindle Distillery, The Bees Country Kitchen and Old Soul Bakery, - complemented by Booths and M&S food halls, and popular intergenerational outlets like Grandad Jim's Sweet Shoppe - will make for a very strong 'foodie' proposition.



The best of... retail therapy

From the butter pies sold at the covered market to Nigel Clare's menswear, Chorley's retail offer genuinely does have something for everyone.

But for many shoppers, Tuesday's market remains the core driver. The market - and the coach parties it continues to attract - is a fantastic asset which generates income across all parts the town centre.

Highlighting more destination shopping experiences outside of the town centre for example Heskin Hall shopping village and Bygone Times, as well as promoting retail specialisms such as Malcolm's Musicland and Drumbeat Records for music fans could help broaden the retail offer.

In alignment with the key messaging around independence and authenticity, Chorley's very high proportion of independent retailers and family-run businesses (above 70%) who operate all year round, could help boost retail footfall on non-market days, as could the further development of a more 'specialist' Saturday outdoor market.

The fact Chorley has a Booths and M&S only two minutes' walk apart, and is home to many other popular high-street names within Market Walk, is another strong selling-point for the town's overarching retail narrative.



The best of... arts and culture

Chorley's night-time economy has been bolstered in recent years with new bars and restaurants, plus Chorley Theatre continues to attract some of the country's best stand-up comedy acts in addition to its popular 'home-grown' productions.

Also, initiatives such as the Real Ale Trail and Chorley Live really help to bring the town's pub and bar culture to life.

By creating a refreshed culture and entertainment narrative focused on the fact Chorley has everything you could want (comedy, cinema, theatre, pubs with live music, cool bars etc.) all located within a safe, clean and compact, walkable town centre – creates a clear distinction when compared to 'sprawling and hectic' large cities or those that become a 'ghost town after 6pm'.

Stories and landmarks linked to Chorley's fascinating entertainment history including cartoonist Leo Baxendale the Beano, painter and novelist Leona Carrington, circus performer George Testo Sante and comedian Phil Cool, could also be woven into this narrative, again emphasising the unique and diverse cultural character and personality of the town.

Along with the history and heritage of Chorley, this theme could provide a hook from which to build the What's Your Story, Chorley? event and create opportunities to bid for funding to expand Chorley's cultural offering.



The best of... chills and thrills

Building on prior activities such as Ghastly Astley, this theme could be used to develop a mini-festival package, book-ended by the run-up to Halloween and 5 November festivities. It could incorporate the existing ghost stories/ghost tours at Astley, Heskin and Hoghton, the bonfire and fireworks at Astley, and the Scare City experience at Charnock.

The theme could also weave in broader Lancashire folklore and local gothic history and make links to the Pendle Witches story. Further, it could be an opportunity to highlight the connection with Leona Carrington by adding some Mexican 'Day of the Dead' elements (Nov 1st/2nd).





The best of... **dog friendly fun**

Chorley has a wealth of places for residents and visitors to go with their four-legged friends. With an abundance of green spaces and dog-friendly venues, Chorley offers the best of dog-friendly fun.

This is an opportunity to highlight how the destination caters to visitors traveling with pets, especially dogs, by:

- Identifying attractions and accommodations: List dog-friendly parks, trails, cafes, restaurants, and accommodation.
- Promoting services and amenities: Include information on dog-friendly facilities such as water bowls, waste bag stations, and designated pet areas.
- Showcasing events and experiences: Mention any dog-centric events, like pet shows or dog-friendly walking tours. Incorporate dog friendly activities into events where possible.
- Pet policies: Outline rules for dog-friendly spaces, like restricted areas, to manage visitor expectations.

Examples of dog friendly locations include:

- **Astley Hall and Park** - A historic site with spacious parklands ideal for dog walks. Dogs are welcome on leads in most areas, and there are plenty of trails to explore.
- **Duxbury and Yarrow Woods** - A woodland area perfect for walks with dogs. You can stop by Frederick's Ice Cream Shop for refreshments afterwards, making it a fun outing for the whole family.
- **Rivington and Anglezarke Reservoirs** - Enjoy scenic walks with plenty of dog-friendly routes. This area includes Rivington Pike and terraced gardens, which are especially popular in the winter months.
- **Wheelton Canal Walk** - A peaceful and flat route by the canal with views of barges and wildlife. Nearby dog-friendly pubs, like The Top Lock, offer a cosy spot to relax afterwards.
- **Organised dog friendly walks** such as Brinscall to Roddlesworth Walk and Rivington Estate Walk.

The best of... **accessible adventures**

Work should be carried out to ensure Chorley is a truly accessible destination, welcome to all.

Visitors are looking for information about wheelchair and pram-friendly paths and venues, as well as literature available in different formats such as audio tours, large print and braille, and additional languages.

Communications and marketing should be made accessible, and the development of accessible information, businesses, services and facilities should be encouraged.

What is currently available needs to be identified as well as where improvements can be made. Working with businesses, the accessible offer for the borough can be developed, improved and promoted to ensure days out are open to and enjoyed by all.

The best of... family fun

When it comes to family days out, Chorley has lots to offer. From Green Flag award winning parks and open spaces to cultural venues such as Astley Hall and Gardens, outdoor adventures at the Anderton Centre and Rivington, or one of the many events hosted in the borough – Chorley has something for everyone.

Family friendly attractions should be highlighted alongside seasonal events and activities, creating a variety of different days out for those visiting with children.

Diverse interests should be considered including experiences that cater to children of various age groups, such as interactive exhibits or adventure parks.

Convenience is key family-friendly dining options, stroller-friendly paths, and family facilities all need to be highlighted.

The best of... events

Chorley has lots going on in the form of shows and events attracting thousands of people all throughout the year. There is an opportunity to better promote events, both those managed by the council and externally managed events to encourage more people from outside of the borough to visit.

There is also an opportunity to bring in third party event organisers to complement the existing programme to appeal to event more people and ensure there's always something new to enjoy.

The themes outlined may provide content for existing events to be refreshed or inspiration for new events.



The best of... business

Chorley is home to some amazing businesses from large scale organisations such as GA Pet Food Partners, Brysdales, Porta Micro Matic, and TVS through to a vast range of small independent companies in many different sectors that contribute to a thriving local economy. Many of which have become destinations in their own right such as Fredericks Ice Cream, Birkacre Garden Centre, Brindle Distillery (Home of Cuckoo Gin).

With significant funding secured and more to come, the heart of Chorley's town centre in being revamped and public spaces and infrastructure are being improved, breathing new life into both town and village centres.

Retail and hospitality in Chorley are thriving. Local shops, cafes and restaurants are supported by a range of grants helping them adapt, grow, and thrive.

With excellent business support, facilities such Strawberry Fields Digital Hub, Strawberry Meadows and Buckshaw, it's no wonder so many businesses choose Chorley.

International links

In addition to mainstream itineraries, there is an opportunity for Chorley to potentially develop some niche and specialist themes. For example a USA-themed content package based on the believed Chorley origins of Myles Standish, the suggestion that the Standish family coat of arms could have inspired the Stars and Stripes flag, the Nancy Pelosi gift of a Whitehouse US flag to St Laurence's in 2021, the Preston Mormon Temple, Charles Lightoller's presence on the New York-bound Titanic, US servicemen history in the town etc. This theme could be used specifically to target US visitors, as well as more general audiences.



Audience

Current visitor market

Chorley's current offer has broad appeal, and the something for everyone message can be evidenced and justified.

From the available data and anecdotal evidence from interviews with venues and business owners, a majority of external visitors are from within the 55+ year range, primarily retirees.



This audience typically:

- Uses social media – primarily Facebook
- Has disposable income
- Are time rich
- Partakes in traditional activities and attractions such as tea rooms
- Are tech savvy, but seeking simplicity
- Appreciates security and privacy
- Prefers low-stress experiences and leisurely itineraries
- Is interested in creative and leisure activities – such as art and music
- Enjoys boutique and artisanal shopping

Visitors tend to be day visits with 2.78 million tourism day visits made in 2022 compared to 0.31 million visitors staying in Chorley as part of a holiday or short break.

Data reveals a significant proportion of visitors to Chorley are from within a ten-mile radius however it is felt people will travel up to an hour for a day trip visit, meaning the target area can expand into Preston, the Fylde Coast, Lancaster, Bolton, Wigan, Blackburn, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Southport and the Liverpool City region.



And while many cohorts within this age range arguably have more time - and more disposable income - to commit to a place like Chorley, attracting a younger demographic, targeting different markets and promoting a family-focused offer could also reap significant commercial and reputational benefits.



Target market groups



The core audiences we will proactively focus on through regional or local activity will be:



Market group 	Description 
<p>Early retirees / empty nesters (Mosaic equivalents Suburban stability and Modest Traditions)</p>	<p>This is the current core visitor audience which will continue to be a key target market. This audience is typically time rich and has disposable income. They use social media – primarily Facebook and are tech savvy but seeking simplicity and appreciate security and privacy</p> <p>They partake in traditional activities and attractions such as tea rooms and prefer low-stress experiences and leisurely itineraries. They are interested in creative and leisure activities – such as art and music and enjoy boutique and artisanal shopping.</p> <p>This audience is interested in coach trips, taking in a range of sites across a day out and so pulling together itineraries for group traveller organisers will be key.</p>
<p>Grandparents (Mosaic equivalent Senior Security)</p>	<p>An extension of the core market is those with grandchildren and caring responsibilities for part of the week. Whilst this audience is relatively local, they represent a large proportion of the visitors to the town centre and the borough's attractions.</p> <p>They are looking for child-friendly environments, seating and rest area, flat, easy to navigate terrain for prams and little legs, parking and proximity, food options, toilets and changing facilities, play areas, outdoor exploration and activities for bonding – e.g. feeding the ducks or enjoying a story time activity. Family discounts and affordable venues are important for return visits.</p>

Market group 	Description 
<p>Families with young children up to age 12 (Mosaic equivalents Domestic Success, Aspiring Homemakers and Family Basics)</p>	<p>A new key audience to develop is people aged 25-50s, and their families. They typically expect and require a wide range of tangible amenities, together with softer and more holistic qualities such as fast and efficient service, affordability and quality, experiences over material good, a strong food and drink offer, family friendly locations, products and experiences.</p> <p>They are engaged in social media, online reviews and recommendations and are interested in content to share on their social media channels.</p> <p>They are looking for diverse activities that cater for different interests, especially hands-on experiences.</p> <p>Child-friendly restaurants, allergy awareness, toilets and baby-changing facilities, family friendly hotels or self-catering options, child discounts / family discounts / free or low-cost activities, trails with stories or activities along the way and indoor attractions to cater for rainy days are all of interest.</p>
<p>Couples (Mosaic equivalents Rental Hubs, Modest Traditions, Transient Renters)</p>	<p>Day trip and short stay couples will be a new focus for Chorley. Those travelling without children as a couple tend to be looking for scenic spots, intimate dining, both day and evening entertainment and cultural activities reflective of the local area. They are looking for opportunities for connection – such as shared experiences, couples' packages and adventures together as well as small group or private experiences and seasonal activities and events.</p>

Target market groups

The core audiences we will proactively focus on through regional or local activity will be:

Market group 	Description 
Outdoor explorers	<p>This audience is formed around interests rather than age or other demographics. With the range of outdoor assets available in Chorley we have the opportunity to target those looking to spend time in the great outdoors. Whether this be families looking for ways to get out in the fresh air, cyclists, ramblers and amblers looking for new walking routes, young adventures looking for the next outdoor craze to take part in or those simply looking to get away and connect with nature.</p> <p>This audience is looking for outdoor attractions, walking routes of varying lengths and difficulty, good public transport links, historic or cultural landmarks, art and architecture and opportunities for exploration – including hidden gems, local experiences or themed walks and events.</p>
Pet owners	<p>There is also an opportunity to take advantage of the pet friendly travel market trend, targeting those looking for days out with their furry friends! Dog friendly shops, attractions, restaurants, pubs, cafes and accommodation are key with pet centric stores, outdoor events, pet waste mins and traffic free zones providing opportunities for trips with the whole family.</p>

Market group 	Description 
Our residents	<p>Residents and local are an important market as visitors to the town centre and the borough's attractions. We will encourage people to explore what's on their doorstep and using campaigns such as 'shop local' to encourage spend within local businesses.</p>
Local businesses	<p>In order to form a unified approach to the promotion of Chorley we will work with businesses to share our positioning statement, photography and marketing content to enable a shared sense of place and branding for the borough.</p> <p>We will form opportunities to cross promote both council initiatives, assets and events and those owned by businesses across Chorley including the creating of packaged itineraries and trails.</p> <p>We will also create sponsorship opportunities to support the sustainability of our events and to allow local businesses to reach thousands of visitors attending.</p>

Action plan

05



Action plan: 2025 to 2030



This action plan sets out areas of work over the next five years to support the sustainable growth of Chorley's visitor economy. This work cannot be achieved by the council alone and some actions will involve working with external organisations, partners and the local community.

**The best of
Lancashire
all in one place**







Short term 2025/26

Action area 	Details 
Define Chorley's offer to visitors and develop Chorley's brand and image	Agree positioning statement: Chorley – The best of Lancashire, all in one place
	Develop a communications plan based around this position, researching new marketing channels such as Trip Advisor advertising, to increase awareness of Chorley across the North West and beyond and allocating budget accordingly
	Clarify roles within the Communications and Visitor Economy service to ensure joined up working and increased capacity to carry out the actions outlined in the DMP
	Create an internal destination management steering group with officers from across the council to encourage joint working and a shared approach to promoting Chorley as a destination and monitor the actions on the DMP
	Audit and refresh marketing collateral including print, social media graphics, photography, video and exhibition materials. Ensure all visitor-facing content is presented clearly, confidently and consistently
	Plot all assets and create an animated map of Chorley's attractions for use on the 'Check Out Chorley' website and future promotion



Action area 	Details 
Define Chorley's offer to visitors and develop Chorley's brand and image	Review social media channels, creating a plan to increase following across the different platforms. Start to follow, share and tag attractions across the borough. Consider discontinuing the use of X and introducing the use of TikTok
	Use data from the Check out Chorley website to see what people are most interested in viewing and create further content based on this
	Engage with Marketing Lancashire to review content on their website and provide regular updated content for their campaigns
	Create positive PR based on town centre developments, events, new businesses or good news from businesses in the area
	Promote our assets as locations for production companies to film, linking in with Film Hub North and Filming in England
	Review accomodation offer across the borough of Chorley and engage with providers



Short term 2025/26

Action area 	Details 
Create themed packages to appeal to a range of different audiences	Review our target audiences and key assets to create a series of packaged itineraries
	Create a targeted campaign for each itinerary based on audience profiles
	Utilise themes to enhance our events offer, looking at ways we can bring themes into our calendar to create a marketing hook and encourage new people to attend
	Work with coach companies to create a different itineraries for their customers



Action area 	Details 
Support businesses in the tourism sector to enable a joined up offer and cross promotion	Re-launch the tourism network, creating a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) model to better connect with local businesses
	Present the headline findings and recommendations of the Destination Management Plan - including a 'reveal and rationale' of the new destination proposition - through a series of discovery sessions with key stakeholders and partners, both internal and external
	Create ways to keep in touch through networking sessions, email groups and by following key attractions on social media
	Develop a tiered membership with a range of benefits from free access to uploading events on the website through to paid options such as digital screen advertising
	Promote external attractions through our Check our Chorley channels
	Create businesses showcases for social media, creating content on independent retails and human interest stories
	Promote a full picture of events in Chorley inclusive of those managed by the council and third-party events



Short term 2025/26

Action area 	Details 
Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits	Drive forward the town centre developments to provide long term benefits for local people and visitors to the borough
	Attract new events into the borough, working with third parties to promote our assets and land as places to hire for events and create a pricing strategy for our spaces
	Review existing and potential sites for tourist information points across the borough
	Create sponsorship opportunities for our events to help raise our profile and drive income for the delivery of future events
	Create a tourist information service either at the bus station or in the shop at Astley Hall
	Create a data strategy to pull together the visitor information that we have across the council and identify any gaps. Use this data to better understand visitor behaviour and the impact of our promotion and our events. Identify data champions to collate and monitor this data. Invest in new data collection resources as required
	Request reviews, respond to encourage further feedback and share positive comments externally and internally. Create or claim all Trip Advisor and Google listings for our assets and major events
	Conduct an accessibility audit to identify opportunities for accessible visits and any gaps



Action area 	Details 
Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits	Review the customer journey at Astley Hall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review ticket sale methods • Create better signage on site to let people know the hall is open and how to buy a ticket and to signpost people to the exhibition space • Improve signage from the town centre to Astley and vice versa so the two feel better connected • Review opening times, days and months to create more consistency for visitors • Create a forward plan for exhibitions and promote this to encourage return visitors • Create a digital offer on site to further tell the story of the hall and open up more accessible ways to experience the hall and its history
	Develop five-year plans for the council's assets including Astley Hall and Chorley Markets to align with the wider DMP
	Develop a cultural strategy for Chorley to enhance our offer across the borough
	Attend key competitor events to see what works, what doesn't and to identify any gaps we can fill with our events
	Look at the removal of the redundant brown Botany Bay signs from the motorway and replacement of the Lancashire County Council sign at Chorley Bus Station
	Work with coach companies to create a different itineraries for their customers



Medium term – years 2 (2026/27) and 3 (2027/28)

Action area 	Details 
Define Chorley's offer to visitors and develop Chorley's brand and image	Conduct a review of places to stay and create a plan of how best to promote this offer
	Review the offer at Chorley Markets. Explore ways to further modernise and build on the already strong visitor offer, attracting a younger demographic
	Promote new assets including the new civic square as part of the town centre improvements
Create themed packages to appeal to a range of different audiences	Work with Marketing Lancashire on international campaigns. Reach out to more special interest audiences
	Promote new arts and culture activity which emerge through the Culture Strategy in order to add to the appeal of Chorley's wider market segments
	Create a campaign to promote Chorley's green tourism offer



Action area 	Details 
Support businesses in the tourism sector to enable a joined up offer and cross promotion	Create a stakeholder steering group with internal and external stakeholders, enlisting those with a passion for the area to create a force for good and drive forward the further development of the DMP. This group will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take overall strategic responsibility for monitoring the deliver of the DMP delivery. • Provide support and guidance on product development and marketing. • Present a coherent voice for the visitor economy. • Reinforce the brand positioning and messaging, ensuring our marketing, events and tourism activity are in line with this
	Encourage businesses across Chorley to create a sustainable eco friendly offer, highlighting the benefits, showcasing best practice and bringing in training
	Create a sense of place toolkit to allow for a consistent and shared approach to promoting Chorley. Include centrally available assets such as suggested content, photography, video and branding
	Develop a 'Culture Pass' to use in multiple attractions across Chorley / Lancashire
	Explore options for the development of bookable packages between different attractions, hospitality businesses and accommodation providers



Medium term – years 2 (2026/27) and 3 (2027/28)

Action area 	Details 
<p>Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits</p>	<p>Look to bid for further funding opportunities for the tourism sector. Further sources of grant funding could arise from Visit England/VisitBritain for specific projects, as well as ongoing UK Shared Prosperity Funding and the national stakeholders such as Arts Council England and the, Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <hr/> <p>Review the council's event calendar. Focus on improving the best events and reducing the overall number, with a two-year event planning cycle. Rotate smaller events to minimise spend and maximise resources. Consider external delivery partners. Consider the feasibility of new events, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley's Classic-Con – first ever Comic-Con devoted to classic/vintage UK comics. Anchored by Leo Baxendale's work on The Beano, could also trade-off Dan Dare's creation by Southport's Frank Hampson as part of a wider North West 'classic comic' tradition and legacy • The Sirloin Sizzle – a national sirloin steak 'n' sauce barbeque championship in celebration of the Hoghton Tower legend. Would also be an opportunity to highlight quality of local produce/suppliers. Could be piloted as an element of Taste of Chorley and built-out as standalone event if it has traction <p style="text-align: right;">...continued on next page ></p>

Action area 	Details 
<p>Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Chortle in Chorley – a northern-focused comedy festival/industry conference hosted at Chorley Theatre (NB Chorley's early 80s Laughing Gas night was UK's first alt comedy club outside of London). Also, could be a celebration of Lancashire/Northern comedy performers, past and present. Chortle – one of the UK's biggest comedy websites – could be approached as a potential event partner. Investigate the potential for a wider Lancashire / NW comedy festival / competition / conference in partnership with the Chortle website and Chorley Theatre • Independents Day – a celebration/showcase of Chorley's independent and family-owned businesses. Possible wrist-band mechanic to allow visitors to enjoy discounts and deals across the borough offered by independent operators <hr/> <p>Review options to improve the event infrastructure at Astley Park to enable future cost savings for council managed events and to create an appealing and marketable space for external event providers</p>

Long term – years 4 (2028/29) and 5 (2029/2030)

Action area 	Details 
Define Chorley's offer to visitors and develop Chorley's brand and image	Support emerging proposals to regenerate Chorley Market and the new Civic Square with a strong tourism focus
Create themed packages to appeal to a range of different audiences	Use Chorley's new and distinctive programme of unique events and festivals to reach out to more special interest audiences, both nationally and globally

Action area 	Details 
Support businesses in the tourism sector to enable a joined up offer and cross promotion	Look into the potential of introducing a Chorley town centre Business Improvement District (BID)
Improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and encourage return visits	Review the potential to attract hotel bed stock to the area to improve number of overnight and longer stay visits
	Secure public and private sector investment to develop accessible tourism infrastructure such as accessible pathways, Changing Places facilities and accessible play

Monitoring the destination management plan

06

The following key performance indicators will be used to monitor the achievements resulting from these actions:

- Number of visitors to Chorley
- Number of visitors to Chorley's events and the reach of our customers, tracked using postcode data
- Time spent in the borough by visitors
- Number of coach trips to the borough
- Town centre vacancy rates
- Number of businesses engaged in the tourism network
- Income from sales of enhanced packages for businesses
- Followers and engagement on the Check out Chorley social media channels
- Feedback from Chorley Council's residents survey relating to pride of place
- Number of successful funding bids
- Income from sponsorship

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CHECK OUT
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