

Chorley's Economic Development Strategy

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2014

MAKING IT
HAPPEN IN
Chorley



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Background and context



Creating jobs through attracting new business and regenerating run down areas of the borough are the key to improving the quality of life for residents, meaning this is the organisation's top priority.

In the last two years the authority has invested more than £2 million in doing just that, with the results starting to speak for themselves. We've helped more than 1,200 businesses during this period, creating a forecasted 2,000 jobs, many of which will have gone to local people meaning they can enjoy the benefits of being in work.

We are now starting to see more physical work taking place with a new Asda store and four brand new units replacing two derelict sites in key town centre locations and the complete revamp of the town's main shopping street.

There's also exciting plans for extending the Market Walk shopping centre and there are ten new inward investment sites that will provide new developments for all types of businesses in brilliant locations across the borough over the life of this strategy.

All this makes Chorley's economy compare well to the rest of Lancashire and the wider region. We have excellent transport links being in the centre of the North West, good connectivity, a skilled workforce, quality housing and relatively low unemployment.

We are one of just four districts in Lancashire that have seen significant growth in jobs and Gross Added Value (GVA) per population over the last five to ten years – we're expected to outperform Lancashire and the UK performance over the next 10-15 years.

Unemployment is also relatively low with only 5.3% (2,900 people) out of work - it is below the regional (8%) and national (7.5%) averagesⁱ. This is also shown through relatively low levels of working age people claiming job seekers allowance. In April 2014, Chorley's performance was 1.8% compared to the 3.1% regional rate, and 2.7% national rateⁱⁱ. Workplace earnings have been growing too.

However we are not complacent, we realise that there is still a lot more that needs to be done and challenges to address, and these form the basis of the actions within this strategy. While the borough has performed relatively well through the recession, it needs to exploit its strengths to fully benefit as the economy continues to recover.

Working in partnership with others across the private, public and voluntary, community and faith sectors will be important in delivering improvements in the borough's economy as we need to take into account changes across the region and the rest of the country. This includes capitalising on opportunities in the wider region, such as the nearby Enterprise Zones and the exploitation of shale gas, and ensuring that where possible efforts are joined up, coordinated and complementary.

In addition, we acknowledge that the key to achieving many of our objectives is to align our economic proposals with asset management and planning policy and enable joint working between key partners such as the Homes and Communities Agency, the Highways Agency and Network Rail to align asset strategy with planning policy.

Legislative changes also make delivering this strategy important to the borough. The reforms to the welfare system and the way that local government is financed make it important to ensure that more people find sustainable work and that business growth is encouraged and sustained. This strategy aims to achieve that.

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Delivering our priorities



The Economic Development Strategy approved in 2012 set out an economic vision for Chorley, together with five priority areas. Significant progress has been made over the last 18 months in delivering actions for each of the priority areas, but there is still more to do. In summary:

- The strategic site at Buckshaw Village has supported economic growth in the borough, but plans need to be put in place to bring forward our key employment sites, identified as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process that will drive economic growth;
- Comprehensive business support is in place. Given financial constraints we will continue to develop our partnerships to ensure sustainable support is targeted to Chorley businesses;
- There has been a great deal of visible activity in the town centre over the last 12 months, which is the first step in revitalising it to ensure that it is a place where people choose to visit and spend time, and that it complements the strengths of the rest of the borough. Work is now needed to progress the opportunities identified in the town centre masterplan;
- Chorley also benefits from a well-educated and skilled workforce, but more work could be done to support businesses in developing the skills of their workforce as well as ensuring local training and education providers are delivering courses which address skills gaps identified by local employers; and
- Finally, while the borough is relatively affluent, there are areas of deprivation which need greater support to improve and reduce the gap.

In reviewing the progress made over the last 18 months, together with a clearer understanding of what is happening at a Lancashire level, the priority areas have been updated slightly and are set out below:

Our vision and priorities

Chorley's economic vision is to capitalise on Chorley's location in order to be the place of choice in the North West to do business. Chorley will attract employers to its key employment sites and together with a strong local business base; residents will have a greater opportunity to gain well paid employment locally. The vision will be delivered through five priority areas as set out below:

1. To promote and increase inward investment in Chorley through maximising best use of available employment land and buildings in the borough in order to support economic growth and provide a mix of well paid, high and low skilled jobs.
2. To provide support to new and existing businesses.
3. To create a vibrant town centre that attracts people from both the local community and visitors in the day and evening, for shopping, eating and entertainment.
4. Education, training and skills development - Supporting people in accessing education, training and skills required by local businesses and supporting businesses to develop the skills of their existing workforce.
5. Reducing the gap in our most deprived communities - To reduce the gap in Chorley's most deprived communities and support them in becoming economically active and self-sustaining, supporting a reduction in levels of deprivation in the borough.

Further details of each of the priority areas, together with planned actions and measures are set out in the sections below.

Additionally, support will be given to all business sectors across each of the priority areas, with additional targeting of certain business sectors which will take advantage of opportunities within Lancashire and align to the LEP, build on our existing strengths or target growth sectors. These sectors include advanced manufacturing and supply chain companies, wholesale and retail, health and storage and distribution.

Timescales

The overall vision for the economic development strategy is ten years. Originally approved in 2012, the strategy runs to 2022; however the actions identified for each of the priority areas cover a two year period from 2014/15.

Delivery Monitoring

For each of the priority areas, a selection of the key actions being undertaken over the next 18-24 months make up the action plan. Many of the actions will not be deliverable without hands-on support from our partners, including the LEP, LCC, neighbouring authorities and LEP's and Chorley's Economic Development Group.

In order to monitor the progress in delivering against the priority areas, key long term outcomes and measures have been identified. These will be reported again on a biennial basis, at the same time as refreshing the strategy and actions.

More regular and detailed monitoring of delivery of the actions will be carried out by Chorley's Economic Development Group and the relevant Executive Member.

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Priority:
To promote and increase inward investment in Chorley



Context and opportunities

Chorley is an excellent strategic business location. Situated in close proximity to the M6, M61 and M65 motorways, the area also benefits from regular direct rail connections from the west coast mainline, is within easy reach of three international airports and the docks on the river Mersey.

Chorley is bordered by Preston to the north and Blackburn to the east, with Wigan and Bolton to the south, and Blackpool and Southport towards the coast. Major cities Manchester and Liverpool are just over half an hour away offering easy access, while benefitting from the advantages of Lancashire.

Chorley's location and excellent transport links provides the ability to tap into the market catchments of Manchester, Liverpool and Preston and also means there is a readily available pool of skilled and flexible labour.

Chorley's position is being further strengthened by the electrification on lines between Manchester and Preston, which is due to be completed by December 2016 and may be further strengthened by a high speed rail as part of the national 'high speed two (HS2)' programme. HS2 should be operational between Birmingham and London by 2026, extending to Northern England later in the second phase by 2032 - 33. While this is beyond



the life of this strategy Chorley will need to work with partners in the region to ensure that we are in a position to benefit from the high speed link in terms of jobs, growth and prosperity.

The council is also keen to work with neighbouring authorities and LEPs to support plans to improve linkages with key city regions in the north. Plans are already in place to improve rail linkages between key northern cities including Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle. This will shorten journey times between the cities, bringing them closer together and creating a northern unity which together can better compete with London. These improvements are due to be completed by 2019, well ahead of HS2.

Work is also underway to investigate the feasibility of opening a new motorway junction, on the M6 at Charnock Richard. This would further improve connectivity to the southern part of the borough, and provide real logistical benefits for new developments, employment sites and support overall economic growth in the area in future years.

Additional infrastructure improvements, to support economic growth for Chorley will also be pursued with LCC, the Highways Agency and South Ribble Borough Council. These include improvements to the capacity of the roads by Junction 8 of the M61 and some of our key employment sites, as well as road junction improvements by Junction 28 of the M6.

Broadband speeds are in general highest in urban areas. In Chorley, almost 85% of households are in an area with connections between 2 and 20 megabits per second, however 15% have no or low capacity connectionsⁱⁱⁱ. Lancashire County Council has agreed a £62.5m deal to roll-out superfast broadband across the county. The project will extend fibre broadband across the county, reaching 97% of premises by the end of 2015. This has the potential to ensure that local businesses can become global businesses. It will ensure that firms remain here and it will also attract a more diverse range of high growth, high value companies to the area.

In terms of employment sites, Chorley has a number of outstanding existing sites such as the Revolution at Buckshaw Village. The existing sites have been key to supporting economic growth in the borough over recent years and have provided an ideal distribution and depot base for global and national organisations such as Kimberly-Clark and the Royal Mail.

However, work is now needed to develop key employment sites in Chorley, in order to continue to drive economic growth and prosperity. This is a difficult and complex task and is something that we have been trying to progress for a number of years, demonstrated by the fact that between 2010 and 2013 it is estimated that only approximately 11 hectares of land within the borough has been developed for employment purposes, with half of this attributed to the Parcellforce distribution centre on the Revolution site.

Chorley does have a range of employment sites (use classes B1, B2, B8 and C1) totalling 86 hectares either with planning consent or allocated in the Chorley Local Plan, on offer to potential developers. The council aims to take a hands-on approach by buying land and developing units or by working with partners to do the same.

If brought forward, the employment sites have the potential to create thousands of jobs for local people. Developing just half of the sites could provide over 3,000 jobs, more than Chorley's current unemployment levels. It is the council's ambition to facilitate 50% of these employment sites by 2022.

The council will continue to seek support from the LEP and LCC through such means as:

- the Growing Places Fund, to unlock sites which have planning or ownership issues, such as the land at junction 8 of the M61 and land to the east of the A49;
- to support the continued securing of employment sites, for employment creation rather than other usage such as housing; and
- to maximise the opportunities that will be created as part of the City Deal with Lancashire County Council, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council, particularly through linking the Cuerden site with a 10 hectare site in Chorley to the east of Wigan Road.

A list of all our current employment sites is detailed in Appendix 1.

Recent Progress

In the last 12 months progress has been made in developing an inward investment plan and campaign. A key part of this has been the development of a new inward investment website, which clearly illustrates Chorley's cohesive and unique offer. In addition a 'Choose Chorley' grant has been launched at a Choose Chorley networking event. Attended by over 160 local business leaders and intermediaries, the event outlined our future plans to attract inward investment into the borough.

Next steps

The council is keen to encourage businesses from all sectors to invest in Chorley and as such has put together a comprehensive package including financial and support to make expanding, relocating or setting up business in Chorley as easy as possible.

In addition the Council will target resources into:

Maximising opportunities arising from the nearby Enterprise Zone sites in Samlesbury and Warton

Research from the Lancashire Economic Forecasts, Oxford shows manufacturing, wholesale and retail; and health will contribute over 10% GVA to the Lancashire economy between 2013 and 2030, with education, construction and real estate following closely behind.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, together with BAE systems, has been successful in achieving Enterprise Zone Status for the BAE sites at Samlesbury and Warton specialising in advanced engineering and manufacturing. This is expected to attract investment and employment into the region and as such provides an opportunity for encouraging investment in Chorley from supporting supply chain companies.

Strengthening existing key sectors already based in Chorley

Wholesale and retail trade makes up approximately 15% of Chorley's existing business base^{iv}, employing over 5,000 local residents^v. This is a key sector for the borough and should continue to be supported through our business support offers to new and existing businesses.

Targeting identified growth sectors, particularly where we already have some strengths

The health sector is strong in Chorley providing the most jobs of any sector and is in the top five in terms of volume of businesses. Additionally, health is considered to be the third best growth sector in terms of GVA contribution^{vi}. The Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan identified the health sector as a major employer in the region with activities ranging from high level research and medical product manufacture, through to employment in the NHS, and in a significant growing health and social care workforce which is increasingly migrating from the public to private sector. Digital health is also set to become a significant part of medical delivery in the future.

It also references the health sector as a developing sector that could grow significantly in terms of employment and value in the future. To support this sector, the LEP is putting significant investment into developing a Health Innovation Park at Lancaster.

As such, the council aims to work with the LEP and health providers and networks to see how Chorley can support the further growth and investment of this sector in Chorley and within the region.

Finally by targeting specific sectors which may be particularly suited to our employment sites such as storage, logistics and distribution.

Overall, Chorley is already in a strong position. It benefits from an excellent location and transport infrastructure, and a track record in business growth and survival.

Long Term Outcome
To promote and increase inward investment in Chorley through maximising best use of available employment land and buildings in the borough in order to support economic growth and provide a mix of well paid, high and low skilled jobs.
Key Actions 2014/15– 2015/16
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with developers, land owners and the LEP to bring forward key employment sites.2. Work with key public sector partners to align asset plans to ensure a future supply of employment land.3. Deliver the Inward Investment Action Plan and ‘Choose Chorley’ campaign; including<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop positive relationships with key partners including the LEP, Enterprise Zones, neighbouring authorities and the UKTi.• Develop sectoral propositions and start to implement a plan targeting inward investment of specific sectors detailed above.• Build relationships with target intermediaries.4. Investigate the feasibility of creating an additional M6 Junction for Chorley between J27 and J28.5. Investigate the feasibility of other road infrastructure improvements; such as Botany Bay employment site.6. Monitor progress of the HS2 programme and establish links and respond to consultations as required.7. Progress opportunities around developing a digital health park in Chorley.
Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number/size of employment sites being brought forward. (Target 50% of current sites by 2022)• Increase business rate based by 3%• Increase in the number of jobs created.• Increase in the median workplace earnings• Increase in the amount of investment brought into the borough via council supported services.• Increase in the job density ratio within the borough• Increase in the number of businesses re-locating to Chorley.

Priority:

To provide business support to new and existing businesses



Context and opportunities

Chorley's location makes it an excellent place to start a business, which can be seen through strong rates of growth in business stock. The 2012 figures for active enterprises showed 405 business births, the third highest number of all the Lancashire districts^{vii}. The provision of support for new and existing businesses has been strengthened over the last 18 months. The in-house service includes two dedicated officers supporting new and existing businesses.

Chorley also boasts above regional and national average survival rates with 96.2% of enterprises born in 2007 surviving one year, 67.9% surviving three years and 46.2% surviving five years^{viii}. In terms of the businesses directly supported by the council, the figures are much higher and approximately 97% of businesses survive after one year, and 96% after two years.

During 2013/14 the council has handled 278 new start enquiries, established 125 new businesses with a projected 225 jobs created. Advice and guidance has been provided to 542 businesses, with 48 intensively assisted creating a projected 182 additional jobs and £6.1m increase in turnover.. Customer satisfaction for our services are in excess of 93%.

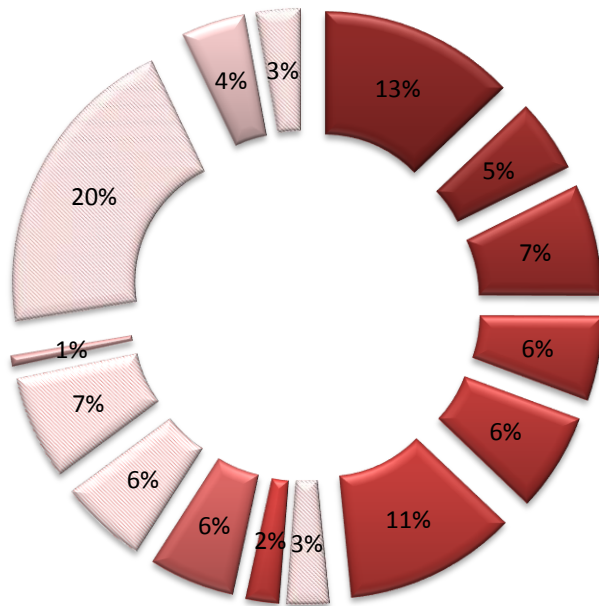
Furthermore, the council has established the Choose Chorley Business Network which is a regular event to bring business leaders together so that they are aware of the help, support and advice offered and so that they can build contacts.

In addition to the council's offer, there are a range of support, training and grants available to Chorley businesses offered by other organisations, with one of the key ones being 'Boost Business Lancashire'. Boost is a business growth hub led by the Lancashire LEP. It offers support to non retail businesses on a range of topics including product and service development, raising finance, profit improvement and sales and marketing. We will continue to ensure that our services complement and link to other support offers for the benefit of Chorley's businesses

The chart below demonstrates Chorley's varied business base which is not reliant on any one industry. Data based on VAT and PAYE registered enterprises in Chorley shows the highest volume of business to be within the wholesale and retail trade (including the repair of motor vehicles), construction, professional, scientific and technical, and business administration and support services.

Chorley has a higher than average number of jobs in the services sectors and less in manufacturing compared with other districts in the region. The service sector, while being an important source of employment, is primarily low paid and low skilled work.

VAT and PAYE Business Sectors in Chorley



- Professional, scientific & technical (13%)
- Information & communication (5%)
- Business administration & support services (7%)
- Agriculture, forestry & fishing (6%)
- Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (6%)
- Construction (11%)
- Education (3%)
- Financial & insurance (2%)
- Accommodation & food services (6%)
- Health (6%)
- Manufacturing (7%)
- Public administration & defence (1%)
- Wholesale & retail; repair of motor vehicles (20%)
- Transport & storage (inc postal) (4%)
- Property (3%)

The sectors which are underlined and shaded show the sectors which are forecast to contribute the most to GVA between now and 2030^{ix} and therefore important for future economic growth in the area.

VAT and PAYE enterprise data 2013, ONS

The rural economy is important to Chorley in terms of employment, food production and supply, supporting the visitor economy, and generally maintaining the beautiful countryside. Chorley has the fifth largest rural economy in Lancashire with approximately 37% of local businesses classed as rural. However, it is contracting - figures from DEFRA show that since the 2004 classification by 2011 the rural population in Chorley reduced by nearly 22%

As in many areas across the county, poor profits in the agricultural economy are leading to a general trend in diversification of farming activities, but support and investment is needed in order to facilitate these changes. As such the Council promoted the 2009-13, Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to businesses in support of vocational training within the agricultural and forestry sectors, adding value to agricultural and forestry products, farming diversification and creating and expanding micro enterprises.

Going forward the Council will continue to use its networks and work with local businesses to take advantage of the new programme beginning in 2015.

ONS Business Data 2012/13	Rural	Urban	Total	% Rural	% Urban
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	190	35	225	4.59	0.85
Wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles	280	565	845	6.77	13.66
Professional, scientific & technical services	180	360	540	4.35	8.71
Construction	190	275	465	4.59	6.65
Tourism and recreation	130	205	335	3.14	4.96
Public Administration, Education and Health	115	270	385	2.78	6.53
Administrative & support service activities	120	185	305	2.90	4.47
Manufacturing	105	160	265	2.54	3.87
Other	235	535	770	5.68	12.94
Total	1,545	2,590	4,135	37.36	62.64

The Lancashire visitor economy attracts 60m visitors a year, which is more than Cumbria including the Lake District. Lancashire numbers have increased by 4.5% since 2010, and nationally the visitor economy is expected to grow strongly^x. While Lancashire's tourism economy is particularly focused in Blackpool and the Fylde coast, Lancaster, Preston and the Ribble Valley, It is recognised that Chorley has a broad range of tourism assets. The sector accounts for approximately 8% of businesses in Chorley and generates around 4,000 jobs^{xi}.

There is opportunity to capitalise on the wider success of tourism in Lancashire and predicted increases in visitor economy growth. Chorley does have a lot to offer and attracting visitors to the town centre and surrounding areas could have a positive impact on the

local economy. Actions from an Overview and Scrutiny review on tourism are already underway with the focus on Council owned assets and proving successful including the development of promotional materials for Astley Hall to market it as a wedding venue and developing better relationships with Marketing Lancashire. In addition, there are a range of activities that could be undertaken such as establishing a Tourism Forum, visit Chorley website, tourist information point and visitor guide etc. New businesses could also be attracted or created by encouraging a positive visitor economy climate.

The implementation of Business Rate Retention (BRR) aims to incentivise councils to grow business and encourage enterprise and job creation, as councils get to retain a proportion of the business rate income that is collected. A number of planned actions across the inward investment and business support priorities, if successful, will lead to an increase in the borough's business rate base. Examples include, delivery of opportunities identified in the town centre masterplan, bringing forward key employment sites and delivery of the BIG grants.

The table below details the key actions that will be delivered over the next 18 months, together with the measures that we will use to review the success. These are in addition to the existing business as usual work and support which is already provided by the council.

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Long Term Outcome

To provide support to new and existing businesses

Key Actions 2014/15 – 2015/16

1. Develop targeted support packages for business in the sectors which are estimated to have the biggest impact in terms of GVA growth.
2. Investigate the feasibility of a start-up (incubation) hub to support new start businesses.
3. Maximise opportunities from RPDE support to rural economies.
4. Develop, agree and implement a programme of work to develop Chorley's visitor economy.
5. Develop the business support service offer via a special focus group with Chorley's top 10 growing businesses.
6. Develop proposals for a business park based (managed) workspace scheme.

Success Measures

- Maintain the existing high percentage of businesses sustained for 12 and 24 months
- Increase in the number of projected new jobs created.
- The number of businesses intensively assisted.
- The number and value of starting in business grants awarded.
- The number and value of BIG grants awarded
- The total value of match funding/leverage achieved linked to Chorley Council grants.

Priority:
To have a vibrant town centre



Context and opportunities

Chorley is a vibrant and prosperous market town that despite the economic downturn has continued to provide a good range of facilities for both residents and visitors.

Market days on Tuesdays and Saturdays are the busiest days for the town centre, with people travelling from neighbouring towns and regions to visit our famous markets. Recent investment in both the Flat Iron and Covered Markets have further strengthened and reinvigorated the markets, which have seen an increase in occupancy. Furthermore, the percentage of vacant town centre floor space has seen a gradual reducing trend since 2009 and is now 5.7% compared with a regional average of 12.4% and national average of 11%.^{xii}

Another strength is the number of high quality, independent shops and boutiques ranging from fashion, home and interior, restaurants, jewellery, butchers, florists, health and beauty to specialist bike, curtain and fire place shops which account for 75% of the retail offer.

While these independent stores are seen as a unique selling point for Chorley, the town's retail hierarchy does also show a proportionally high number of charity, gambling and value shops which reflect local demand.

Car parking in Chorley is relatively cheap and conveniently located close to the town centre, providing a wide range of options for people visiting the town. The quality of the parking does vary and is predominantly off street, uncovered, and pay and display. A programme of improvements to the car parks and gateways into the town centre is underway and this will support the priority of being a vibrant town centre.

However, Chorley's location near key shopping destinations in urban centres and city regions such as Preston, Bolton, Manchester and Liverpool, together with its lack of large or well-known retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues mean that many people travel out of, or bypass Chorley en route to other destinations.

In addition, while the majority of the town centre is pedestrianised, there is a disparate mix and spread of shops in the town centre. This, together with areas of poor quality townscape, poorly maintained premises and shop frontages and lack of quality public realm impacts on Chorley's shopping experience and gives the perception that the town centre is in need of revitalising.

A Town Centre Team has been established as a single representative forum for the various operational interests in the town centre. The Team has been instrumental in driving forward the trial re-opening of Market Street to vehicles and the provision of on street parking in order to attract more shoppers and boost trade in the area, as well as changes to car parking tariffs which aim to make parking more affordable to shoppers.

Work is also well underway to achieve our vision of a vibrant town centre with a lot of activity taking place over the past 12 months including:

- The development of a town centre masterplan, which sets out a number of opportunities for investment at key development sites to ensure the viability and vitality of Chorley town centre into the future;
- The purchase of the Market Walk shopping centre, enabling the council to have more influence in improving and ensuring a sustainable future for the town centre;
- The development of a programme of car park improvements;
- The development of retail units and car parking on a long term vacant town centre site;
- The continuation of the town centre grants programme supports both the establishment of new enterprises and the growth of existing businesses within long term vacant properties. Overall the grants programme aims to fund a number of measures that will help retailers to improve their shop fronts, refurbish premises and generally improve their business; and
- The initiation of the development of a new ASDA store and surrounding public realm improvements.



Next Steps

There is a great deal of activity being planned to improve the town centre further. Primarily based around the opportunities identified in the town centre masterplan, the planned activity includes:

- Progression of the Fleet Street Masterplan which presents an opportunity to introduce a medium density residential community connected to the town centre. The introduction of a new residential development into the area will help to increase the town centre population, complement the established neighbouring uses and existing planning consents in the area, deliver affordable housing to meet the needs of Chorley and provide a boost to existing and new uses along Market Street.
- Implementation of Market Street improvements. This includes work to refurbish shop frontages together with a programme of improvements at the southern end of the street, which will create a shared pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfare with landscape enhancements. This includes improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, aiming to reduce traffic speed and better enable pedestrian flow between the new ADSA store and the town centre.
- Investigating the options and feasibility of extending the Market Walk shopping centre in order to improve and extend the town centre offer.
- Investigating the opportunity identified in the town centre masterplan to create a civic quarter in the town centre, with the potential to provide a mix of commercial and green public space areas.
- Improvements around Steeley Lane which aim to improve the linkages between the eastern side of the town centre, beyond the railway line, to the western side.
- Developing a Youth Zone to provide young people with somewhere to go, something to do, and someone to talk to. Offering a range of activities, the Youth Zone will essentially be a youth centre as well as facilitating a range of other services from a single central location.

In summary, Chorley town centre's current strengths lie in its markets and quality independent shops, but it faces strong competition from other key retail areas across the sub region. To be competitive, further investment in the town centre is required to improve, consolidate and diversify the offer of quality shops, eating establishments and entertainment venues, as well as an improved public realm for visitors. To achieve this, the council is making significant investment into the town centre and is increasingly taking a more hands on guardianship approach to directly creating opportunity and growth, which can already been seen through the purchase of Market Walk and the development of the former McDonald's site into new units.

Long Term Outcome

To create a vibrant town centre that attracts people from both the local community and visitors in the day and evening, for shopping, eating and entertainment.

Key Actions 2014/15 – 2015/16

1. Progress the Fleet Street Masterplan
2. Develop proposals for a Civic Quarter
3. Progress plans to extend Market Walk
4. Develop the Chorley Youth Zone
5. Deliver the Town Centre and Steeley Lane Action Plan
6. Deliver a programme of public realm improvements along Market Street and across the town centre
7. Deliver the programme of car park improvements
8. Investigate further opportunities to expand Chorley Markets into street locations within the pedestrianised zone.
9. Develop proposals for phase two of Chorley's central business park
10. Develop proposals for a town centre based (managed) workspace scheme
11. Deliver the town centre campaign
12. Investigate the feasibility of Purple Flag accreditation for the evening economy.
13. Evaluate the re-opening of Market St and make recommendations for the next steps.

Success Measures

- Increase in town centre visits
- Increase in average length of stay of visits
- Reduction in vacant town centre floor space
- Increase in the number of jobs created (linked to town centre grants programme)
- Increase in businesses operating in the early evening.

Priority: Education, training and skills development



Context

Education in Chorley is strong. Chorley has a well-qualified workforce: 35.9% of the population are qualified to Level 4 (Higher Education) or above (compared with 31% regionally and 35.2% nationally). Only 6.9% of the population has no qualifications (compared with 11% regionally and 9.3% nationally).^{xiii} In 2012/13 66.8% of pupils achieved five or more GCSE A*-C (including English and Maths), well ahead of the Lancashire average of 60.4%.^{xiv}

Chorley benefits from one of the top colleges in the country, Runshaw College. Linking in with UCLan (University of Central Lancashire), the college now offers university courses in state of the art facilities. Also within Lancashire are Lancaster, UCLan, Edge Hill and Cumbria universities.

In the last 12 months, the council has held its annual career and jobs fair and has been working with local schools, culminating in an Enterprise Challenge Day, which was a great success. More work will be done to build on our relationships with schools and universities to ensure courses meet the needs of employers within Chorley and within the wider region.

In addition, the council has also delivered on its commitment of getting more people into work through its support of apprenticeships. This has included increasing the number of apprentice places the council has, provision of financial incentives to local businesses to create new apprentice posts; as well as working with Runshaw College to overcome barriers to young people accessing and sustaining apprenticeships.

However, the need to support people in improving their education levels and developing skills does not just apply to young people. As such, the scope of this priority area has been widened and aligned to the Lancashire Skills Strategy, 'Skills for Growth'. The council now aims to also support and encourage existing businesses to further develop their workforces, as well as working with all age groups to develop skills and therefore employability. Particular focus will be given to targeting the skills required by local business, business sectors which we are specifically targeting or

businesses in the nearby Enterprise Zones. This will include skills to support sectors such as manufacturing and engineering, wholesale and retail and health. This is supported by the findings of a Lancashire Business Growth survey found that almost half of those surveyed cited a shortage of skills among the existing workforce as a potential barrier to growth in the future.

This will be complemented by the development of a new engineering centre at Runshaw College, subject to funding. The facility will have the potential to provide training and skills across a wide range of areas and for a diverse range of students from apprenticeships, to foundation degree level, with the latest technology to ensure employability skills are current. Employers will also have the option to access some of the high technology equipment to enhance their own capabilities and expand their market share.

The council already has a well-established programme of Boost Your Business Workshops to support our businesses in becoming more self-sustaining, foster entrepreneurship and develop new skills. In the last 12 months examples have included developing exporting and marketing skills, social media, blogging, recruitment and self-assessment. However it will be important to work in partnership with the LEP, schools, colleges, universities and training providers to map skills gaps against existing provision, ensuring a more targeted and coordinated approach.

The table below details the key actions that will be delivered over the next 18 months, together with the measures that we will use to review the success.

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Long Term Outcome

Supporting people in accessing education, training and skills required by local businesses and supporting businesses to develop the skills of their existing workforce.

Key Actions 2014/15 – 2015/14

1. Establish a Chorley Skills Board to look at the expansion of apprenticeships, internships and work placements.
2. Work in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency and training providers to determine support to existing businesses for work force development.
3. Develop a campaign to support and encourage businesses to invest in developing their workforces.
4. Via the business advice service, undertake a diagnostic review of organisations' training needs.
5. Work in partnership with the LEP, schools, colleges, universities and training providers to map skills gaps against provision and encourage curriculum changes as appropriate
6. Further develop a programme of training provided by the council, based on skills required by local businesses, business sectors which we are targeting and business sectors in the nearby enterprise zones.

Success Measures

- Reduction in the % of 16-18 year olds who are NEET.
- Reduction in the number of JSA claimants between the ages of 18 – 24.
- The number of apprenticeship posts
- The number of Council training courses provided – including attendance and satisfaction
- The number of businesses, schools and colleges intensively engaged
- % of the population with NVQ level 3 and above (Target 50%)

Priority:

Reducing the gap in our most deprived communities



Despite Chorley's overall strong economic position, there are growing economic disparities within the borough, with some areas facing severe social and economic deprivation and high levels of worklessness contrasting with areas of considerable prosperity. The 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, demonstrated that the borough is considered to be more deprived comparative to other areas than when the indices were last produced in 2007. Overall, Chorley is considered to be the 156th most deprived of 326 local authority areas in England. The key cause behind this are increases in employment and income deprivation and a significant increase in the level of health deprivation in the borough.

In response, the council has requested and made a case for parts of the borough to be designated for Assisted Area Status during the second stage of consultation in 2013/14. In particular identifying areas along the M65 corridor such as Clayton Brook, an area of real deprivation and Abbey Village, an area in need of regeneration, both of which would greatly benefit from Assisted Area Status. While this has not been possible, the council is eager to work collaboratively with the LEP and Lancashire County Council to identify alternative schemes and programmes eligible for EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), in order to support our most deprived areas and to help unlock further growth potential.

This may include maximising the opportunities created by the City Deal, for example through working with people in communities such as Clayton Brook to support them in becoming work ready and to enable them to take advantage of opportunities arising from the nearby Cuerden employment site. This will complement our highly regarded Employment Charter which aims to assist local businesses to recruit the right people and help local residents find the right jobs.

A lot of work is already being done across the borough and by a range of partners to tackle these issues, including early intervention and prevention work around families and health and wellbeing issues. These actions are covered by other strategies and projects; therefore the focus of this priority is to address employment and income deprivation in these areas. Our Employment Task Force is a partnership of more than 20 employment support and training organisations which work collectively to address redundancy situations.

Clearly, overall unemployment and workplace earnings figures for Chorley are relatively strong, which indicates that the issues in the worst 20% areas are being masked by more affluent areas of the borough. To ensure that the whole borough benefits from a strengthened economy, this

strategy needs to take these issues into consideration. By ensuring that the most deprived communities are included in improvements in jobs, skills and businesses; this strategy will also contribute to a reduction in deprivation, and improved life chances for residents.

Another factor for consideration is Chorley's aging population. The level of over 65s has increased by 26% (2,658) since 2001 and now makes up 17% of Chorley's population.^{xv} It is estimated that this will rise further by 33.1% between 2011- 2021, which is the highest rate in Lancashire^{xvi}. While this generally means reduced numbers of economically active people in the borough, which can place additional pressure on public services, it can also create opportunities to utilise the skills and spending power of this age group in terms of part time working, volunteering and spending within the borough.

Initial actions to address this priority area included the establishment of a credit union for Chorley and Chorley time credits to engage people in volunteering. The credit union offers people a safe and alternative way of saving and borrowing money, providing a real alternative from payday loans for people who are struggling financially. The credit union is proving to be a real success with 546 new savers opening an account with them in the 40 weeks. The time credits scheme has also been a great success with 71 local organisations and community groups and 750 volunteers now using time credits and delivering over 8,000 hours of volunteering time.

While successful, these actions have not been specifically targeted at deprived areas. This is something that the council aims to address in this strategy, for example through projects as 'Chorley Works'. Chorley Works is a programme about tackling unemployment through incentivising employers and supporting local people into sustainable jobs, with particular targeting of those most affected by the welfare reforms. There are specific criteria to determine who is eligible for support and, the council's new employability officer is the route into the project, which helps people who are aged between 25-49 in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, and affected by welfare reform to increase their chance of finding work.

The table below details the key actions that will be delivered over the next 18 months, together with the measures that we will use to review the success

Long Term Outcome

To reduce the gap in Chorley's most deprived communities and support them in becoming economically active and self-sustaining, supporting a reduction in levels of deprivation in the borough.

Key Actions 2014/15 – 2015/16

1. Deliver the 'Chorley Works' scheme
2. Investigate the opportunity to develop a Community Led Local Development employment and growth bid as part of the Lancashire European Structural and Investment Funds.
3. Develop European bids for forward strategies for Chorley Works and the Employability Offer.
4. Working with the Job Centre Plus, deliver a digital inclusion project.
5. Investigate a Working Together with Families Employment Project.
6. Review and consider extending the remit of the Council's communities team to work with partners to target not just specific groups of people who meet a certain criteria, but to target deprived areas. This may include:
 - Working with communities and partners to understand issues in accessing employment in deprived areas and developed a joined up and common plan to tackle the issues.
 - Working with local businesses and the job centre to identify current and potential vacancies for local people. Working with people in deprived areas to prepare for work including identifying jobs, preparing for interviews and developing skills needed for the jobs or to start their own business – this may include financial support.
 - Linking communities to national schemes and/or local volunteering schemes. Work with local businesses to incentivise short term posts to provide people with paid work experience opportunities, which if successful may result in full time employment.
 - Develop a programme to tackle unemployment and low earnings in deprived areas.

Success Measures

- Chorley's most deprived wards will see a:
 - Reduction in the claimant count;
 - Reduction in those claiming for 6 months and over;
 - Reduction in unemployment levels;
 - Reduction in all crime figures;
 - Reduction in drug and alcohol admission rates;
 - Increase in affordable housing.
- Increase in volunteering.
- The number of referrals into Chorley Works
- Number of 8 week placements completed
- The number of people who have secured permanent paid employment through Chorley works.
- The number of people who have completed one or more training courses through Chorley works

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Appendix 1 – Employment Site Details

Classes B1 (lights industry, offices, research and development), B2 (general industry), B8 (storage and distribution) and A2 (financial and professional services).

Site Location	Size and Use	Details
Land to the North East of the M61 Junction 8 Located in a nice setting bordered by the Leeds-Liverpool Canal on one side.	The site is 6.9 ha and it's suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses combining office, manufacturing and leisure opportunities	This forms part of three major development sites that sit side by side right on J8 of the M61, and together will form one of the biggest developments taking place in Chorley.
Botany Bay	This site covers 5.9 ha. and is suitable for B1, B2, B8 and C1 uses.	This site forms the second development site which sits side by side by Junction 8 of the M61. The site is currently being master planned. There is already planning permission for mixed use development of mainly B1, B2 and B8 use classes, erection of two storey office unit and erection of two single storey industrial units with associated service yards and car parking.
Botany/Great Knowley	This site covers 14.1 ha. and is suitable for B1 and B2 uses.	This site forms the third and largest of the development sites which sits side by side by Junction 8 of the M61. The site is also currently being master planned.
Southern Commercial in Buckshaw Village Sits next to the newly created Buckshaw Parkway station offering excellent links to the M61, M6 and M65.	This site covers 8.3 ha. and is suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses.	This is the latest property development on Buckshaw Village with all the infrastructure in place making it the perfect place to look if you want to move quickly. We are working with the developers to bring forward a proposal to complete the development.
Group one in Buckshaw Village	This site covers 5.4 ha. and is suitable	This is another site that benefits from being on Buckshaw

	for B1 and B2 uses.	<p>Village, one of the largest mixed use developments in the North West.</p> <p>There is outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the land including employment use.</p> <p>There is currently a masterplan in place with an access junction under construction.</p>
The Revolution, Buckshaw Village	This site covers 13.8 ha. and is suitable for B2 and B8 uses, however only one plot is remaining.	
Land east of Wigan Road - The site provides a great opportunity as it has good access to J28 of the M6.	This site contains 15 hectares allocated for employment use as part of an outline application for a mixed use development incorporating up to 700 dwellings, 40,000sqft of B1 office space, public house/ restaurant, convenience store, community building, single form entry primary school, public open space, highway works and associated works.	The council is working with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and developers to masterplan the site.
<p>Cowling Farm</p> <p>Located on the edge of the main Chorley town area close to a number of thriving business parks before you get into the beautiful countryside setting through Heath Charnock up to Rivington.</p>	This site covers 3.5 ha. and is suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses	<p>This is one of the council-owned sites that requires a development brief and further assessments.</p> <p>It is only a few minutes from the M61 motorway and is a prime site.</p>
<p>North of Euxton Lane</p> <p>This site is between the J8 of the M61 and the Buckshaw Village development that is continuing to grow.</p>	This site covers 13.1 ha. and is suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses.	<p>The Council is working with the Homes and Communities Agency to master plan the site.</p> <p>It's ideally located just a couple of minutes from the M61 and will provide a greater choice of units in one of the fastest growing areas of Chorley.</p>

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