

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive (Introduced by the Leader)	Council	21 st July 2015

CHORLEY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide a summary of the Council's achievements during 2014/15 as well as highlighting the challenges and opportunities facing the Council in 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Over the last 12 months, activity to meet the corporate priorities has been highly successful in achieving positive outcomes. Chorley's local economy has been strengthened as we've supported the establishment of 94 new businesses; we've advised 92 businesses and intensively assisted 56, with 94% of new businesses surviving over 24 months. In addition inward investment and employment initiatives continue to deliver more mixed skill jobs for Chorley residents. Improvement works and campaigns in line with the town centre masterplan have been completed, while projects to address health inequalities, social isolation and community safety concerns continue to drive improvements across our communities.
- Looking ahead, reducing budgets and an increasing demand for services will require all public service organisations to work innovatively to meet the needs of local residents and protect the most vulnerable members of our communities. Working together with partners through the Chorley Public Service Reform Board and developing alternative delivery models to promote an early intervention and prevention approach will be vital in shaping the Council's response to the challenges ahead.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- N/A

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

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

BACKGROUND

8. The annual report is a key mechanism for presenting information on the Council's performance to residents, partners and key stakeholders. The report provides information on what the Council has delivered over the past 12 months to meet its vision of an ambitious council that achieves more by listening to the whole community and exceeding their needs. Looking ahead the report identifies key challenges faced by the council in order to meet resident's needs, setting out a number of key initiatives for 2015/16 that will deliver improvements in these areas.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

9. The Chorley Council Annual Report is attached to this report as an appendix. The key headlines from the report are:

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

The welfare reform action plan has helped many residents at risk to adjust to the recent welfare changes by working with agencies to prevent evictions or re-possession, and assist residents with personal budgeting. During 14/15, 77 repossession cases have been averted through interventions and attendance at court. Neighbourhood area priorities were collectively identified and works were completed which improve the local environment. Community engagement continues to be strong through the Time Credit scheme with a 40.5% increase in the number of organisations engaged with the scheme this year and 11,041 hours of volunteering provided by the 1,111 members. Thousands of residents and visitors have been attracted to a varied and successful events programme including Picnic in the Park and Chorley Live, and £146,317 was awarded to a range of local Voluntary, Community and Faith sector groups to support and deliver vital services such as Home-Start providing support to families and the Chorley Women's Centre who provide valuable support to vulnerable women.

b. A strong local economy – Public realm improvements to the Southern end of Market Street and shop front improvements in line with the town centre masterplan have taken place this year in order to enhance the town centre. Plans to extend Market Walk have progressed with the first tenant confirmed and the scheme's planning application being submitted. The inward investment campaign together with business grants totalling over £200,000 have all assisted in supporting business to start, survive, expand and create jobs all of which are supporting economic growth in the area. In addition, projects to target and tackle barriers to employment as well as increase opportunities for the young through apprenticeships and skills development have also been highly successful, reducing the number of NEETs (Young People not in Employment, Education or Training) by 27.8% in 14/15.

c. Clean safe and healthy communities – The "Don't Mess with Chorley" campaign highlighted environmental issues such as dog fouling, fly tipping and littering with over 10,400 people encouraged to utilise the "Do It On-Line" reporting mechanisms which

enable residents to track the progress of their requests. Chorley continues to achieve some of the highest levels of affordable home building in Lancashire with 165 delivered during 2014/15 alone, while also reducing the number of long term empty properties by 1.8%. Overall crime rates have reduced by 4.3% in 14/15 as have the anti-social behaviour and burglary rates, reducing by 6.4% and 2.4% respectively. The five year Play and Open Pitch Strategy continues to provide new and renovated recreational facilities across the borough which supports, and encourages increased attendance figures at our leisure facilities; 12.6% higher than in the previous year, and many initiatives like "Couch to 5K" continue to inspire and encourage residents to make healthy lifestyle changes.

- d. An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area** – Continuing budget cuts means that the way in which public services are delivered is unsustainable. The Commission into the Future of Public services in Chorley was held and a number of recommendations identified and progressed through the Chorley Public Service Reform Board including development of new service delivery models. The continued development of our high street Credit Union is also proving a success, increasing the number of registered savers and offering residents an alternative to pay day lenders. 859 savers joined the scheme this year, 40% more than the expected outcome. Our service to directly support residents with energy switching issues has resulted in the 141 residents supported receiving an average saving of £213.37, and the opening of the new Single Front Office at the Council’s Union street site has enhanced our customer first approach by speeding up processing times and making the whole process easier for the 6941 customers who accessed the Front Office in 14/15.

- e. Council Spending** - The Council’s budget management has been strong, investment has been effective and significant budget efficiencies have been achieved. The programme of investment for 2015/16 totals £0.807m revenue investment and £3.615m capital investment to support key priority areas.

- f. Challenges and how we will continue to make it happen in 2015/16** – Developing Chorley’s economy continues to be a priority and a number of initiatives have been put in place for 2015/16 to create new jobs, promote inward investment and continue to improve the retail and leisure offer in the town centre. We must also challenge the way public services are delivered to achieve better outcomes; significant budget reductions are inevitable across public sector partners and therefore we must work together to find new and innovative ways to provide services.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

10. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	✓	Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

11. No comment

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

12. No comment

Gary Hall
Chief Executive

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jason Mills	5775	7 th July 2015	Annual report 2014_15 covering report