

# **Chorley Council Annual Report** 2016/17



## Welcome to Chorley Council's annual report

This report presents Chorley Council's annual report for 2016/17. It provides an overview of activities and achievements over the last year, outlining the key steps that we have taken to ensure that we continue to deliver our vision and priorities as outlined below:

**Our vision:** A proactive community leader, supporting the borough and all its residents to reach their full potential through working in partnership to deliver services that achieve the best outcome and protect vulnerable people



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



Clean, safe and healthy communities



A strong local economy



An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

## The challenges in 2016/17

A growing population, reductions in government funding and policy changes at both a local and national level continue to present huge challenges for Chorley. However, this year we've made real and tangible steps towards addressing these challenges with a focus on changing the way that we work and developing innovative solutions to ensure that we are in the best position to continue to provide vital services for our local communities. Our achievements outlined within this report demonstrate how we have worked to deliver our corporate vision and priorities in 2016/17.

## Overview of 2016/17

This year we have done even more to deliver on our promises and ensure that we face challenges head on. We've had to make some difficult decisions but our priority continues to be to maintain vital services for the people of Chorley and their families.

I've been pleased to see a number of our plans for large scale developments being finalised and put into place, with the physical evidence of this change now visible in and around the town centre. These developments will boost the local economy and provide better facilities for local residents, encourage visitors and promote Chorley as a place where people want to live, work and invest.

Beyond the town centre and across the borough we have developed new community amenities such as the Lancaster Way community centre and made plans for better sports facilities on the Westway site. Local parks and play grounds have been improved to provide access to quality outdoor spaces and our events programme has delivered even more for residents, families and visitors to enjoy in 2016. We have also worked hard to secure the continuation of much needed local services such as libraries and bus services.

We want residents to be empowered to shape improvements in their own areas and for them to be rewarded for giving their time. More people are now signed up to the Chorley Time Credits scheme which exchanges volunteer hours for access to an enormous range of attractions and benefits. By working together with residents we have been able to address the issues that matter most for local neighbourhoods to create cleaner, more attractive spaces and develop longer term plans that will see communities thrive.

We've got big challenges but equally big ambitions that will make Chorley a place where everyone can reach their full potential.

**CLlr Alistair Bradley, Leader of Chorley Council and Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform**



In a year of constant change both politically and economically I'm pleased to report that Chorley Council has sustained positive performance and strong levels of customer satisfaction.

Our corporate strategy identified 16 key projects to be progressed during 2016 which included a number of large schemes such as the Market Walk extension, Primrose Gardens retirement village and a new Youth Zone. Alongside this, we also set out to change the way that we operate as an organisation, setting up new ways of working with our partners and making services easier to access for residents.

Overall performance has been strong, with the majority of projects on track at the end of the year and progressing as planned. Measures of success also show high levels of performance, with over 70% of Indicators performing on or above target at the end of the year. We continue to take robust action to address areas of underperformance and have made positive improvements in levels of volunteering, access to digital services and more efficient processing of service requests such as planning applications and benefits.

As we move into 2017/18, our corporate strategy will drive forward plans to achieve sustainable local growth and reform in the way we deliver services in order to meet the challenges of future years and ensure that we achieve better outcomes for Chorley.

**Cllr Peter Wilson, Deputy Executive Leader, Executive Member for Resources**





## Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all

### Long term outcomes

- Residents who take pride in where they live and their achievements
- All residents are able to take an active part in their community
- Easy access to high quality public service

### What have we done this year to achieve this?

This year has seen a continued commitment from the council to provide quality, accessible community facilities with a new community centre on Lancaster Way at Buckshaw Village and the opening of Buttermere community centre. We've set our centres up with digital equipment as part of ensuring all residents are able to connect with local services, supported by over 70 digital skills sessions. We've also focussed on physical access to services for rural areas, maintaining vital transport links.

Residents are taking a more active part in their local area through participating in volunteering opportunities, with more new members joining the Time Credits scheme seeing an increase in volunteering hours this year. Residents and visitors enjoyed a range of events including Chorley Live, the Grand Prix and Chorley Flower Show highlighting all that Chorley has to offer.

- **63% increase in the number of volunteering hours earned**
- **Increased the number of digital access points across the Borough by 44%**
- **Over 68,000 people attended our events across the year**

### Community facilities

Enhancing community provision and facilities is a key priority for the Council and this year has seen the development of new facilities and further plans for development of existing facilities. A new community centre 'Lancaster Way' has been built in Buckshaw Village. The community centre complements the village in providing a facility for local residents with state of the art sports facilities, a large hall and smaller meeting room available for hire, all for the benefit and use of the local residents. The Westway project also aims to enhance current facilities for the community and this year has seen the continued development of plans to upgrade the sporting facilities in the area.

Following Lancashire County Council's budget cuts and subsequent re-modelling of service provision, we stepped in to fund the continuation of full library services at Adlington,

Eccleston and Coppull Libraries and have been working closely with community groups to develop sustainable models for delivering these services for communities.

### **Improving connectivity**

We are continuing work to deliver improved and efficient digital services and increase customer engagement with the council via these channels in line with our digital strategy. We have increased the number of digital access points across the borough by 44% this year, exceeding the target of 11%, meaning there are now more places for people to get online and do more online across the borough. To ensure people have the confidence and skills to use online services we have continued to provide our digital access sessions and a total of 73 digital skills sessions have been delivered across a number of locations this year.

Following cuts to local public transport, we have stepped in to fund bus routes across the borough. This has allowed for much needed local bus services to continue to run, ensuring that residents are able to access these services when needed and providing access into Chorley town centre and surrounding areas.

### **Time Credits**

The Chorley Time Credits programme continues to grow, supporting residents to volunteer and providing much needed volunteer capacity within communities. This year, 87 additional community groups have been engaged in time banking to bring the total up to 435 groups. A total of 1,980 new members were recruited this year, giving 64,763 hours of their time, and increasing volunteering hours by 42% compared to last year.

### **Neighbourhood Working**

Neighbourhood working priorities were identified at neighbourhood area meetings for delivery in 2016/17 to improve and enhance community spaces. The work undertaken this year and some key outcomes have included:

- Chorley Town East: Improvements to footpaths have not only ensured the safety of residents when walking, but also improved the overall look and feel of the area.
- Whittle-le-Woods: Provision of bus shelters, has allowed residents a safe place when boarding and alighting from public transport.
- South East Parishes: A targeted road safety campaign has been delivered with the aim of promoting road safety, with a focus on both speed awareness and pedestrian safety around Town Lane Heskin. This project has ensured that residents are aware of the importance of road safety.

## Events programme

We have delivered various events across the year, which have allowed us to engage with local residents, raise the profile of Chorley as a destination and encourage visitors from further afield. All of which improves the local economy and community with events such as the Grand Prix 2016, which has encouraged more spend in the town centre, averaging at around £20 per person.

- The Chorley Flower Show returned for the second time in 2016, building on the success of last year, with 13,000 visitors enjoying the beautiful displays and entertainment with many commenting on their enjoyment of this fantastic show.
- Over 29,500 people attended various Christmas attractions in 2016.
- Thousands of people lined the streets to see the Chorley Grand Prix this year. The event was a great success and received great feedback from local residents and visitors alike
- Thousands of people enjoyed a weekend of live entertainment in Chorley as the fourth Chorley Live proved to be the best yet, with local performers playing at cafes, pubs, restaurants and shops. Seeing more than 240 live performances across 30 venues.

## Grants and Commissioning

We provide funding to commission vital services for local residents of Chorley and this year saw these services being re-commissioned to ensure that the funding continues to be targeted to the areas of greatest need in Chorley. The services will provide vital support for families, vulnerable adults, older people, young people and community safety.

Additional funding was also awarded this year through our small community funding process. The funding went to a number of local VCFS organisations including Girl Guides Luncheon clubs, local sports clubs and family centred services to help them to deliver a number of different community based projects.

## Disabled GO

We have worked in partnership with Disabled Go, a national disability organisation, to create a new accessibility checker for people with disabilities, dementia and their carers, friends and family so that they can find out the accessibility of places they would like to visit. The free online access guide, which was launched in April, provides information on over 200 venues across the borough including information about parking, walking distances and toilet facilities.



## A strong local economy

### Long term outcomes

- A vibrant town centre and villages
- A strong and expanding business sector
- Access to high quality employment and education opportunities

### What have we done this year to achieve this?

This year, work has continued on developments in and around the town centre as well as supporting businesses across the borough. This work will see areas of the borough transformed and will enhance Chorley's profile as a place to live, work and invest. Work on the Market Walk extension has progressed to the construction phase to deliver new facilities to boost the local retail offer, create jobs and enhance Chorley's local economy. We have also continued to assist both new and existing businesses in the borough, boosting the local economy and job creation.

Our employment schemes have supported people into work and enabled them to access education opportunities. We have been working on a number of projects to promote community and the local economy within Chorley, encouraging people to spend their money where it will benefit the local community.

- **87 new business start-ups delivered through our business grant schemes**
- **The overall employment rate in Chorley is 74.8%, this is better than the North West average of (73.1%)**
- **Over 400 people attending our Choose Chorley for Business events**

### Market Walk extension

The Market Walk project will improve the retail and leisure offer in the town centre providing benefits attracting national retailers and more visitors to Chorley. This will create growth and opportunities for the future, enabling the town centre to thrive over the coming years. Work this year has included progressing tenancy interest in the scheme and the enabling works. The coming year will see the beginning of the build of the scheme, which is planned for completion in 2018.



## **Inward Investment**

Attracting investment and new business to Chorley is critical if we are to create new and more highly paid jobs that will sustain the local economy and enable better outcomes for all residents of Chorley. This year we have continued our work to help the Chorley business sector to thrive through our business grants and loans and our ever successful Choose Chorley for business events. Our Chorley BIG grants have seen a total of £478,257 private sector investment, with a total of 55 jobs forecasted and one company has relocated to Chorley via our choose Chorley grant, bringing with it a total of 25 jobs. Our business start-up grants have supported the creation of 87 new businesses in the borough.

## **Young people, volunteering and training opportunities**

The council continues to support young people on their way to employment and learning new skills and by working in conjunction with Runshaw College to support young people into apprenticeships by reducing some of the barriers they might experience. Through the scheme, 37 young people have been supported, with 15 of these young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The fund has been used to help towards costs additional to wages such as equipment, travel, work clothes and training fees.

## **Check Out Chorley**

The 'Check Out Chorley' website, developed by the council in 2015/16, aims to showcase the local area and show what Chorley has to offer to people of all ages. Over the year, there has been significant development and promotion of the website, to improve access to information regarding Chorley as a visitor destination. So far, the site has proven to be popular and had over 62,634 page views over the year, allowing the people of Chorley and potential visitors to gain access to great events and organisations.



## Clean, Safe and Healthy Communities

### Long term outcomes

- Clean and safe streets
- Reduced health inequalities
- A wide range of quality recreational activities
- High quality affordable and suitable housing
- High quality play areas, parks and open spaces

### What have we done this year to achieve this?

We have developed plans to implement new ways of working with our partners through the Integrated Community Wellbeing team which aims to bring together selected functions from Chorley Council and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust to work more effectively and better use resources to deliver positive outcomes for those who access our services.

This year has also seen significant achievements in terms of encouraging residents to get active and continue to be active. Young people have been encouraged to take part in our Get Up and Go activities and free swimming sessions across a number of our leisure centres, encouraging them to be active and engage with physical activity. We have continued to work towards providing access to good quality, affordable housing including developing plans in order to meet future housing needs. In addition to this, we have continued to work to make sure that our open spaces and streets are clean and safe alongside reducing the amount of empty homes in the borough. We have also commenced the building of the Primrose Gardens Retirement Village which will allow access to housing for residents who require support for additional needs.

- **Development of the Primrose Gardens Retirement Village, to allow residents with additional needs access to the right accommodation**
- **Promotion of leisure centres, with an increase of 7% junior attendances, promoting an active and healthy lifestyle**
- **3,099 young people attended free swimming sessions this year**

## **Integrated Community Wellbeing**

One of Chorley Council's key aims is to be at the forefront of change and working to create sustainable, effective public services and this year has seen the creation of new initiatives such as the Integrated Community Wellbeing Team. The service was introduced in April 2017 and will bring together teams from across the Council and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust to work together from the same location, allowing the organisations to work to improve focus on prevention and early intervention and better public services. This will mean the teams are working effectively to tackle issues for local residents at an early stage, ensuring that all needs are taken into account and situations are resolved as quickly as possible, resulting in a better experience for service users.

## **Primrose Gardens Retirement Living Scheme**

We are delivering a scheme for Chorley which will increase and improve the affordable housing offer in the borough. Construction is now underway on the scheme and the development will be crucial in delivering specialist housing that promotes greater choice and ensures independence is maintained for local residents, which is something that is particularly important as demand for care services continues to grow.

## **Housing and Affordable Homes**

Chorley Council is committed to providing affordable homes across the borough, ensuring that residents have access to high quality, low cost, and suitable housing options. This year we delivered 87 affordable homes which means that over a four year period, a total of 466 affordable homes have been delivered.

We provide housing support to those who need it most and this year the council has provided 659 homeless preventions and reliefs, helping people who present as homeless or potentially homeless.

## **Getting Active**

We aim to provide a range of healthy activities and opportunities for people to engage with to get active, keep fit and have fun.

**Leisure Centres** - Our leisure centres play a big role in getting people healthy, active and staying active. This year our leisure centres had over 1 million visits.

**Get Up and Go!** -24,856 young people took part in Get Up and Go activities in 2016.

**Free swimming** -3,099 young people participated in free swimming activity this year. The scheme aims to provide healthy activities for young people, encouraging them to be active

and healthy and providing a positive activity for them to undertake during the school holidays.

## **Parks and Open Spaces**

We take great pride in our parks and open spaces in Chorley and our teams work every day to ensure that they are well maintained and a pleasure to visit. The Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (2013-2018) outlines a five year action plan to protect, manage, and enhance our open space provision in Chorley. The third year of this plan has seen further developments with some highlights, including improvements to eight play areas across the borough:

**Amber Drive play area** in Chorley has been refurbished and improved and has received positive feedback from local people and the site is being well used.

**Wymottt Park Play Area** has seen developments which have included refurbishment of the toddler play area, with additional equipment being installed and new safety surfacing being provided. This has ensured a safe and fun play area for all.

**Buttermere Green** has seen the Installation of a new toddler play area, providing new facilities for the benefit of young children and their families.

## **Community Safety**

Chorley has a crime rate below the average for Lancashire and over 2016/17 we have continued to work closely with our partners to provide services to ensure that our residents stay safe and feel safe. We have reduced the number of long term empty properties by 8% over the last year, completed a project to improve CCTV provision across the borough and working with Police Community Support Officers to deliver a number of initiatives to provide beneficial interventions at an early stage and preventing escalations into more serious situations. Antisocial behaviour incidences have seen a decrease this year at 9.67 per thousand population (43.83 in 2015/16). Again, this is lower than the Lancashire average which is 54.47.



## An ambitious Council that does more to meet the needs of local residents and the local area

### Long term outcomes

- A council that consults and engages with residents
- An ambitious council that continually strives to improve
- Cohesive communities and around underlying areas

### What have we done this year to achieve this?

We continue to be ambitious in our aspirations for change to ensure that we are working in the most cost effective way possible to meet the needs of local residents. We have progressed innovative new ways of working with partners through the Public Service Reform Partnership to transform the way public services are delivered locally.

We have implemented a number of changes to the way we work as an organisation and now have a new management structure in place which better reflects our plans for the future and will support us to achieve them.

- **Our website continues to develop and improve access to services - and has achieved over 1.2 million page views**
- **41 vulnerable residents have been better supported through work bringing partners together to work from the same location**
- **Delivered better health and wellbeing outcomes for over 100 residents through the pioneering work of the Public Service Reform Partnership**
- **18.3% customers dissatisfied, which is better than our target of 20%**

### Changing the way we work

This year has seen the implementation of the key actions within the Council's Transformation Strategy to ensure that our organisation is best placed to meet future financial and organisational challenges, including effective leadership and governance structures. This has included work to support the development governance of the Integrated Community Wellbeing service, implementing a changed senior management structure, development of a new organisational development plan and progression of the Transformation Strategy projects identified to provide the outcomes needed to transform the way we work as an organisation.

## Chorley Public Service Reform

The Chorley Public Service Reform partnership looks to drive transformation in the way that public services are delivered locally and to explore public service integration. In its second year, the partnership has formalised innovative new ways of working together to achieve better outcomes with a focus on better connectivity between services and earlier intervention for vulnerable residents. This year key achievements have included:

- Planning and implementing a co-located service hub based at Chorley fire station with 6 services working together to respond collectively to the needs of vulnerable or complex cases.
- Extended work with primary care colleagues to launch a pioneering joint pilot project that will support better outcomes for frequent attenders to primary care across four GP practices in Chorley.
- Intensive work in Chorley to engage with residents and assess community potential, commissioned by the Partnership and completed by SPICE, resulting in recommendations to shape new ways of working towards more resilient places.
- Ongoing work with frontline service delivery partners to strengthen service connectivity, supporting practitioners to develop networks including testing out new ways of using technology.
- Development of governance and information sharing arrangements to support new ways of working

## Chorley Youth Zone


The Youth Zone will provide a purpose built facility for Chorley's young people aged 8-19 years and up to the age of 25 with disabilities. The Zone will be a safe environment where young people can raise their aspirations, grow in confidence and engage in healthy activities. There are over 15,000 young people aged 8-19 years who live in Chorley whom this development will benefit. The Youth Zone project has progressed significantly over the last year, with the scheme now fully developed and funded and demolition works have commenced on site.

## Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction levels are one way in which we monitor how well we are doing and how happy our customers are with the service they have received from us. Final dissatisfaction figures available for 2016/17 showed an outcome of 18.3% against a target of 20%, meaning that we performed above the target set. To address any dissatisfaction, a number of initiatives have been introduced to sustain performance including ensuring that customers are responded to in a timely manner and working with our contractors to ensure that they are meeting customer expectations.

## Council Spending over 2016/17


In 2016/17 the Council committed to new revenue and capital investments totalling £3.167m that benefitted the Council's four main priority areas as follows:




**£190k** Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all



**£592k** A strong local economy



**£2.256m** Clean, Safe and Healthy Communities



**£129k** An ambitious Council that does more to meet the needs of local residents and the local area

This investment went towards priorities as identified by local residents including:

Providing support to community organisations, promoting volunteering and delivery of projects to enhance local neighbourhoods

Supporting new and existing businesses, delivering employment schemes and investing in events for the borough to raise the profile of the local area

Supporting community safety initiatives, mediation services and drop in services for young people including work to reduce the number of empty homes in Chorley

Working to integrate public services with our partners and delivering health and wellbeing schemes for our staff

## Looking ahead to 2017/18

Looking forward to 2017/18, we will continue to focus on delivering positive outcomes for residents against our corporate priorities, this will include the following:

### Involving residents in improving the local area and equality of access for all

Working to empower communities with the tools and support to creating thriving local spaces and places

Delivery of new strategies to enhance our digital and online services and make sure that customer can contact us through the channels that are best for them

### Clean, safe and healthy communities

Delivery of the Primrose Gardens Extra Care Scheme

Implementing the Integrated Community Wellbeing Team

Continuing our work to support people into work experience and employment

### A strong local economy

Continuing work to strengthen the local economy, boost local provision and support the local job market

Improve the town centre and extend Market Walk

Promoting Chorley as a visitor destination and delivery of high profile events such as the Chorley Grand Prix and Flower Show

### An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

Working with our partners to bring together public services and make them sustainable.

Delivery of new facilities for young people in the borough

Developing solutions to meet the financial challenges ahead