

CHORLEY HOUSING STRATEGY

2019 to 2024

Introduction and background

Our aim is to:

Ensure that everyone in the borough is able to access affordable and good quality housing that suits their needs. The type of tenure and where someone lives will not mean they should have to accept poorer quality or less affordable accommodation.

This housing strategy sets out the council's ambitions to ensure that everyone living in the borough has access to the high quality accommodation that they need. No one should expect to live in worse accommodation because of the tenure, nor because they live in a particular area.

The evidence about the benefits of good quality accommodation is strong – if someone lives in poor quality housing, they are more likely to experience poorer physical and mental health. This strategy sets out to support the council's ambitions to improve people's lives and reduce demand on public services seen in the Integrated Community Wellbeing Service.

Chorley population is set to grow considerably in the coming years. Between 2014 and 2039, the population will increase by 18.1%, with the growth in household numbers being 24.6%. Our population is also projected to grow proportionately older in the coming 25 years. In 2016, 8% were aged over 75. This is projected to increase to 14.6% by 2041. An older population will have different housing needs, and so this strategy will aim to ensure that people are able to live independently for as long as possible, to reduce demand on public services.

Chorley has experienced a significant growth in housing over the last 10 years, and is projected to experience a further increase of 24% in the number of households in the borough by 2039. This is the fastest rate of any Lancashire district and higher than the predicted growth in households in England. The council continues to support growth in line with the agreed local plan, but is aware of the potential pressures that an increasing population can place on local services. Therefore, this strategy will set out the council's ambitions to ensure that the new developments see the right type and quality of housing in the most appropriate places.

The potential benefits of this strategy are:

Measure	Target (2019/20)
Number of affordable homes delivered	100
Average time to complete adaptations	6 months
Number of long term empty properties in the borough	Fewer than 170
Number of preventions and reliefs	600
% of homes in fuel poverty	11.2%
Number of open market homes owned by the Chorley housing company	20
Number of affordable homes owned by the Chorley housing company	14
Number of rough sleepers	0
Number of proactive housing inspections	80

Links to other strategies and plans

As an overarching document, it is important that this housing strategy makes clear links to other key strategies and plans. These are referred to specifically at the relevant points, but the main links are with:

- Central Lancashire Local Plan
- The Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Recommendations from the 2018 Overview and Scrutiny review of conditions in registered provider accommodation
- The business case for an integrated community wellbeing service for Chorley

Key priorities

The following are the key priorities for this strategy:

- Securing quality across all housing tenures
- Supporting people to remain independent in their own homes
- Preventing homelessness
- Supporting a balanced housing market

Set out below is each priority in more detail, with the work that is already undertaken alongside the planned work.

Timescales

The Housing Strategy covers a period to 2024. However, the key actions to be undertaken over the next 12 to 18 months are set out in the action plan. These will be reviewed and refreshed at the appropriate point.

Priority: Securing quality across all housing

Context and opportunities

Having access to good quality, secure and sustainable housing is important in supporting individuals and communities to flourish. Conversely, studies have shown that poor housing leads to poorer health and an increased demand on public services¹.

The Council intervenes in supporting owner-occupiers living in the poorest quality accommodation in the borough and exercises its powers in extreme cases but budget limitations prevent it from assisting owner occupiers more generally as Government policy places an expectation on home owners that they will bear the cost of maintaining their own homes. Over the last twelve months, eight cases where an occupier has been living in very poor quality accommodation have been provided support by the council. These cases are very involved, and require a fine balance of providing support for residents and local communities against the use of public funds in improving assets.

Rented properties account for approximately 25% of dwellings in the borough, with 10% being privately rented and 13% socially rented. This is broadly similar to most other Lancashire districts. Those living in rented accommodation have potentially less control about the quality and security of their accommodation, which is why there is significant legislation aimed at protecting tenants.

In 2018, the council's Overview and Scrutiny committee have undertaken a review of conditions of housing in the social-rented sector. A key part of the work undertaken was a survey of residents to gather their views. Some of the key findings of that survey included:

- 72.9% of tenants were satisfied with the standard of their property when they moved in, while 16.3% were dissatisfied.
- 14.9% of tenants were dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance carried out on their property.
- 85% of tenants agree that their neighbourhood is a good place to live

Fuel poverty can affect everyone, regardless of their tenancy. Not being able to afford to keep a home adequately heated is one of the factors associated with reduced health outcomes. While the incidence of fuel poverty in Chorley at 10.6% is lower than elsewhere in the North West, it is still a target to address.

Overcrowding is a relatively small issue in the borough, with 2.11% of households having an occupancy rating of -1 (implying that the household has one fewer bedroom than is required) or less. However, there are significant differences across the wards, with 6.75% of households in Chorley South East being overcrowded.

This priority aims to ensure that everyone should be able to access good quality and secure accommodation regardless of the tenure, thereby supporting improved quality of life.

Principles

- Our aim will be to secure quality across all housing, regardless of the tenure
- Everyone should expect consistency and fair treatment in private or social rented sector and whether they are a tenant or a landlord

¹ See, for example, The King's Fund, <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/time-think-differently/trends-broader-determinants-health-housing>

- Landlords should engage in ensuring that the neighbourhoods local to their properties are good places to live
- We will aim to ensure that tenancies are sustainable, with support available for landlords and tenants, particularly those who are more vulnerable.

What we already do

The council already undertakes work to support this priority. This includes working with landlords through the Private Sector Landlord Forum and the Selectmove Partnership as well as regular meetings with the large registered providers in the borough. In addition, we also have a Healthy Homes project which provides proactive property inspections for tenants.

The council also has powers under the Housing Act 2004, which introduced an assessment procedure for housing standards. This legislation is designed to improve housing standards, predominantly within the private rented sector, and prosecute landlords who fail to maintain standards for their tenants. The Act also introduced Hazard Awareness Notices, which allow the local authority to inform owner occupiers of hazards within their own property. However, these are simply advisory notes to owner occupiers, notifying them of their responsibility to remedy hazards identified by the Council for their own safety.

Key actions 2018/19 – 2019/20

The following key actions will be undertaken to deliver against this priority:

- Develop a voluntary standard for all rented properties (including social and private rented) relating to quality standards, re-let cleanliness and responsiveness.
- Respond to proposed legislation to licence private landlords, including introducing a programme of inspection of privately rented properties
- Undertake a review of the Healthy Homes programme
- Review and refresh the council's policy to support owner-occupiers who are unable to make essential repairs to their property
- Develop a programme to promote affordable warmth, encompassing boiler checks and repairs.
- Investigate the impact of AirBnB on the borough and identify any necessary actions.

Priority: Supporting people to remain independent in their own homes

Context and opportunities

Chorley's population is projected to grow to proportionately older over the coming 25 years. In 2016, 8% were aged over 75. This is projected to increase to 14.6% by 2041. An older population will have different housing needs, and public services need to respond to meet this potential change in demand.

Some interventions are already in place, particularly around Disabled Facilities Grants and adaptations. Since the council introduced the Chorley Adaptation Grant in April 2017, more residents have been able to access support they need. In 2017/18, the council received 208 major adaptation referrals. 107 CAG cases and 26 DFGs were approved, a total of 133. This was a significant increase on the previous year, when 92 DFGs were approved.

Demand for accommodation that suits people's needs and has support in place is already in existence. The council has been oversubscribed for the 65 apartment Primrose Gardens facility, with over 200 applications being considered in the first allocations process.

Principles

- People should be able to remain in their own homes wherever possible so they are able to remain independent
- Our housing stock and interventions should aim to avoid residents having otherwise unnecessary moves into residential care, other settings or lengthy hospital stays

What we already do

The council continues to be proactive in supporting people to remain independent in their own homes. For example, the council delivers the integrated home improvement service on behalf of the county council in the borough. This involves arranging the delivery of a range of housing related interventions including minor adaptations and the handyperson scheme. In addition, the council continues to deliver a high quality service for disabled facilities grants and, separately, the sanctuary scheme for survivors of domestic abuse. This complements the work undertaken by the major registered providers in the borough to support survivors of domestic abuse.

Key Actions 2018/19 – 2019/20

Key actions in this priority include:

- Open Primrose Gardens to provide housing for people with additional care needs
- Work with partners within Lancashire County Council and LCFT to reform the processes around major and minor adaptations, removing bottlenecks and increasing capacity where needed.
- Work through the integrated community wellbeing service to increase and improve referrals for support from GPs and other primary care providers.
- Undertake an assessment of housing need including particular types such as older people and affordable housing and examine options for changes to planning policy.
- As part of the new Local Plan, review planning policies for the quality and sustainability standards of new housing developments, such as homes for life, to maximise ways to future-proof new developments
- Examine options and the business case for expanding the offer of extra care accommodation in the borough.

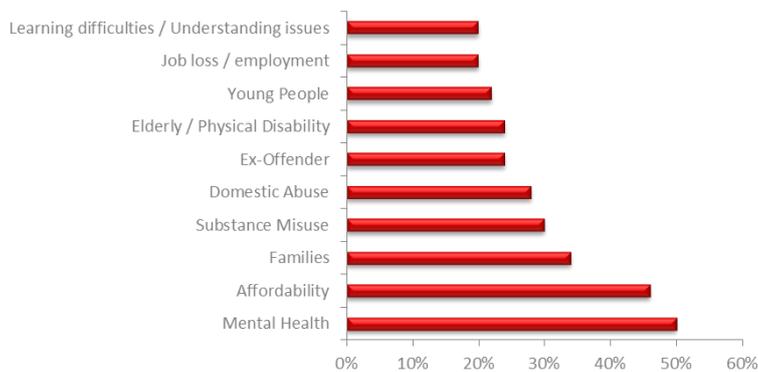
Priority: Preventing homelessness

Context and opportunities

Around 1,200 people present themselves to the council each year as at risk of homelessness. They are provided by support by the council’s housing solutions team, with an emphasis on preventing homelessness as far as is possible.

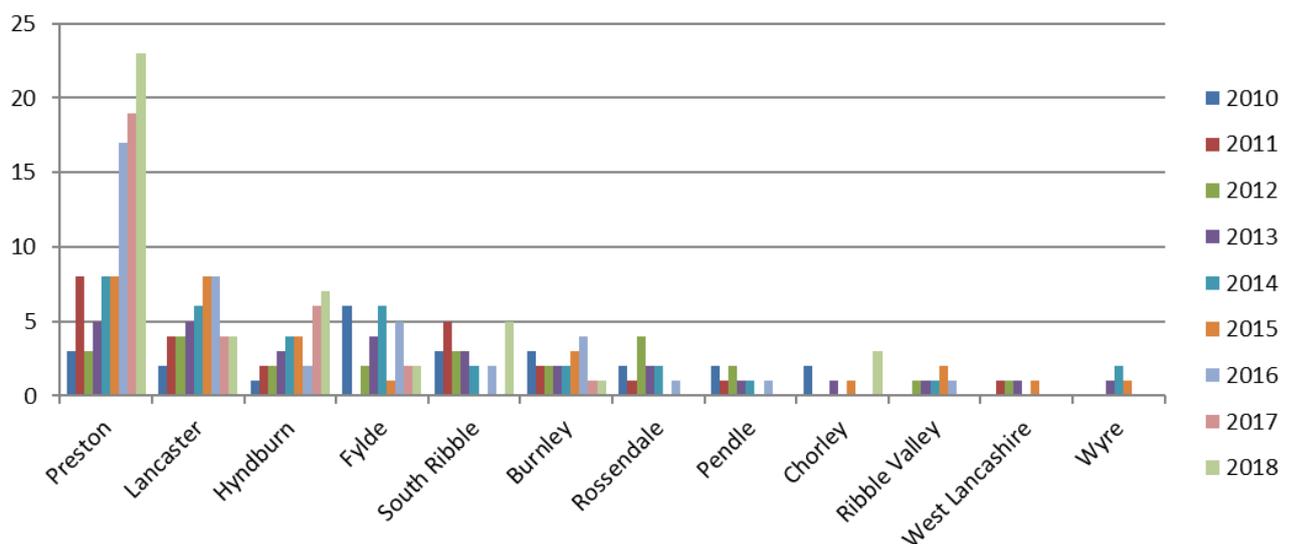
As part of the integrated community wellbeing service, a review of homelessness cases was undertaken. Over a five year period, 6,123 cases of people in need of housing support were opened. 20% of the cases were households accessing the service more than once in that period, average every 12 months, with the most persistent being in need of accommodation every 8 months.

Many of the customers presenting at risk of homelessness have other needs that often contribute to, or are exacerbated by the need for more suitable accommodation. The proportions of the current caseload are set out below. It should be noted that many individuals have multiple issues and so will count in more than one category:



Chorley has a very small number of rough sleepers. The most recent count, undertaken in 2018, found three rough sleepers. This is an increase on previous years. The graph below shows the results of the annual rough sleeper count for the Lancashire districts.

Rough sleeper count 2010 - 2018



Principles

- Everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness will be able to access advice, support and we will work with them to develop a housing plan to secure accommodation.
- We will work to ensure that the options available to customers with even the most complex needs are as wide as possible by accessing the right support at the right time.
- We will continue to work with partners including social landlords and charities to support those threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

What we already do

The council is already extremely active in preventing homelessness. The council owns and manages Cotswold Supported Housing, providing safe and supportive accommodation to those in need. In addition, we work closely with large social sector landlords and Chorley Help the Homeless to prevent and support tenants at risk of eviction. We also provide support with personal budgeting and referral pathways for debt advice. In addition to Selectmove, we also provide an accommodation funding service to increase options for housing in the private rented sector.

Key Actions 2018/19 – 2019/20

The key actions for this priority are:

- Work through the integrated community wellbeing service to reform pathways for customers with complex needs so they receive timely support from public services
- Review and refresh the homelessness prevention strategy
- Develop a multi-agency action plan and protocol for supporting people who are rough sleeping.

Priority: Supporting a balanced housing market

Context and opportunities

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken as part of the central Lancashire LDF examined the housing market that the borough functions in. While parts of the borough have strong links to neighbouring areas (for example the Liverpool and Manchester strategic market areas), the study concludes that the evidence suggests that Chorley, Preston and South Ribble form a common and unique housing market area.

Chorley borough had the fourth largest median house price in Lancashire for the year ending December 2017, at £169,250. There were differences in the median house prices across the borough as well, with the most expensive ward being Pennine and the least Chorley North East.

In 2017, Chorley was the fourth least affordable district in Lancashire to purchase a property. The ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings was 6.20, compared to 3.59 in Burnley and 7.51 in Ribble Valley.

While the affordability ratio for residence-based earnings in Chorley is 6.20, the same measure based upon workplace-based earnings is 6.82. This is because the average pay for those working in the borough is lower than those living in the borough but working elsewhere.

Chorley continues to experience significant growth in housing, with 3,080 new homes built over the last five years. While the council has been successful in securing 638 new affordable homes as part of that development, the council will need to continue to ensure that the development of new homes remains balanced. In addition, the development of housing needs to be accompanied by related infrastructure and public services.

Principles

- Housing growth should be supported by the appropriate growth in services and supporting infrastructure.
- The council will take an active role in providing a balanced housing market with high quality and suitable accommodation for our residents.
- The council will continue to facilitate and drive the delivery of affordable housing in the borough.

What we already do

In recent years, the council has attempted to take a proactive role in ensuring that the housing market is balanced and supported by improvements and expansion to local infrastructure. Work has included facilitating the building of new affordable homes, working to bring forward employment sites and developing Primrose Gardens. Where necessary, the council has also sought to robustly defend its local plan and control decisions around development control locally. The council continues to invest in reducing the number of empty properties in the borough, proactively seeking to reduce the number of long term empty properties. In addition, the council will continue its proactive approach to identifying and targeting benefit and tenancy fraud, including participating in data matching and working with partners to identify potential issues.

Key Actions 2018/19 – 2019/20

Key actions for this priority are:

- Review and refresh the central Lancashire local plan
- Establish a Chorley Housing Company
- Include consideration of the provision of housing within the refresh of the town centre masterplan
- Use the outputs of the local plan to review land supply and land use across the borough to determine the need to bring forward sites or housing types.
- Continue to bring empty properties back into use, with annual monitoring to neighbourhood area meetings

Priority	Action	Completion date
Securing quality across all housing	Develop a voluntary standard for all rented properties (including social and private rented) relating to housing quality, re-let cleanliness and responsiveness	July 2019
	Respond to proposed legislation to licence private landlords, including introducing a programme of inspection of privately rented properties	tbc
	Undertake a review of the Healthy Homes programme	July 2019
	Review and refresh the council's policy to support owner-occupiers who are unable to make essential repairs to their property	October 2019
	Develop a programme to promote affordable warmth, encompassing boiler checks and repairs	September 2019
	Investigate the impact of AirBnB on the borough and identify any necessary actions	May 2019
Supporting people to remain independent in their own homes	Open Primrose Gardens to provide housing for people with additional care needs	April 2019
	Work with partners within Lancashire County Council and LCFT to reform the processes around major and minor adaptations, removing bottlenecks and increasing capacity where needed	May 2019
	Work through the integrated community wellbeing service to increase and improve referrals for support from GPs and other primary care providers	July 2019
	Undertake an assessment of housing need including particular types such as older people and affordable housing and examine options for changes to planning policy	December 2019
	As part of the new Local Plan, review planning policies for the quality and sustainability standards of new housing developments to maximise ways to future-proof new developments	May 2022
Examine options and the business case for expanding the offer of extra care accommodation in the borough	July 2019	
Preventing homelessness	Work through the integrated community wellbeing service to reform pathways for customers with complex needs so they receive timely support from public services	March 2019
	Review and refresh the homelessness strategy	October 2019
	Develop a multi-agency action plan and protocol for supporting people who are rough sleeping	April 2019
Supporting a balanced housing market	Review and refresh the central Lancashire local plan	May 2022
	Establish governance arrangements for council-owned housing	June 2019
	Include consideration of the provision of housing within the refresh of the town centre masterplan	January 2020
	Use the outputs of the local plan to review land supply and land use across the borough to determine the need to bring forward sites or housing types	March 2020
	Continue to bring empty properties back into use, with annual monitoring to neighbourhood area meetings	March 2020