

Central Lancashire

Lancashire

'Mark Three' New Town – Designated 26 March 1970

Central Lancashire New Town was essentially a regeneration and development programme for Preston, Leyland and Chorley. The scale of development proposed was considered to be too much for municipal delivery, so the Central Lancashire Development Corporation was designated to drive delivery – a bold move requiring tact, consultation and co-operation between seven local authorities. The Development Corporation had just a 15-year lifespan and is considered more akin to an Urban Development Corporation than a New Town Development Corporation. Central Lancashire was never intended to be recognised as a New Town in its own right. Today, Preston is a 'Primary Urban Area'. Recognising opportunities and key links, since 2008 Preston, Leyland and Chorley Councils have been working together on a joint Local Plan.



Key facts:

- **Location:** 38 kilometres north west of Manchester, located on the M6 motorway and the West Coast Main Line.
- **2011 Census population:** 313,332, in 131,637 households.¹
- **Local authority:** The former New Town area is split between Preston City and Chorley and South Ribble Borough Councils.
- **Local Plan status:** Central Lancashire Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2012).

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 26 March 1970.
- **Designated area:** 14,267 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 321,500 by 1986, rising to 420,000 by 2001 (population at designation: 235,300).
- **Development Corporation:** The outline plan, for development in a main centre (Preston) and enlarged townships (based on Leyland and Chorley), was designed to respond to changing demographic needs. The townships were to be separated by areas of open space and tree belts. Development Corporation wound up 31 December 1985.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in in the former Central Lancashire New Town area that are owner-occupied (69.0%) is 10.3% and 5.5% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 15.6% of households are in social rent – 5.7% and 2.4% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 13.6% of households are in private rent – 0.6% higher than the UK New Towns average and 2.7% lower than the UK average.
- 44.5% of households are not deprived in any dimension – 2.5% and 2.0% higher than the English New Towns and England averages, respectively. 31.3% are deprived in one dimension, 18.4% in two dimensions, 5.3% in three dimensions, and 0.5% in four dimensions – all 1-3% lower than the English New Towns and England averages (except for deprivation in three dimensions, which is 0.1% higher than the England average).

- The 2011 Census reported that 47.1% of Preston built-up area residents declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 0.4% higher than the UK New Towns average and 0.5% lower than the UK average. There is less than 0.2% difference in those reporting 'bad' and 'very bad health' in the Preston built-up area compared with the UK New Towns and UK averages.

Employment/economic profile:

- The area's largest settlement, Preston, is its main retail and commercial centre, with a large and successful university. Leyland and Farington have a strong and diverse manufacturing base, and Chorley is a thriving market town.
- Preston increased its number of private sector jobs by around 16% between 1998 and 2008, the third-strongest performance among England's cities, but despite city-wide growth the city centre has recently lost private sector jobs.
- Within Lancashire Enterprise Partnership LEP.

Development Corporation legacy:

- There is a positive attitude to growth and joint working.
- The area benefits from green wedges of open country.
- The area benefits from good transport infrastructure.
- There are a number of sites now owned by the HCA, and also a number of sites with extant planning permissions resulting from commitments under the 1981 New Towns Act.

Key issues for the future:

- Managing and locating growth. Central Lancashire was designated as a growth point and the Preston area needs to accommodate 22,000 homes over the next 15 years.
- Delivering infrastructure to meet future needs.
- Planning for more sustainable travel.
- Providing good-quality affordable homes for all.
- Encouraging economic prosperity through employment provision, tourism, retail and education provision, and rural economic development.
- Improving design quality, health and wellbeing and addressing climate change.

¹ NOMIS Census data used for the Preston built-up area: the total for three local authorities would be too inaccurate and ward-level analysis too complex

Did you know?

Preston is home to Europe's largest bus station, given Grade II listed status for its controversial brutalist architecture.