

Bolton : Our Vision 2012-2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bolton Vision Partnership agreed the current Community Strategy back in 2007. “Bolton : Our Vision 2007-2017” was rooted in a strong sense of optimism for the Bolton Family, predicated in very strong economic forecasts for us over the next 10/15 years – it genuinely was Bolton’s time.

Much has been achieved over the last four years – many major development programmes have been delivered with over £250m investment into the town centre alone; and many of the challenging targets agreed by local partners have been achieved – crime is down, educational attainment is up, life expectancy has improved.

During the last four years, the economic environment and public service context has changed fundamentally – economic forecasts are now far more challenging; public sector funding is being significantly reduced and public services are being reformed.

In response, the partnership agreed to refresh our Community Strategy to make sure we developed a ‘Bolton first’ response to this new environment and the challenges and opportunities it would present, balancing our strong sense of ambition with a realistic assessment of what can be achieved.

Bolton is still well placed at the heart of the Greater Manchester economy to secure growth and investment in the longer term and we should be optimistic about the future of our town, building on our proud history and heritage.

The commitment to **secure economic prosperity and narrow the gap** remains but the priority themes have been refreshed to provide a greater focus on health and well-being and children and young people:

- **Prosperous**
- **Health and Well-being**
- **Children and Young People**
- **Clean and green**
- **Safe**
- **Stronger**

New three year targets have been developed and detailed delivery plans are being developed providing a focus for action for all partners. By 2015 we will:

- **Protect and maintain the town centre economy and jobs and have an agreed development agreement for Cutacre and strong progress on Horwich Loco Works.**
- **Improve the number of young people getting 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths to 64%.**
- **Ensure that more adults achieve level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications.**
- **Further improve life expectancy within Bolton by narrowing the gap to 11.9 years for men and 9.4 years for women.**

- **Reduce overall crime by 6% resulting in over 900 less crimes per year in Bolton.**
- **Maintain the cleanliness of the Borough despite the significant reduction in service.**

In addition, our review and analysis identified a number of **cross cutting issues** that are seen as so important and cut across the partnerships that they require a specific focus from the Vision Steering Group:

- **Aspiration**
- **Alcohol**
- **Skills**
- **Complex families**
- **Community cohesion**

The remainder of this document considers these issues in more detail and needs to be read in conjunction with the original Strategy which sets out the background and context in more detail.

BACKGROUND

Back in 2007, the Bolton Vision Partnership developed and agreed a new 10 year Community Strategy for Bolton – “Bolton : Our Vision 2007-2017”. The strategy was clear – to secure economic prosperity, maximise the benefit for local people and narrow the gap across a range of outcomes.

Whilst the Strategy was ambitious, it was underpinned by a robust economic forecast for Greater Manchester and the wider North West region. Over the next ten years, Bolton expected to secure £1 billion public and private sector investment creating over 15,000 new jobs. For these reasons, the partnership was optimistic about the future and our ability to use this new prosperity to improve the quality of life for local people and particularly those living in the Borough’s most deprived communities.

Much has been achieved over the last four years. The £1 billion transformation of the town centre was central to our plans to secure economic growth and create jobs and prosperity for local people. **Over £250 million has been secured resulting in:**

- £90m investment in a new town centre campus for Bolton College and Bolton Sixth Form College.
- £30.6m investment in Bolton One - a partnership between the Council, University of Bolton and NHS Bolton to secure a town centre health and fitness centre, swimming pool and sports science facilities for the University.
- £40m refurbishment of the Market Place Shopping Centre, significantly enhancing the town centre retail offer.
- A new £9m multi-storey car park on Deane Road and a new car parking facility on Topp Way. £48m investment in a new integrated bus and rail interchange, due to open in winter 2014.
- Office developments at No. 1 Merchants Quarter, 120 Bark Street and the Atria; and a new £3m Travel Lodge hotel.

In addition, there have been **many other significant developments:**

- Bolton at Home have become an independent social housing provider enabling £1.2bn investment to more than 18,000 homes and the surrounding estates during the next 30 years.
- Middlebrook has continued to grow and expand with an extended retail and leisure offer providing in the region of 8,000 jobs. The value of the scheme is over £200m.
- The Essa, St. Catherine’s and the co-located Firwood Special school and Kearsley Academies will see £64m investment to help transform teaching and learning in three of our most deprived communities.
- £14m investment in a new Bolton Sixth Form College campus in Farnworth improving access to further education in the south of the Borough.
- A range of improved facilities for health services including Brightmet Health Centre, and new facilities for children and families at the Royal Bolton Hospital, including a new children’s ward and neonatal and intensive care.

- Delivery of the Primary Capital programme which will see an estimated investment of up to £61m in Bolton's primary schools between 2008 and 2014.
- £7.2m investment in Queens Park providing high quality green space and a range of facilities within one of our deprived communities.

These programmes and investments are important as they support the delivery of better outcomes. **In terms of outcomes, again much has been achieved over the last four years:**

- People are living longer than ever before – average life expectancy in Bolton has risen to 77.8 years (2005-09) from 76.8 years in 1999-2003 – the highest it has ever been.
- The gap in life expectancy within Bolton has narrowed from 15.2 years (1999-2003) to 11.9 years (2005-09).
- Attainment at the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased from 53% in 2007 to 60% in 2011.
- The number of young people achieving level 4 and above in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased from 72% in 2007/08 to 78% in 2011.
- In 2011 almost 85% of our GCSE students achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C compared to 51% in 2006.
- In 2011 60% of the Borough's students achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C, including English and Maths, compared with 38% in summer 2006.
- Over 76% of our young people achieved a level 2 qualification by age 19 in 2009/10 compared with 70.9% in 2007/08. Those achieving a level 3 qualification by age 19 rose from 45.5% to just under 50% in the same period.
- Crime across the Borough reduced by 29% between 2007/08 and 2010/11.
- Anti-social behaviour across the Borough reduced by 36% between 2007/08 and 2010/11.
- The gap in the overall crime rate within Bolton narrowed from 23.3 crimes per 1,000 households in April 2007 to 18.9 in March 2011.
- The gap in the rate of anti-social behaviour within Bolton almost halved between 2007/08 and 2010/11 – falling from 24.04 incidents per 1,000 households in April 2007 to 12.11 in March 2011.
- Bolton's streets have got cleaner, and in 2010/11, 94% of Bolton's streets passed acceptable standards for litter compared to 93% in 2008/09.

Strong leadership and commitment from all partners in the Bolton Family, from the public, private and voluntary sector working with local people, has been essential in securing these achievements. Leadership from schools working with Children's Services and other partners has been instrumental in driving up educational standards for young people.

Ultimately, the collective impact of our efforts to deliver greater prosperity and narrow the gap is to make Bolton a better place. Activity taking place within individual organisations or partnerships is all part of a broader strategy to improve Bolton as a place to live, work, invest and visit. In short, the sum is greater than the parts.

REFRESHING OUR STRATEGY

Over the last four years, the context and environment facing the partnership has changed markedly. The banking crisis in 2008 led to one of the deepest and most sustained economic recessions for generations and Bolton, like all towns and cities, has not been immune from the impact. The economic forecasts for Bolton have been significantly revised down – rather than 15,000 new jobs over ten years, Bolton is now looking at 3,500 jobs by 2020 if we do nothing. Implementing the programmes set out in this strategy could increase this number significantly.

The difficult market conditions have impacted on the delivery of most of the major private sector led schemes in the original Strategy - Central Street, Church Wharf, Cutacre and Horwich Loco Works. Whilst all retain strong prospects for delivery in the future, they have not progressed at the rate to deliver the growth and jobs that we originally planned.

This challenging economic picture has been coupled with the Government's strategy to significantly reduce public sector funding as part of the deficit reduction strategy. Most parts of the public sector – Council, Police, NHS, Further and Higher Education, Probation, Fire – have to make significant savings in the short term. Whilst generating efficiencies can and will make a contribution, reductions in the quality and scope of many front line services is inevitable, especially when such reductions may result in increased demand for services. Partners will need to explore the opportunities for better joining up services to save costs, reduce duplication and protect front line services.

Many partners have to make difficult choices about future priorities. The balance between universal rather than targeted or specialist services, or protecting vulnerable people rather than tackling deprivation - these have always been difficult choices but they become more acute with less resource and capacity.

At the same time, the coalition government have a radical programme of reform that will impact on most aspects of the partnership. Changes to the relationship with schools; reforms to the NHS; a Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester; reform of the welfare system – all these developments will have a profound impact in Bolton. Developing a 'Bolton first' response to the challenges and opportunities will be an on-going priority for the partnership.

Over the last year or so the full scale and impact of these developments has become clear. In response, partners concluded that partnership working has never been more important but we need to review our priorities in response to this new context. The twin aims of securing **economic prosperity and narrowing the gap** remain, but we need to revisit our priorities for the next three years to make sure we have a shared plan for where and how we will make a difference.

Whilst some things are beyond our control, such as the national economy and government policy - there is still much we can do to make a difference. We need to balance a strong sense of ambition and aspiration for Bolton with a realistic assessment of what we can achieve in the new context.

Our strategic response to this new context is matched by a new set of detailed targets to make sure we are clear about what we will do over the next 3 years to help deliver our long term ambitions.

A recurring theme from the consultation is the need to work harder to communicate our successes and plans for the future so that all partners and communities have a better understanding of what we are trying to achieve and the benefits that this will bring to the Borough and its people. A communications plan will be developed to underpin the rollout and delivery of the strategy over the coming months.

CONTINUING WITH ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND NARROWING THE GAP

The analysis underpinning the current Community Strategy was twofold. Firstly, we had a significant opportunity to secure economic growth and jobs that we had to exploit for the maximum local benefit. Secondly, many of Bolton's communities suffered multiple deprivation and a poorer quality of life compared to other parts of the Borough and the country as a whole.

Based on this analysis, the agreed strategy was to – **secure economic prosperity and maximise the local benefit and narrow the gap across the following themes:**

- **Health**
- **Achievement**
- **Prosperous**
- **Safe**
- **Cleaner and greener**
- **Strong and confident**

Whilst the context has changed fundamentally, the long term strategy is still valid. We need to do all we can to promote investment and growth and ensure local people have the skills and support to access new jobs and opportunities in the future.

The partnership has already agreed a new Economic Strategy. Developed with local and regional partners it is rooted in a clear understanding of Bolton's economic position sub-regionally and regionally and the opportunities for growth and investment. Despite the economic context, Manchester's economy is still the largest outside of London and Greater Manchester has ambitious plans to grow the economy, generating jobs and prosperity for local people and particularly the most disadvantaged.

Bolton must capitalise on its unique attributes – location, transport, town centre retail offer, Middlebrook, Cutacre - thereby ensuring we maximise the economic value locally to narrow the gap and tackle inequalities. 2012 is an important year for Bolton. "Bolton 2012" will bring together a programme of events and activities centred on the Olympic torch relay coming to Bolton; the "Year of Sport", the Cultural Olympiad and a wide range of other cultural activities. The contribution to our strategy to raise aspiration and promote growth and tourism will be significant.

The 'core strategy' for Bolton agreed in 2010, underpins our plans for economic regeneration and growth; setting out how Bolton will physically develop over the next 10/15 years. An effective transport system that supports accessibility within Bolton and across Greater Manchester will remain a priority. Progressing the town centre interchange; working with Network Rail to improve access to the city centre; developing quality bus corridors; and extending the car parking at Horwich Park Way will be on-going priorities.

In response to this context, the new Economic Strategy has the following priorities:

- Protect and promote the town centre due to its key role in the local economy and its future economic growth potential.
- Retain Cutacre and Horwich Loco Works as key employment sites within the M61 corridor which will generate significant new jobs for local people in the future.
- Continue to provide support to existing and new business and enterprises to sustain and develop the local economy.
- Develop a clear strategy for how we drive up skills levels to ensure that more local people can access jobs and opportunities in the future.
- Provide support and guidance to young people and adults to help them access the job market.

NARROWING THE GAP AND VULNERABILITY

Tackling disadvantage and improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable have been long standing priorities and have guided our partnership activity over the last 10/15 years. This shared commitment to 'narrow the gap' was reinforced in 2007 and much has been achieved over the last four years.

Our efforts have delivered impressive results and our experience and understanding of 'what works' in many areas is strong. For example, the improvement in educational standards in Bolton is no accident – strong leadership from schools, high quality teaching and learning, effective partnership working and challenge and support from Children's Services has made the difference.

However, many challenges remain and we need to redouble our efforts to deliver greater improvements in the future. Our strategy to 'narrow the gap' has two key elements:

- Improve outcomes in Bolton overall so that outcomes are at or above the national average.
- Improve outcomes in Bolton's most deprived areas to narrow the gap in outcomes with the more prosperous areas.

In simple terms, achieving improvements in outcomes requires partners to work together either on a '**thematic**' basis or a 'neighbourhood' basis. The 'themes' could be, for example older people, children and young people or people with disabilities. This is how mainstream services work together to integrate services and target resources to the most vulnerable or those who have specific needs.

The ‘**neighbourhood**’ activity is where local partners work jointly, in the Borough’s most deprived neighbourhoods, to deliver ‘neighbourhood renewal’ and a better quality of life. Resources are concentrated in the most deprived neighbourhoods, underpinned by a model of Neighbourhood Management jointly led by the Council and Bolton at Home on behalf of the wider partnership. These neighbourhoods are as follows:

- Brightmet
- Crompton
- Great Lever
- Farnworth
- Halliwell
- Hall ith Wood
- Hulton Lane
- Johnson Fold
- Rumworth
- Tonge with the Haulgh
- Washacre

Both these approaches need to work effectively together to help narrow the gap and make the best use of available resources. Whilst choices have always had to be made about where resources are invested, this becomes increasingly difficult with significantly reduced funding.

An increasing proportion of the Council’s remaining funding will have to be spent on providing services to the most vulnerable and in particular children’s and adult’s social care. The Council has no choice but to provide these statutory services and whilst efficiencies can be found and new ways of working explored, this will create further pressure on other parts of the Council and the NHS in particular.

In simple terms, the judgement is about whether to invest in and protect services for vulnerable people with a high level of need (e.g. residential care for older people) which is not purely about narrowing the gap. Or, to invest in activity that is very much about trying to narrow the gap in outcomes across communities, for example, community safety activity to help narrow the crime gap. Whilst both make a contribution to better outcomes, the balance between targeting resources at the most vulnerable for their basic needs (care and support) or in other areas, such as worklessness becomes increasingly difficult to manage.

A greater focus on targeted prevention is an important part of our response – partly due to the financial reality and partly because the evidence is strong that this is where public services need to invest. Exploring how we can invest a greater proportion of our remaining resources ‘upstream’ rather than only dealing with the issues as they immediately arise will remain an important part of our plans in the future. By targeting our prevention efforts on those at highest risk of developing problems in the future, we aim to reduce the number of people who become vulnerable which will allow us to shift resources even further upstream in the future.

How we maximise the role and value of the voluntary, faith and community sector in Bolton will be important. The strength and depth of this sector in Bolton is a real asset, but the sector is dealing with significant financial pressures and at the same time rising demands from individuals and communities. How the sector is supported to evolve in the new environment and find alternative ways of operating and funding will remain a key priority for the partnership overall.

Consultation has told us that the sector is so large and diverse that it can be difficult for partners to understand ‘who does what’, which can often lead to duplication and missed

opportunities. We therefore need to work with voluntary and community leaders to explore how we can overcome this and maximise the value of the sector in the future.

NEW THEMES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Whilst the broad strategy remains unchanged, the establishment of a new Health and Well-being Board to steer partnership activity on health, social care and general well-being provides an opportunity to refresh our themes and partnerships. In addition to 'health and well-being' the 'achieving' theme will evolve to include all the agreed priorities for children and young people, again mirroring the responsibilities of the Children's Trust. Therefore, the proposed future themes for partnership activity are:

- **Prosperous**
- **Health and Well-being**
- **Children and Young People**
- **Clean and Green**
- **Safe**
- **Stronger**

The priorities and main targets within each of the themes are summarised at **page 15**. The full suite of three year targets is attached at **Appendix A**.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Good progress has been made in delivering the priorities set out in the Community Strategy but we know that sustaining this level of improvement will be more difficult in the future. However, it is clear from the discussions and analysis that all partners are firmly committed to delivering a better quality of life for current and future generations.

This strong sense of ambition and unwillingness to accept the inequalities that exist has helped shape a number of cross cutting issues. These are seen as so fundamental that if progress can be made, the implications for our wider strategy and the town's future prospects could be significant.

Our detailed analysis highlighted a number of issues that have a significant impact on the town and are fundamental to achieving our ambitions for the future. They cut across the broad themes and require a particular focus from the partnership as a whole if we are to make a difference. By their very nature, these issues are amongst the most challenging we face and there is not an obvious and easy solution.

Therefore, the partnership has endorsed five areas that will be a particular focus for action in the first twelve months of the Strategy. This process of consultation with all partners and the Vision Conference will continue to shape and inform the detailed responses and action plans that will follow.

We do not have a complete solution or way forward on these issues but a strategic lead from across the partnership will be appointed to develop a strategy and action plan for each issue that will be brought back to the Vision Steering Group for approval in April 2012. . The proposed cross cutting themes are:

- **Aspiration**
- **Alcohol**
- **Skills**
- **Complex families**
- **Community Cohesion**

These following issues as a minimum will be considered:

Aspiration

This Community Strategy is partly based upon a recognition that Bolton as a place and its people have untapped potential. Economically, we need to do more to make sure that Bolton can ‘punch above its weight’ so it can compete with other towns and cities to secure investment and growth.

We also know that low aspiration is major factor that contributes to a wide range of issues – poor health and well-being, low educational attainment and skills, low career aspirations. If we could unlock some of this, the impact on a wide range of outcomes could be significant.

Much of what we do already makes a contribution – improving the quality of people’s environment, improving education, making further and higher education more accessible, helping people live healthier lifestyles.

However, we need to develop a comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy that will explore where and how we can make a fundamental shift in the aspiration levels of local people.

This will include:

- Articulating what we already do which contributes to raising aspirations so that we can maximise the benefits e.g. maximise the value and potential of the investment in further education and higher education in the town centre.
- A Strategy not just focused on employment and skills but one that includes how people take action to improve their own health, develop personally, and contribute towards their communities.
- Explore what organisations from across the public, private and voluntary sector can do to promote aspiration within their own workforce and within the wider community e.g. mentoring opportunities, promoting volunteering.
- What more can we do within neighbourhoods and communities to promote aspiration and tackle the root causes of low aspiration.
- Capture the learning and experience from within and beyond Bolton to inform the Strategy.

Alcohol

Alcohol is very much part of modern life and forms an important part of social and cultural activities. In moderation, alcohol can make a positive contribution to people's quality of life but we also know that the reverse is true if alcohol is consumed excessively.

The evidence is very clear – alcohol makes a massive contribution to poor health and low life expectancy and is a major factor in violence and crime and disorder. Dealing with the health and community safety aspects of alcohol has always been important locally and we have done well. Yet we also know that left unchecked, the legacy for current and future generations will be significant.

Therefore, the partnership have agreed that we need to have a full and proper debate about the role of alcohol in modern Bolton that seeks to balance the positive contribution that it can make against the negative impacts on the town.

This will include:

- Building on the existing Alcohol Strategy that focuses on minimising the health issues related to alcohol and commissioning effective treatment services.
- Exploring how the current town centre night time economy can be maintained but better balanced with a different offer that is not so closely related to alcohol.
- Exploring how we can promote safe drinking for younger and older people whether drinking at home or socially.
- What more can we do to tackle the issue of under-age drinking to minimise the health risks for young people and how we can look to change this culture.

Skills

Our long term aspiration for Bolton is predicated on economic growth to provide jobs and prosperity for local people. The skills and capability of the local workforce are key factors that will influence whether current or potential investors decide to invest in Bolton and/or recruit people from Bolton.

The Bolton and Greater Manchester economy will grow over the next 5/10 years and a greater proportion of those jobs will require higher level skills and qualifications – levels, 2, 3 and 4. Whilst skills levels in Bolton have improved in recent years, we need to do more so we can compete with other parts of Greater Manchester and the North West.

We are well placed in many ways – record improvements at GCSE; massive investment in further education and a local University in the town centre. We must build on the work already done to develop a coherent strategy that will capitalise on these foundations and make a major improvement in the skills and capacity of local people.

This will include:

- Working with partners including the colleges, University and work based learning providers to develop a new approach to driving up skills levels at levels 2, 3 and 4.
- Working with partners such as Job Centre Plus and Work Programme providers to encourage workless adults to engage at level 1 to help them progress to achieve level 2 skills and above.
- Encouraging employers to support the skills needs of their workforce.
- Exploring the development of a 'Participation Strategy' to ensure that more young learners progress onto further education within Bolton.
- Supporting the work of Bolton College, Bolton Sixth Form College and the University of Bolton to progress the concept of the 'Bolton Education Zone' to promote retention and progression of learners in Bolton.
- How we generate more apprenticeship opportunities for young people, building on the investment made so far.

Complex families

There is emerging evidence that a relatively small number of families are faced with a myriad of different issues that impact upon their quality of life and the communities they live in. Very often these families can be workless, have issues with drugs and alcohol, have problem with mental health, are caught up in the criminal justice system or have vulnerable children.

By their very nature, a range of public and voluntary services are often involved in providing support across this range of issues. Whilst this approach can often work for some families, a more holistic, whole family solution is required.

Whilst Bolton can point to many areas where services and agencies work well together to deal with particular families and communities, there is potential to develop a more integrated approach that could secure better outcomes for these families and savings for the agencies involved.

The partnership is committed to exploring a Bolton approach to this issue and agreeing a way forward with local partners.

This will include:

- Supporting the 'transforming justice' work across Greater Manchester and ensuring that this learning is implemented and used in Bolton.
- Playing a lead role in the Greater Manchester "Whole Place Community Budget Pilot" and making a significant contribution to the future of public service reform.
- Leading and delivering the Troubled Families initiative to help improve the quality of life for some of the families with the most difficult circumstances.

Community Cohesion

Bolton is a diverse Borough where people from all walks of life have been welcomed over many generations. Community and social cohesion is strong – there is a strong sense of mutual respect and tolerance which we must protect and foster for the future.

The commitment to community cohesion and strong leadership from all parts of the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sector is solid. As is our enduring commitment to celebrate all that is great about Bolton’s diversity whilst recognising that there will be challenges and issues from time to time that we need to work through.

In view of the changed context and the issues this may raise in the future, the partnership will look to refresh our Community Cohesion Strategy to make sure it is fit for purpose for the future. This will help to ensure that Bolton remains a place where everyone is welcome; where people can build a better life for themselves and their families; and where the contributions of our diverse communities are fostered and respected.

This will include:

- Reviewing the progress made in delivering the current strategy agreed in 2010 to inform a future strategy.
- Making sure we capitalise on the programme of events during 2012 to progress the strategy around One Bolton and promote strong social and community cohesion.
- Developing a stronger focus on community cohesion with our neighbourhood focus ensuring this is an important priority within neighbourhood management.
- Developing even stronger relationships and support for the voluntary, community and faith sector, to ensure that all communities have a voice.

PRIORITY THEMES

A core element of our Strategy is the delivery of co-ordinated partnership activity to help secure improvements across a range of priority themes. Based upon the strategy and approach set out here, the next chapter considers the priority themes in more detail and sets out clear priorities and targets for the next three years.

A full suite of detailed targets can be found at Appendix A and partnership leads are either refreshing or establishing robust delivery plans for the next three years which provide the focus for delivery.

As a reminder, the priority themes are:

- Prosperous
- Children and Young People
- Health and Well Being
- Clean and Green
- Safe
- Stronger

PROSPEROUS

Securing investment, growth and jobs for local people will be an enduring priority for the partnership but the economic position makes this much more difficult. Bolton is now forecast to secure 3,500 jobs by 2020, much less than was forecast back in 2007.

The partnership has already agreed a new Economic Strategy that sets out clear priorities for the next three years:

- Sustain existing and further develop key employment sites.
- Retain and develop the business base of the Borough.
- Maintain skills levels amongst the residents of working age.
- Sustain levels of employment as set out in the Local Economic Assessment.
- Increase the provision of affordable housing.
- Increase the number of people who live in suitable and decent accommodation and ensure they are able to remain in and sustain their accommodation.

By the end of the three year period, we aim to:

- **Ensure that more adults achieve level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications.**
- **Maintain the working age employment rate at 65% despite the challenging economic conditions.**
- **Keep the percentage of people claiming out of work benefits below 17%.**
- **Secure at least 80 new affordable homes per year.**

Continued delivery of the transport strategy will remain important to support economic growth and investment and access to future job opportunities. Delivering an effective “Bolton 2012” programme will be important to ensure we maximise the economic value and promote investment and tourism in the Borough. A new five year Tourism Strategy is being developed setting out how we will sustain and increase the level of tourism in Bolton in the future.

Bolton’s cultural offer – libraries, museums, theatre etc. – is an important part of our economic and Tourism Strategy and will be an on-going priority for the Strategic Economic Partnership.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Leadership and drive from all partners on the Children’s Trust has been instrumental in securing better outcomes for children and young people in Bolton. Schools have been pivotal in delivering the improvements over the last four years.

The Children’s Trust has refreshed its priorities and for the next three years will focus on:

- Raising attainment.
- Improving children’s health.
- Improving outcomes for looked after children.

- Reducing the number of children living in poverty.
- Keeping children safe.

By the end of the three year period, we are aiming to:

- **Ensure that GCSE rates stay above the national average and that we continue to close the gap for children with special educational needs; looked after children and children who receive free school meals.**
- **Halt the nationally expected rise on obesity so it remains at 9.4% for children in reception classes and 19.3% for year 6.**
- **Ensure that at least 35 children are adopted each year in line with current performance levels.**
- **Reduce the number of young people with a child protection plan by 10 each year.**

The significant reductions in funding within Children's Services have and will impact on the capacity available to deliver services and improved outcomes. Significant reform of schools, teaching and learning is also taking place. We will need to develop a 'Bolton first' response that ensures we can continue to work together to deliver better outcomes for all children and young people in the Bolton Family.

There is a strong link here with the work around skills and partners will work together to explore what more can be done to provide good 'information, advice and guidance' in schools and ensure awareness of vocational routes and apprenticeships.

In addition, data on health, education, employment and a wide range of other indicators clearly show that outcomes are poorest for those living in the most deprived areas of the Borough. Nowhere is this more evident than in outcomes for children and young people. Whilst it is impossible to totally eliminate child poverty in Bolton, particularly in the current economic climate, Bolton recognises that it should be possible to identify a number of realistic and achievable actions that may have a positive impact on reducing child poverty over the coming years.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Whilst tackling health inequalities has always been important, partners agreed that it should be a priority for improvement in 2007. Focus and hard work from across the partnership has had a major impact, resulting in the life expectancy gap reducing within Bolton. However, there are still massive health inequalities with the life expectancy gap in Bolton at 13.2 years for men and 10.5 years for women.

The new Health and Well-being Board has been established to provide leadership and focus to these important issues in the round, bringing together issues around population health, health and social care and general wellbeing, for all ages. The priorities for the Health and Well-being Board will be:

- Encourage people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- Intervene early to prevent or defer people from needing care and support.
- Make sure it is quick and easy for people to get the care, support and treatment they need.
- Make sure that the care, support and treatment is of high quality/reasonable cost.
- Make sure that we safeguard the vulnerable, and that people in Bolton live and die with dignity.

The key targets for the next three years are:

- **Increase life expectancy in Bolton by narrowing the health gap to 11.9 years for men and 9.4 years for women.**
- **Slow the expected rate of growth in hospital admissions due to alcohol to 2,359 in 2014/15.**
- **Increase people's sense of well-being by narrowing the regional gap and achieving an average of 27.7 in the regional survey.**
- **Increase the percentage of people supported to live at home (as a percentage of those in care) to 90%.**

Major reforms of the health service and social care are in progress and there are rising financial pressures on the system and an ageing population. How health and social care work together to deliver more integrated services that provide good quality health and social care and help people to live independently will be a key priority over the next three years.

CLEAN AND GREEN

Creating a cleaner, greener and more sustainable town is important to make Bolton attractive and a place where people want to live and businesses want to invest. We have seen massive improvements over recent years across all areas, in which cleanliness has improved significantly and particularly in our most deprived areas – over 90% of Bolton's streets now have an acceptable standard of litter and cleanliness.

The Clean and Green Partnership have agreed the following priorities:

- Maintain the current levels of cleanliness across the Borough.
- Maintain Bolton's parks and green spaces and continue to encourage visitors.
- Minimise the levels of waste and increase recycling initiatives.
- Reduce the environmental impact on the Borough.

The key targets for the next three years are:

- **Maintain over 90% of Bolton's streets to an acceptable standard of litter and cleanliness.**

- **Achieve a 5% increase in the amount of waste diverted from landfill by improving recycling rates.**
- **Reduce CO2 emissions by 1,700 tonnes by reducing carbon from buildings, street lights and council operations.**

Sustaining improvements in the future will be more difficult - budgets and front line services have been reduced. We need to work even harder with local partners and communities to find new and different ways to sustain the quality of environment that we now have in Bolton, and to continue to reduce our carbon footprint and our environmental impacts.

SAFE

Reducing crime and helping communities feel safe is an important priority for local people and for the partnership. Leadership from the Be Safe Partnership has reduced crime by 29% and anti-social behaviour by 36% over the last four years. Whilst the partnership between the police, council and other agencies is still strong, there is real pressure on police and partner resources that will impact on our capacity to deliver in the future.

Priorities for the safe theme will be:

- Reduce crime – serious acquisitive, burglary, vehicle and anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, theft, robbery.
- Narrow the crime gap between high crime and low crime areas.
- Reduce reoffending.
- Improving confidence, focus on protecting vulnerable people and 'troubled' families.
- Focus on understanding and tackling organised crime.
- Participation and volunteering in policing.
- Reduce deliberate fires.

The key targets for the next three years are:

- **Continue to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and further narrow the crime gap between our most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the borough**
- **Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System from 104 to 81.**
- **Reduce the percentage of adults and juveniles reoffending to 27.40%.**
- **Further improve the perception of anti-social behaviour as a problem from 5.30% to 4.70%.**
- **Further reduce the number of deliberate primary fires from 276 to 258.**

Neighbourhood policing will be an important part of our future Strategy - driving down crime, reassuring the public and improving confidence in the police and partner agencies.

Major reforms are underway that will impact on our local approach to tackling crime – reform of the criminal justice system and a new Police Commissioner for Greater

Manchester towards the end of 2012 will have important implications for the Bolton approach.

STRONGER

Developing strong, successful and sustainable communities is a central tenet of work to deliver better outcomes and narrow the gap in outcomes. Investing in our deprived communities; promoting community and social cohesion; supporting the development of a vibrant and effective voluntary and community sector have been long standing partnership priorities.

These issues transcend individual partnerships and the Stronger Communities Partnership will lead and shape our approach on behalf of the wider partnership. The membership has been refreshed to ensure that all sectors and communities are represented.

Priorities for the stronger theme will be:

- **Shaping our strategy for neighbourhood renewal and narrowing the gap.**
- **Neighbourhood management and investing in our deprived communities.**
- **Developing the voluntary, community and faith sector and promoting volunteering.**
- **Community cohesion and community relationships.**
- **Financial inclusion.**

The voluntary, community and faith sector plays an invaluable role locally, very often providing support to the most vulnerable. Supporting the important work of the hundreds of local voluntary organisations and the thousands of volunteers will be an on-going priority for the partnership.

Bolton's diversity is a strength that all partners celebrate – One Bolton has gone from strength to strength over recent years and will be even more important in the years to come. Reflecting on our Community Cohesion Strategy will be a cross cutting issue, testing our approach and making sure it is fit for purpose for the future.

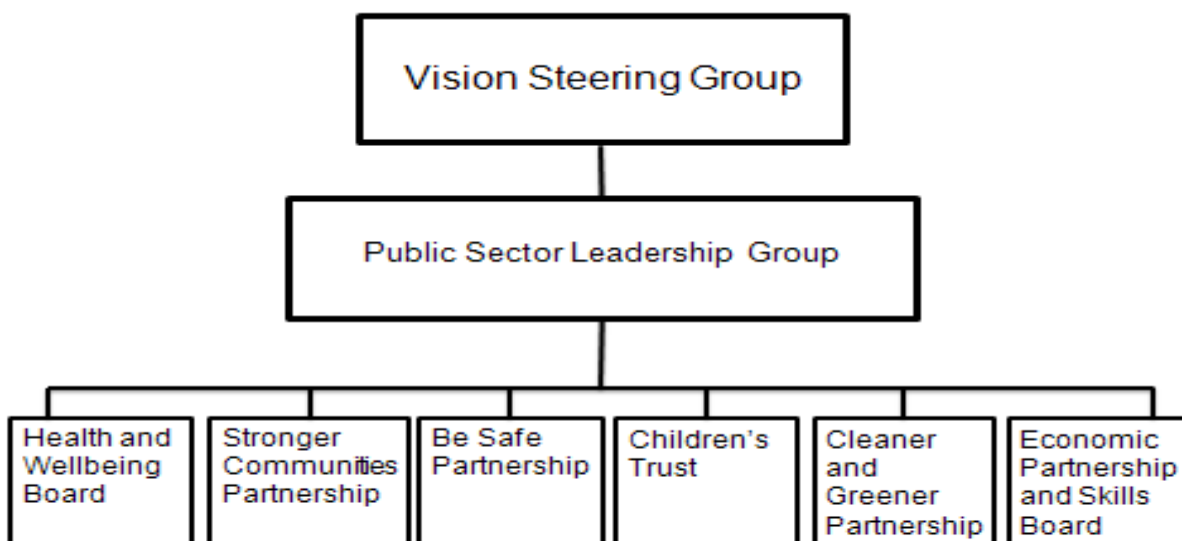
We must also recognise and foster the contribution of the many different communities in Bolton, such as older people, young people, people with disabilities etc. Valuing the contribution of all and delivering better outcomes for all will be enduring priorities for the partnership.

DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP

The foundations for the Bolton Vision Partnership were laid back in 1995 with the development of Bolton's first Community Strategy. Since that time, the partnership has evolved and relationships galvanised in response to new and changing environments. Encouragingly, the Bolton Family is as strong as ever and all partners are committed to working together to deliver better outcomes for local people.

Much has been achieved over the last four years and we should celebrate our achievements, but challenging times are ahead and partnership working will be even more important to deliver a better Bolton for current and future generations. The unique and vital contribution of the voluntary, community and faith sector is recognised by all partners and new opportunities will be explored for the future role of the sector to help deliver our joint priorities.

The themed partnerships will provide the leadership and focus for delivering the agreed priorities and targets with strong leadership and challenge from the Vision Steering Group. The partnership has been strengthened via a new Public Sector Leadership Group, a Children's Strategic Third Sector Forum and an energised Faith Leader's Forum – providing a solid basis for joint action in the future.



Bolton
Vision