

Report to:	Cabinet	
Date:	12 January 2015	
Report of:	The Chief Executive	Report No:
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Report Title:	Community Strategy outcomes update: Q1 and 2, 2014/15	
Confidential / Non Confidential: <i>(delete as approp)</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>(Non-Confidential) This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public</p> </div>	
Purpose:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>This report provides the Cabinet with a mid-year review of performance for 2014/15</p> </div>	
Recommendations:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>The Cabinet is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comment upon and challenge the performance update set out in this report; b. Endorse the conclusions and priorities set out for the remainder of the year </div>	
Decision:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px;"></div>	
Background Doc(s):	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px;"></div>	
Signed:	_____	_____
	Leader / Cabinet Member	Monitoring Officer
Date:	_____	

1. Introduction

This report provides a mid-year review of outcomes against Bolton's Community Strategy across each of the key themes and cross-cutting priorities as follows:

- Economic prosperity and the related cross cutting themes of skills; Working Well and Children and Young People's attainment
- Narrowing the gap and the related cross cutting themes of Health, Safe; Clean and Green; and children and young people.

This report includes a review of outcomes where hard data is available, but also provides a qualitative assessment of progress at an in-year stage.

The key message is that the partnership continues to make progress towards delivering community strategy priorities:

- Long term development plans are progressing to secure economic prosperity within the town and improvements in measures such as worklessness numbers and skills levels are instructive of progress in this priority area
- The investment to "narrow the gap" in areas of greatest deprivation is also delivering some strong results particularly around health equalities, attainment and crime.

This report does, however, highlight the challenge of maintaining outcomes in some areas in the ongoing climate of diminishing municipal resources, whilst reaffirming the importance of collaboration to maximising focus and capacity.

2. Progress in delivering the Strategic Objective of Economic Prosperity

The ongoing challenge of the national economic position continues to present us with a challenging operating context. On this basis, direct interventions to stimulate the local economy have been a major priority for the Council and its partners over recent years and specific progress over the last 6 months has included:

- Work has started on the Logistics North site, including groundworks for Aldi and MBDA. Both employers continue to work with Team Bolton on recruitment and skills development.
- Approval has been secured for a town centre cinema and restaurants plan for the Market Place, as part of the Town Centre strategy
- Work has started to the travel interchange with the erection of the new substation, to bolster the travel infrastructure that will bring more people and businesses to the town
- The refurbished market has opened, including a number of new traders within the food hall

In addition Bolton, together with other Greater Manchester authorities, has signed the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Agreement with government so that the region will have more responsibility and powers for transport, planning, housing, helping people back into work, health and social care and support for business, all of which will bring the prospect of more economic development and spending power to the town.

Skills

To equip residents to be in a position to take up the opportunities which economic development will bring to Bolton we have been working with partners to deliver a borough-wide skills strategy, to improve the skills levels of our residents. Bolton is also playing a key role in the GM Working Well pilot, which aims to get long-term unemployed people who have not succeeded on the government's Work Programme back into work. Although improving the skills and 'employability' of our residents remains challenging, these initiatives are delivering some promising results:

- Worklessness levels are at a 6 year low at 13.6% compared with a baseline figure of 16.9%
- While there remains a mixed picture in terms of qualification levels within the working age population the direction of travel is broadly positive. Bolton still has lower number of residents with a Level 4+ qualification when compared with our GM counterparts but there has been an increase in the number of residents with Level 3 skill levels (19.2% in 2013 compared to 16.4% in 2011). This coupled with above GM average levels of Level 2 skills indicates a positive direction of travel for Bolton. Raising skills levels across the Borough continues to be addressed by delivery of the all-age Skills Strategy and public service reform agenda including a focus on increasing the number of higher and advanced apprenticeships opportunities, ensuring progression routes within the Education Zone, working with employers to improve skills levels and matching residents to opportunities.
- Bolton has had a steady growth in apprenticeship starts across the age groups in recent years with Bolton reaching the third highest in Greater Manchester in 13/14. Growth has been concentrated in those aged over 25 in recent years however the most recent figures suggest starts have fallen in this age group. These trends are broadly reflective across the region and the country as a whole. -Improving the number, range and take up of apprenticeships continues to be a priority for the partnership.
- The College's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre opened in September. Working closely alongside employers, it is anticipated that gaps in local STEM provision will be significantly addressed by the opening of the centre.
- The Bolton Jobs and Skills Fair took place in September which, for the first time also incorporated careers advice for young people and their parents. Visitor numbers increased and feedback was positive. Further evaluation of long term outcomes for visitors is being followed up by Team Bolton.
- The Council co-ordinated the engagement of other public service leaders and secured over 80 new opportunities for apprentices, traineeships and other supported employment schemes for residents furthest away from the employment market. Planning is in place for these programmes to start in the new year.

Visitors and events

A number of high profile, well attended events have been delivered during quarter 2 as part of the annual events diary. This includes Skyride, Ironman / Ironkids, the British Transplant Games and Bolton Food and Drink Festival, which brought over 150 000 visitors to the town. The Food and Drink Festival exceeded its 3 year Vision target by obtaining an increase of 59 000 (62%) of visitors on the 2011 baseline

Housing and homelessness

The Housing market is a further measure of national economic performance; since 2007 there has been a dramatic decrease in housing completions.

The Council is pursuing a number of development plans to address housing supply, with progress as follows:

- Planning permission (subject to section 106) was secured for Rivington Chase in Q2, which will deliver up to 1700 houses
- Work is also ongoing to bring forward new housing developments in the town centre, particularly student accommodation
- Targeted work has been undertaken to identify other priority sites for development and a list of sites to be brought forward within the next 6 months has now been identified, using a mix of private and authority-owned sites. Potential interventions to enable the sites to be developed are now being considered.

The availability of affordable housing also continues to be a particular issue. Bolton at Home (BH), as our biggest social landlord, continue to see an increase in Right to Buy sales, up 25% on Q1, which increases pressure on stock available to let; BH are also experiencing their lowest ever level of voids. It is estimated that 377 affordable housing units are required each year within Bolton; work is on track to complete 275 units during the period 2013-15 and plans to develop a further 219 properties under the AHP (Affordable Housing programme) 2015-18 are in place. Despite progress against plan supply is, however, some way short of demand.

There has been a reduction in applicants to the Housing Register and in the number and presentations of homelessness cases by the Local Authority to date this year, however the trend of increasing complexity in the cases that are received continues. The Housing Advice service has exceeded the GM average in cases they have intervened in to prevent or relief homelessness. The number of referrals from Local Welfare Provision to the Money Skills services (170% increase in Q2) is indicative of increasingly complex cases which go beyond the standard tenancy issues.

3. Strategic Objective – Narrowing the Gap

The objective to “narrow the gap” has two dimensions: narrowing the gap nationally, between Bolton’s outcomes and the average of England as a whole and narrowing the gap locally between the most and least deprived parts of the Borough. Strong progress continues to be made with progress so far this year as follows:

- Life expectancy – a key measure of deprivation - is improving across the borough and the life expectancy gap compared with national average has reduced for 3rd year running.

Bolton is now making a faster rate of progress in extending life expectancy than across the rest of England average. Since 2006, the gap between most and least deprived wards of the Borough has narrowed from 13.5 years for men 11.3 years for women to 12.1 years and 9.2 years respectively in the latest outturn. Premature death from heart disease and cardio vascular disease is main contributor to shorter life expectancy, for which the key response is population health checks

- Crime rates and perceptions of anti-social behaviour all continue to fall across the borough. Within this context, the gap between high and low crime areas has also decreased year on year. The high-low crime gap is currently 15.36% against a baseline of 17.4%
- Bolton is making good progress on young people's attainment, including in narrowing the gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers (as measured by those children in receipt of free school meals and their peers) as follows:
 - at key stage 2 from 21% in 2008/9 to 19% this year and
 - at key stage 4 from 29% to 25% - a figure which exceeds both the comparable performance across the region and the England average

4. Other Priority Themes

Safe

Since 2005/6 crime including burglary, robbery and victim-based crime has reduced from over 30 800 cases to 17 900 incidents at the end of 2013/14. In particular good reductions have been seen in all types of anti-social behaviour categories in the last year, often attaining the highest reduction in Greater Manchester e.g the number of youth related anti-social behaviour incidents (41% reduction compared to 2013) and neighbour nuisance incidents (25% reduction compared to 2013). The anti-social behaviour perceptions gap is currently 12.7% against a baseline of 18.3%.

Of particular note in the previous performance report was an increase in domestic violence. A new strategy was put in place as a result, which has delivered some strong improvements in performance. Incidents of domestic violence have now reduced to 42 to date this year from a baseline of 56.

Children and Young people

Bolton is maintaining the significant progress made over recent years on educational attainment and our performance now exceeds that of our statistical neighbours. Attainment at key stage 2 and 4 have both improved, from:

- 78 to 80% at Key stage 2 and
- 59.5 to 60.7% at Key stage 4

This improvement is also made in the context of a change in the methodology, which now measures attainment across writing, reading and maths and is therefore a tougher measure than was previously reported.

The rate of teenage conceptions is the lowest it has been for 15 years in Bolton.

Areas where performance is less strong are as follows:

- Over recent years Bolton has reported issues in relation to infant mortality where Bolton's rate rose between 2009-11 and 2010-12 to a level above the England average and above our statistical neighbours. The Children's Trust have focused on this issue and as such continues to deliver a downwards trend although this continues to be monitored closely
- Bolton has more low birth weights than average compared to England and our regional comparators. Again the trend is reducing over time and particular progress has been made over the last 12 months
- Childhood obesity is an area of really mixed performance where, promisingly, reception age obesity has continued to fall over the life of the strategy. This positive picture changes by year 6, however, where Bolton performs poorly.

Clean and Green

Maintaining cleanliness in a climate of diminished resources is a challenge for the Council. As a direct result of resource reductions the cleanliness pass rate has reduced slightly each year from 94% in 2010/11 down to about 90% for the past four years.

Progress continues on recycling, with data indicating that a targeted behaviour change programme and promotional programmes are having a positive effect on the amount of household waste being diverted from landfill. Recent rates show a 2% increase in recycling compared to the same period last year.

Despite this difficult context, ongoing investment continues to be made in green space including, this year, the conclusion of lottery funded work to restore Queens Park and the opening of a new café in Moss Bank Park.

The pilot Community Empowerment Fund, which makes resources available for community groups or business to bid for in order to manage demand for council services and/or mitigate the impact of resources reductions is a key response to maintaining cleanliness standards. This fund is being piloted within the priority areas of clean, green, safe and young people's provision as part of the 2015/17 budget and is now open to bids.

Anti Poverty

A Borough-wide Anti-Poverty strategy was identified as an additional cross cutting theme for this community strategy. Analysis of strategic outcomes is underway, but key operational indicators of progress to date as a result of additional Council investment are as follows:

- There has been an increase in success at Tribunal for disability benefits advice and advocacy cases from a minimum 40% baseline in line with the national average, to a 52% success rate
- waiting times for the Welfare Rights service have reduced from a target of 4 weeks to one week
- During the first two quarters of this year the Money Skills service has:
 - opened 192 new cases
 - closed 190 cases
 - managed £1,105,460 of debt

- Plans are also underway to expand the opening times and services of the Credit Union, as part a new facility in Victoria Square which will open in April to provide responsible loans for new white goods and furniture; a high street presence for Hoot more generally and access to other source of advice and support including Bolton at Home, Age UK and an office base for the Salvation Army Housing Association

6. Conclusions

Overall, the good progress continues towards delivering community strategy priorities. A round up of the current position and priorities for the remainder of this year are as follows:

- robust plans are in place to deliver the economic prosperity agenda by building capacity to attract employment and businesses to the town and equip local people with the skills and experience to apply for the jobs that will be created. There is, however, much work to do in the coming years to deliver these plans in practice.
- broadly Bolton holds its position against national comparators in key measures relating to health, children and young people, employment and educational attainment. The Children's Trust has identified areas where performance is less strong, specifically childhood obesity and low birth weight, with action plans and progress to be reported back at the end of the financial year
- progress continues to narrow the gap between the areas of greatest and least deprivation, including in-borough health inequality (which, whilst improving, remains a key issue) and educational attainment

significant progress has been made in reducing domestic waste and improving recycling, through a comprehensive service and behaviour change programme. Cleanliness pass rates have slipped, however, from 94% in 2010/11 down to about 90% for the past four years - a direct result of there being fewer people, vehicles and sweepers in operation

7. Recommendations

6.1 The Cabinet is asked to

- Comment upon and challenge the performance update set out in this report;
- Endorse the conclusions and priorities set out for the rest of 2014/15.