

Oldham's prospectus

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Oldham
Partnership

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The Context

In August 2008 the Oldham Partnership produced its combined sustainable community strategy and local area agreement. It presents a clear vision of Oldham's future.

“Our ambition is for a transformation of people and place. Our commitment is that by 2020 we will have transformed the borough for the benefit of all its residents. Oldham will be a place where everyone is proud to belong because it will be increasing life opportunities for all. We intend to make the borough a place of choice - a place where people choose to live, work, visit and invest, as a matter of preference.”

To achieve this would always have been challenging. Current circumstances make it even more testing.

There is evidence that the impact of regeneration in Oldham had been weakening even before the global economic downturn. The indices of deprivation provide an assessment of relative deprivation across English local authority areas. Between 1995 and 2004 the indices showed that, in comparison with other places, Oldham was one of the most successful in reducing deprivation and inequalities within the borough. However, the figures for the period 2004 to 2007 suggest that Oldham was no longer outperforming other places in reducing borough-wide deprivation.¹ The concentration of deprivation in certain areas of the borough had also increased in this recent period.² This is an aspect of deprivation that is a longstanding and concerning characteristic of Oldham.

These recent changes in ranking are quite small, and improvement has continued in absolute terms, but when compared to the significant positive changes in ranking in previous periods they do suggest a loss of momentum in the regeneration of the borough. The pace of our progress has slowed.

The borough has also been facing the challenge of restructuring its economy. Manufacturing has remained important to the local economy, but the size of this sector has been reducing in line with national trends; and our local manufacturers have been facing up to global competition. The borough is fortunate in having leading manufacturing companies such as Diodes Zetex; Money Controls; Ferrantis; and Mirror Group. Nonetheless, it lost 9,100 manufacturing jobs between 1995 and 2004. Growth in other sectors, particularly wholesale and retail; public administration, education and health; and business services led to an 8% net growth in employment over the same period, but this was significantly lower than the rate of job growth nationally and in Greater Manchester. We recognise the need to diversify the local economy, with an increased emphasis on high value activities competing on the basis of skills and knowledge.

¹ In the Indices of Deprivation 2007 relative deprivation at the boroughwide level, had increased since ID2004. Oldham is now ranked as the 42nd most deprived local authority area overall, one position worse than its ranking of 43rd in ID 2004.

² Oldham is now ranked 23rd in terms of “local concentration” of deprivation, three positions worse than under ID 2004.

There is a significant risk that the current economic downturn will be a setback to our plans. The country's most deprived areas are usually most adversely affected by recession. The local impacts are many. They include

- A sharp rise in unemployment³ leading to reduced household incomes and lower spending power to support the local economy;
- Stalled private capital investment, particularly in new housing development. Oldham has felt the impact of the difficulties in the wider housing market at just the moment when developments were starting to take off in the inner areas of the borough and its town and district centres. However, to a degree the construction sector, which forms an important part of the Oldham economy, is being sustained by current capital investments by the public sector.
- An anticipated rise in certain types of crime.

There are, however, reasons for optimism that we can emerge strongly from the current downturn. One of our great assets is our young and diverse population. It is vital that we offer our young people the opportunity to acquire the skills they will need for the future, and make Oldham a place that they will be keen to live and pursue fulfilling careers.

Another advantage for Oldham is the ever increasing inter district and cross sectoral collaboration across the Manchester city region. The best future for Oldham is within a strong, well integrated city region. The construction of a Metrolink route through the heart of the borough will greatly improve Oldham's connections to Manchester city centre and other important job locations.

The strength and maturity of partnership working in Oldham is a further asset. The borough's major agencies come together to provide clear and unified strategic leadership.

Encouragingly, there is evidence that the rise in unemployment in Oldham during the recession has not been as great as in comparable towns. However, we need to strengthen Oldham's economy to the point where it is no longer especially vulnerable to cyclical downturns. Our long term ambition is to move Oldham to a position where it ceases to be a "regeneration challenge" but, like places in the south of the Manchester city region, is regarded as an important driver of sustainable growth, and a place where people choose to live, work, visit and invest, as a matter of preference. The opportunities that people will have to enjoy the borough's wonderful parks and countryside, and the increasingly high quality of our schools, and health, social care, leisure and cultural services will help to make Oldham a great place to live.

³ Between February 2008 and February 2009, Oldham's JSA claimants rose by 64% – from 3,936 to 6,449. In percentage terms, this represented an increase from 3% to 4.9% of the working age population.

The purpose of the prospectus

Our prospectus concentrates on those programmes which will have an early tangible impact – programmes on which we will focus the drive and energy of the partnership. The sustainable community strategy sets out our wider priorities for the next five years, but the prospectus makes it clear where we as a partnership will be concentrating our joint efforts. This clarity is important, because this will be a period when financial resources will be very tightly constrained.

It will take time for private sector capital investment to pick up speed again. There is a danger that places like Oldham will, as before, be late to benefit from the next wave of market interest. Public sector resources will almost certainly be scarce for the foreseeable future.

Ideally we would press on now to deliver all the plans set out in our sustainable community strategy. However, we recognise that for the time being this is not going to be possible. We must marshal all available resources and apply them where they will have the greatest impact.

It is in this context that we have decided that it is imperative that we put our plans for the future into even sharper focus. This is why we have developed the Oldham prospectus. They identify a limited number of carefully chosen initiatives that we simply must deliver.

Our prospectus:

- focus on issues which can best be addressed by the members of the partnership acting together. There will, of course, be a great deal of important and complementary work by individual organisations which will be helping us to deliver the sustainable community strategy and local area agreement;
- act as an expression of commitment by the whole partnership to deliver a set of clearly defined priorities on behalf of the people of Oldham; and.
- make these priorities absolutely clear to national, regional, and city regional organisations which can help us bring them to fruition.

How we have chosen our priorities

The partnership has selected its priorities on the basis of a number of factors. The chosen initiatives are:

- essential because they will lay the foundations for the long term self supporting development of the borough and city region – their outcomes will reduce the need for future public sector investment in regeneration;
- the ones we can safely predict will be most transformational in their impact – because we can be sure of the outcomes;
- chosen for their contribution to priority targets in our local area agreement;
- able to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the achievement of targets set in the multi area agreement ;
- fully consistent with the Oldham and Rochdale Economic and Skills Alliance (ORESAs) prospectus;
- able to provide a combination of economic, environmental and social benefits;
- both urgent and capable of early implementation, with key planning stages having already been undertaken
- strongly supported by the community having been included in our sustainable community strategy and local area agreement which was developed with extensive public consultation;

They have also been selected because they will contribute to a number of cross cutting objectives which are a vital part of the partnership's approach:

- creating a cohesive society by tackling inequalities, supporting the most vulnerable, and encouraging community engagement; local pride and active citizenship. Members of the community will be encouraged to give leadership, and provide services where they are best placed to do so;
- securing the most efficient use of resources; supporting the transition to a low carbon society; avoiding waste; and improving the local environment;
- seeking the best possible value for money. Agencies will act in partnership to pool financial resources from various sources to secure the most benefit. They will consider the partnership's shared objectives when making decisions about the use of their own resources.

Section 1: Towards a university town

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oldham's sustainable community strategy sets out an ambitious vision of

"a thriving borough, playing a new and dynamic role in a world class Manchester city region. To achieve this vision there is a need to improve employment opportunities for local people, enhance skills attainment, and create an environment which encourages enterprise and investment."

- 1.2 Oldham's future prospects will be transformed by firmly establishing it as a university town. Creating a stream of highly qualified students from diverse backgrounds will greatly enhance the productivity, competitiveness and prosperity of the local area and the Manchester city region. Deprivation will be reduced significantly, particularly in those communities which have experienced the highest levels of worklessness and the lowest incomes. By reducing inequalities social cohesion will be improved. Entrepreneurship and business formation will be greatly increased. Oldham's reputation and image will be transformed.
- 1.3 In this way we can make our most telling contribution to the development of the overall city region, increasing its pool of skilled and flexible people, and accelerating growth in the northern part of the conurbation. But this will not be a traditional university town. It will be a new model that anticipates future needs.

2. The context

- 2.1 The effects of the economic recession have been keenly felt in Oldham. Like all deprived areas, we are vulnerable to downturns because of longstanding weaknesses in the local economy. There is a pressing need to increase skill levels, encourage higher value added economic activity offering higher rewards, and tackle the most deep-seated concentrations of deprivation within the borough⁴.
- 2.2 A number of local economic assessments have given us a clear picture of the challenges we face. These were confirmed by the Manchester Independent Economic Review 2009 (MIER), which assessed the whole city region. The MIER identifies the steps that are most likely to lead to significant improvements in areas such as Oldham. These include increasing the numbers attaining education and skills at level 3 and above. Levels 1 and 2 are not seen to be economically significant, except that they are stepping

⁴ Between February 2008 and February 2009, JSA claimants in the resident working age population have risen from 6.1%-8.2% in Coldhurst Ward, 5.8%-7.4% in Alexandra Ward but only by 1%-1.9% in Saddleworth East. Oldham also has the third highest (out of ten areas) JSA Claimant Rate in Greater Manchester.

stones towards level 3. The MIER underlines the importance to Greater Manchester of its 'ongoing transition to a knowledge-based economy' but acknowledges that Manchester is "a profoundly south-facing city region". The MIER considers the presence of local concentrations of minority ethnic residents to be an economic advantage for places like Oldham.

- 2.3 Depressingly, in the MIER's analysis of 'innovation assets in the North West', Oldham is not identified as having any of the key success factors like incubators, museums, research institutes, industrial research, and science parks. This is a misapprehension but makes it clear that, in addition to the economic challenges confronting Oldham, it also has an image problem. Its assets and achievements are not currently recognised and its potential not acknowledged.
- 2.4 Unless significant action is taken to confront these economic and skills weaknesses, Oldham will not make its proper contribution to the city region, and will be unable to take advantage of the opportunities arising from sub regional collaboration. If inequalities within the borough persist this will be a challenge to the community cohesion which has been so carefully re-built following the civil disturbances of May 2001.

3. The way forward

- 3.1 This analysis of Oldham's economic and social characteristics points to several imperatives
 - Investment in higher-level skills through an expansion of further and higher education.
 - Strengthening of programmes such as the Junior University and Young Professionals which increase the number of students progressing from level 2 to levels 3 and 4.
 - Expansion of curriculum provision at higher levels in areas vital to the economy and where the town has proven strengths – most notably in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The government sees these as the key drivers of national economic recovery. Arts and media is another area of importance, particularly given the economic opportunities at Mediacity and the role of the Coliseum Theatre as a route into the industry.
 - Creation of strong apprenticeship progression routes, from advanced, to higher to degree level, particularly in key areas such as engineering, construction and hospitality.
 - A commitment to the development of hi-tech industry in Oldham to ensure that there are appropriate destinations to attract and retain the skills of well-trained and well-qualified residents emerging from a strengthened programme of education and training.
 - A commitment to inclusiveness, with sustained action to reduce unemployment across all areas of the town. The Houghton report (Tackling

worklessness: a review of the contribution and role of local authorities and partnerships), offers a broadly-based strategy for addressing many of the important issues.

- A commitment to firmly establish Oldham as Greater Manchester's fourth university town.

4. The benefits

- 4.1 Our proposals place a strong emphasis on high achievement in the STEM subjects. Greater Manchester has a deficit of trained scientists to sustain its growth; for example, there is currently a demand for 11,000 life scientists. By engaging with young people while they are still at school, developing them socially, and raising their academic aspirations we will enable the town's young people to address the current science skills shortage.
- 4.2 Given the town's demographic profile, it is probable that, unlike some major centres of higher education⁵, Oldham will retain a very high proportion of its graduates for the benefit of the city region. A university town is also more likely to see the return of those young people who have chosen to pursue their higher level studies elsewhere.
- 4.3 There is also significant evidence from national student survey figures (published in July 2008 and February 2009) that students feel that they receive a more supportive service from locally provided higher education. For example, students in institutions with fewer than 10,000 students were more positive (about teaching and learning; assessment and feedback; academic support and personal development; and subject delivery) than students in larger institutions.
- 4.4 The people of a university town have easy access to a wide range of opportunities. Working people who want to enhance their qualifications; school and college leavers who are reluctant or unable to study outside the town; older people seeking enrichment in their lives; and a great many others, all find that they can realise their academic, professional and personal ambitions close to home, in a familiar context and with minimum inconvenience.
- 4.5 Ready access to higher education means that the skill levels of local people are steadily enhanced, with considerable benefits to the local economy. Not only does this benefit existing businesses in the town, it also creates more fertile conditions for external investors, and those seeking to establish new enterprises. A university town has more appeal as a residential destination for incoming employers and employees who have families; it will also attract ambitious employers who want to invest in additional employee skills.
- 4.6 Traditionally Oldham has had relatively few people in professional occupations. We need to change this, and expanding higher education

⁵ Each year 75% of students graduating from the University of Manchester's leave the city region.

provision is the best way to do so. Further and higher education also provide settings which encourage interaction amongst people from diverse backgrounds. Our colleges and the university appeal to students because they celebrate the fact that their intake reflects the borough's rich diversity.

- 4.7 The university town concept would create a campus in Oldham town centre of between 7,000 and 9,000 students. The scale is significant. The size of the campus and the numbers of students passing through it will achieve a critical mass that will come to shape Oldham as a place. It will generate a demand for a wider and exciting range of cultural and leisure amenities. New buildings and public spaces will transform the west end of the town. Excellent public transport connections, including a new Metrolink station near the campus, will make it readily accessible from across the Greater Manchester area.
- 4.8 A place's reputation and image are important. Oldham's university campus will enhance the image of the town, positioning Oldham as a centre of learning and of educational excellence. It will help to forge a new 21st century identity for Oldham – a place which competes on the basis of skills and knowledge, rather than low cost, low wage activity.

5. Delivering a university town

- 5.1 We know our plans are achievable and we know the impact they will make. They are neither speculative nor risky. We have a strong track record of delivery. We have already established a university presence and developed the reputation of our further education provision through a series of highly successful innovatory programmes.
- 5.2 We will be taking a series of sequential steps. There are a number of key milestones on our planned journey.

These milestones are:

- (i) Young people are supported in their progress towards higher education and training by means of the Junior University and Young Professionals programmes
- (ii) The curriculum offer is expanded, including the roll-out of diplomas, engaging more young people
- (iii) The regional science centre is established in the west end of Oldham town centre, facilitating an expansion of the remarkable achievements in STEM subjects post-16, as well as establishing higher education and research opportunities in those subjects
- (iv) The Oldham College is transformed through a phased capital programme, developing innovative specialisms in creative technologies, such as eco-engineering and digital media
- (v) The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme is completed, creating new learning communities, raising aspirations
- (vi) The current programme of higher education is expanded, increasing the range of opportunities for the people of Oldham and

- (vii) The economic development schemes in the M60 corridor and at Chadderton Advanced Technology Park are completed, providing a suitable destination for the town's well-qualified young people.

Figure 1 – Key milestones to be achieved in delivering the university town.

Programme name	Programme type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Junior University	Support programme							
Young Professionals	Support programme							
Diplomas	Curriculum development							
Science Centre	Infrastructure & curriculum							
The Oldham College	Infrastructure & curriculum							
BSF	Infrastructure							
UCO Expansion	Infrastructure & curriculum							
M60 Corridor	Economic infrastructure							
Chadderton ATP	Economic infrastructure							

6. How we will make this happen

- 6.1 The creation of a university town is made possible by the mature collaborative approach of Oldham's Partnership, in which the town's two beacon further education colleges are fully engaged. They are able to provide a comprehensive and complementary STEM-related offer for the residents of Oldham. Working through the partnership, the colleges nurture and support their students, maximising their educational achievements and helping them make the transition between school and university. The curriculum offer of the two colleges is complementary, ensuring different pathways are available to support the learners' needs (see case study below).
- 6.2 The colleges' reputations for science and creative technologies act as a magnet for aspirational students from Oldham and beyond. The success of the science centre will enable the town to meet the skills demand of the town and the city region, and raise the employment potential of its young people. It will establish Oldham as the town in Greater Manchester with a reputation for science and help to develop a popular science culture. This will attract employers and the subsequent wealth generation will support the development of amenities within the town. Similarly, The Oldham College is seeking confirmation of its capital programme, which will create a first class learning experience.
- 6.3 The University of Huddersfield has made a commitment to the borough, which is evidenced by the new digital media wing of University Campus Oldham, which opened in 2008. If there are sufficient higher education students, then the university will maintain its investment strategy, and expand its campus, initially embracing the science centre. This expansion and redesign of the higher education offer has the potential to revitalise Oldham and confirm its status as a university town. This model could be exported to other towns, fitting under the university's "Towns like Us" banner.

- 6.4 As a partnership we will ensure that our services complement the delivery of this prospectus both in terms of mainstream services and partnership activities. Working together, we will raise academic attainment and skill levels and we will also work collaboratively to secure both the land and capital investment needed.
- 6.5 The partnership expects to continue to fund the Junior University and Young Professionals programmes, subject to ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of these programmes. They underpin the university town concept, creating the quantum of local students which justifies the planned expansion of the curriculum and scale of provision at higher education level.
- 6.6 The partnership will take a collective approach to the financing of the university town initiative. In some instances it will do this through unified approaches to national and regional funding bodies. In other cases this will involve joint decisions about the application of resources which are available to the borough, and which are not ring fenced to specific programmes.

7. The impact

- 7.1 Aggregating our resources and focusing our priorities to deliver the university town model will actively place shape Oldham and transform the life opportunities for our residents. The following case studies illustrate the life changing impacts we would hope to achieve.

Umara



Umara is currently studying in year 7 at Royton and Crompton School, a specialist science college. She has a particular enthusiasm for her three science subjects and already longs for a career which will enable her to contribute to the greater health and happiness of humanity.

She has heard of the Junior University at Oldham Sixth Form College and is excited to discover that, by the time she enters year 8, there will be a special programme of activities for young science enthusiasts called science academy.

This will give her an opportunity to visit the college, meet some of the staff and take part in science projects designed for groups of keen young scientists in the college laboratories; over her remaining years at school, those activities will be at an increasingly higher level. Not only this, Umara will also be given specialist careers advice by the Junior University team to guide her through the exciting, though sometimes complex, options for a young woman with her particular talents and ambitions. Imagine the effect on her life of the announcement that Oldham is to have a purpose-built science centre, where she can study for her A levels and, if she chooses, take her studies to degree level with University Campus Oldham in the same building!

Even a talented and enthusiastic student like Umara can feel some uncertainty when moving from one level of study to another. To address these anxieties, staff in Oldham's schools and colleges are working together to create an Oldham progression route for science. This will ensure that when students move from one qualification to another, they will all have studied the same topics, regardless of the school they have attended. In addition, to boost their confidence, some aspects of A level will be taught within GCSE programmes and some aspects of Oldham's science degrees will be taught within the A level programmes. Umara can, therefore, be confident of high levels of support throughout her academic career ... but young people also love to be inspired. The science centre, with its state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment; its innovative design, based upon the four elements; the exhibitions from Manchester's Science Museum; and the excitement of its public lecture programme will stay with Umara for the rest of her life!

Umara will achieve her degree in pharmacy in 2018 and will feel that the world is at her feet. Will she take her studies to a higher level or take a professional qualification or look to enter the pharmaceutical team at one of the new enterprises at Chadderton Technology Park?

Jake



Jake's parents often wish that computers had never been invented and yet ... his talented teaching staff can see that his enthusiasm for IT gives them an opportunity to direct the skills of this boisterous young man. He is currently enrolled at Counthill School, which will amalgamate with Breeze Hill School and re-open as an academy in September 2010. Even Jake will be impressed by the huge investment in new technology. He will also be delighted to find that the main part of his learning programme can be organised around a diploma in information technology or creative and media, which he can study at level 2. The qualification will give him plenty of scope to develop his 'hands-on' skills and, as importantly, it will lead him into an understanding of business and industrial applications, modern systems of communication, the importance of team work and the careers which could open up for him.

While studying for his level 2 qualification, Jake will have direct contact from the Young Professionals team at The Oldham College. Working on similar lines to the Junior University at Oldham Sixth Form College, the Young Professionals will give Jake the opportunity to visit the newly-built and richly-resourced technology suite at The Oldham College and to meet the teaching staff. He will have the opportunity to take taster sessions and to meet careers staff who will give him professional guidance on his career options.

He will discover that he can pursue his diploma studies to level 3 – the equivalent of A level – at the college. Jake will also find out that a degree-level qualification (not something he had contemplated at the start of his educational career) will give him significantly increased earning power and, important for an IT man, the opportunity to work on high-level projects in an increasingly technological world. He will be pleased, to discover that degrees in digital arts and ICT are both available at the University Campus in Oldham. By the time he concludes his diploma studies, he, like Umara, will have the opportunity to pursue those studies in Oldham's purpose-built science centre.

The science centre will put Jake in touch with local entrepreneurs at Chadderton Advanced Technology Park, through the Knowledge Transfer programme, which supports the business to develop and grow, using Jake's research and development skills. When he graduates in 2018, he will have exciting options in front of him. Will he join an IT team that he has been working alongside or take his expertise to an even higher level on a master's degree and perhaps develop his own company helped by the incubation units at the science centre.

But where would he be without this?

Section 2: Great places to live

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oldham's sustainable community strategy sets out an ambitious vision of Oldham as a great place to live

“Our vision is that all of the borough's neighbourhoods will be places to which people are attracted to live because they offer an excellent choice of high quality, affordable housing; low levels of crime; and a good, well maintained environment. Residents will feel that they can influence decisions affecting the future of their local area and will get involved in helping to improve the area and support other people.”

- 1.2 The Oldham Partnership has considered how its collaborative working can have the greatest impact. It has decided that it will establish new ways of co-operating at the local level to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. This will involve a range of agencies, voluntary and faith organisations, and local residents collaborating to transform local areas, making them cleaner, greener, safer and healthier places to live.
- 1.3 There is a great deal of other activity planned and underway to improve our neighbourhoods. In particular, it is vital to improve the quality, range and affordability of the borough's housing stock. Our housing market renewal pathfinder and major investment in improvements to the public sector stock through private finance initiatives are two of the ways we are doing this.

2. The context

- 2.1 Our sustainable community strategy was developed with a very high degree of public involvement. Local people have consistently told us that the issues that need to be addressed in their local area are:

- The level of crime
- Road and pavement repairs
- Clean streets
- Health services
- Activities for teenagers

- 2.2 A survey in 2006 revealed that 64% of the borough's residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This represented a strong improvement since 2003, when just 39% of residents were satisfied with their neighbourhood. We need to continue this progress.
- 2.3 Within the borough there are marked differences in residents' views from one area to another. Satisfaction is highest in Saddleworth and Lees, Shaw, and Royton; and lowest in West Oldham, and Failsworth and Hollinwood. It is the

ambition of our sustainable community strategy that by 2020 all the borough's neighbourhoods will meet high standards of cleanliness and enjoy good access to well-maintained parks and open spaces. People will not feel threatened by crime or antisocial behaviour, and levels of offending will be low. Residents will have a sense of responsibility towards their own neighbourhoods and communities, and will feel both that they can influence decisions which shape the future of their areas and willing to get actively involved in making improvements. A greater sense of engagement and pride in place will contribute to the development of stronger and more cohesive communities.

- 2.4 Significant progress has been made on these issues recently, but the momentum of improvement must be accelerated in order to achieve our vision.
- 2.5 The cleanliness of the local environment affects local residents' sense of wellbeing and their perceptions about whether their neighbourhood is a safe place to live. It also has a powerful effect on the image that outsiders have of an area. Standards of cleanliness have long been unsatisfactory in some parts of the borough, particularly the inner areas, but the latest survey revealed marked improvement. Only 12% of the borough's streets fell below the grade B standard of cleanliness – a figure that bettered even the stretching target we had set ourselves.
- 2.6 Total crime levels have also improved in recent years. Currently the most numerous crimes are burglary of dwellings, damage to dwellings, and theft from vehicles. Analysis has revealed a correlation between crime and income deprivation. We recognise that we must reduce levels of worklessness, not just for economic reasons, but also to make our communities safer.
- 2.7 Local voluntary action provides opportunities to build social networks and develop transferable skills. It can increase the range of services and leisure activities available within the local area, as well as the extent to which local residents feel ownership of these. The overall level of volunteering in the borough is relatively high. However, those who might gain the most personal benefit tend to be least involved. For instance, volunteering is less prevalent among those who are unemployed, unable to work due to illness or disability, have fewer friends in the area, and are without Internet access or a mobile phone. Broader participation in community action could have many benefits for both individuals and society.

3. The way forward

- 3.1 We believe that it is most effective to tackle these issues at the local level, working together in our districts and neighbourhoods.

Our approach to area working has the following objectives. It will:

- Provide leadership and direction for local areas (for example, to ensure that there is clarity about local priorities and resources are allocated in support of these);
- Enable local service providers to deliver in a way which is:

- Better co-ordinated across agencies to meet local circumstances;
 - Effective and timely;
 - Responsive to the needs of communities and individuals;
 - Prevents as well as responds to problems; and
 - Offers good value for money;
- Enable residents and businesses to be aware of, and influence, what happens in their neighbourhood, and the nature of the services they receive;
 - Support communities in doing things for themselves, rather than depending upon the council or other organisations to do it for them. Community leadership and community based provision of services will be encouraged;
 - Reduce the inequalities within and between different parts of the borough;
 - Build pride in the borough as a whole, and in the different areas within it by promoting and celebrating what is special in each.

4. The benefits

- 4.1 We believe that high quality neighbourhoods are one of the essential foundations of a future regenerated Oldham. They will help to make it a place which no longer depends upon external support, but one which can largely rely on its own strengths to move it forward. The borough will make a strong contribution to the city region by being a location of choice.
- 4.2 By improving the borough's neighbourhoods we will offer a better quality of life to local residents. New residents will be attracted as people from across the city region and beyond recognise that areas throughout the borough are excellent places to live.
- 4.3 Because the borough will retain and attract skilled people with high aspirations, the local economy will be boosted, a strong market for new leisure and cultural facilities will be created, and communities will become more self reliant.
- 4.4 The condition of our housing stock will improve throughout the borough as the quality of all our neighbourhoods increases. Investment by individuals and companies will rise in line with housing values as neighbourhoods become more attractive to home buyers.
- 4.5 Agencies will co-operate to bring their services together on single sites at locations which are easily accessible for local residents. Combined services will be more convenient for users and also allow the providers to use their resources more efficiently. Where appropriate, schools will be used to provide services for the whole community.
- 4.6 Safe, clean and green neighbourhoods will offer more opportunities for residents to adopt healthier lifestyles, for instance by increasing walking and cycling. This will have huge health benefits.
- 4.7 The best neighbourhoods require least public support. They work well because preventative approaches dominate, and formal public sector

intervention is less necessary. There is keenness amongst local residents, businesses and community organisations to tackle any problems themselves and to offer support to those who need it. Issues will normally be “nipped in the bud” before they escalate. This is the essence of sustainable communities. They are better places to live and put less pressure on public resources because they are more self-sustaining.

5. How we will make it happen

- 5.1 The whole partnership is committed to new ways of working together in localities. Oldham’s area working arrangements will have the following components.
- 5.2 At a borough wide level the overall strategy for the borough is set out in the sustainable community strategy, our local area agreement, and the council’s corporate plan.
- 5.3 There are six district partnerships. Their primary role is to set priorities and take decisions. Within the borough wide framework, they will develop a plan for their area, participate in the design and commissioning of local services, and allocate resources in support of this. They will act as champions for their area in discussions about borough wide priorities, and listen to the views of local people and feed back to them through ward forums known as PACTs (Partners and Community Together). For this reason they will all be represented on the steering group of the local strategic partnership.
- 5.4 The primary role of the PACTs is community engagement. A broad range of partner organisations will participate in the PACTs sending along representatives at an appropriate level (for example the police might send the local police community support officer). Neighbourhood managers will work with partners to ensure the attendance of relevant organisations as required. They will provide a regular mechanism for residents and businesses to meet representatives of the borough’s main providers of public services. They will be organised on the basis of “whatever works best” - sometimes they could be meetings or workshops; sometimes drop in sessions; or they could be organised alongside other local activity – such as by having a stall at a local festival. PACTs provide a mechanism for listening to the views of residents, and feeding back to them about what is happening. They are the communications and influencing arm of the district partnerships.
- 5.5 Area action teams will have the role of service delivery on behalf of the district partnership. They are the operational arm of area working. Involving a wider range of partners will expand this role, and linking their work to area plans developed by the district partnership.
- 5.6 Councillors are members of the district partnership within which their ward lies. They are also members of the PACT for their ward. They therefore play a key role, involved in both area based decision-making and local engagement with residents.
- 5.7 The council will allocate a lead executive director or assistant executive director to each district partnership. Senior representatives of partner

organisations are also members of the district partnerships. It is anticipated that the police, primary care trust, First Choice Homes Oldham and Oldham Community Leisure Ltd will be involved in each district, but that beyond this each district partnership will identify the key partners needed to support the delivery of the local priorities. For example, Jobcentre Plus, The Oldham College, Oldham Sixth Form College and particular schools might be members of the district partnership in some areas.

- 5.8 Co-opted members will continue to have a valuable role, though they will not be members of district partnerships. As a minimum they will automatically be members of the PACT for the ward in which they live and/or work for the duration of their existing term of office, and can then seek re-election. They can help the PACT become an effective conduit for the views of residents, organise local events and activities, and sit on working groups and/or task and finish groups set up by the district partnership. The district partnership may also specifically seek their views on issues – for example in developing the area plan.
- 5.9 The council's neighbourhood managers will initially co-ordinate the operation of the district partnerships, PACTs and area action teams. As the new arrangements for area working develop, the support team required for each area will be reviewed. Over time the numbers of organisations and services structured around the six districts will increase, and opportunities for co-locating staff within the areas they serve will be explored.

6. The impact

Elaine



Elaine has lived in Failsworth for over 30 years. She was widowed two years ago. She is proud of her local area and keen to see it continue to be improved, but has never been keen on attending formal meetings.

Her grandson attends the local primary school and she decided to go along to the school's summer fete. The PACT was using the fete as an opportunity to engage with local people and listen to their views. Elaine met some members of the area action team and took away a leaflet explaining their activities.

For some time she had been thinking that the untidy piece of land at the end of her street needed to be tackled. It was letting down the appearance of the area when it could instead be an attractive green space which local residents could use. Perhaps this was something the area action team could sort out?

Elaine decided to "grab the bull by the horns" and ring the area action team. They told her that the team had been contacted by a few local residents who were interested in volunteering to join a group which could carry out small jobs such as clean ups of public spaces and gardening for disabled people. They had also been approached by a group of youngsters from the secondary school who wanted to get involved in community environmental work. The team would support the volunteers. Would she be interested in joining in?

This wasn't quite what Elaine had expected. She had imagined that the action team would just do the job themselves. Nonetheless she decided she would give it a try.

Community involvement can increase local pride and self confidence. Communities will increasingly feel that they can tackle problems themselves. This particular type of voluntary activity can improve people's health and wellbeing by strengthening social networks and providing opportunities for greater physical activity. It can also provide the chance for people from different backgrounds and generations to interact and gain a better understanding of each other's perspectives. The council and other organisations have an important role to play in fostering and supporting community involvement.

Section 3: Healthy lives

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oldham's sustainable community strategy sets out an ambitious vision of a healthier borough.
- 1.2 *"Our vision is of a borough in which people enjoy long, healthy, active and fulfilling lives. We will provide high quality preventative services and support independent living. When care is needed, good services will be delivered in a timely manner."*
- 1.3 Across the borough people's health continues to improve. Access to high quality health and social care services is also improving, with more care being provided within the community. We believe that each and every individual is entitled to the very best health and quality of life, and we will work in partnership to achieve this goal.
- 1.4 The physical environment will support this by providing access to green space and clean air. Homes will be warm and dry, and leisure facilities will be available to all. People will know what affects their health, and will be in control of factors which challenge their health.
- 1.5 This prospectus commits the partnership, as a matter of the highest priority, to work together to encourage and support local people to have healthier and more fulfilling lives.

2. The Context

- 2.1 Health in Oldham has been improving for many years. This is shown by steadily increasing life expectancy. However, this is against the background of the borough's previous long history of poor health. Taking the borough as a whole, life expectancy for males and females is still well below the national average. Within the borough there are marked differences from one community to another, and a clear correlation between low life expectancy and high rates of income deprivation. The need to raise education and skill levels and increase household incomes in order to improve health and well-being is well recognised.
- 2.2 The health of Oldham residents is connected to their qualifications and skills, employment and wage levels, condition and choice of housing, and the quality of their communities, neighbourhood and lifestyles. We know that it is also important that we provide people with the opportunities to easily live a healthy lifestyle, challenge unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, and provide them with accessible and high quality health and social care.

3. The way forward

3.1 Improvements to health and well-being will come about partly as a consequence of improvements in the other areas of the sustainable community strategy. However the action we take must improve health beyond what should be expected from the social, physical and economic environment. A movement for change has to engage and lead people in Oldham to expect more and to support them to achieve better health and well-being.

3.2 Our approach recognises that we will be more effective in encouraging and supporting healthy lives if we make a concerted effort involving a range of public agencies, businesses, schools, voluntary and community organisations, and individuals.

A number of principles have guided our plans: We believe it is essential to:

- Promote better health and well being for everyone in the borough;
- Promote better care for everyone in the borough;
- Reduce health inequalities within the borough;
- Promote independence and protect vulnerable people;
- Strive to enable children and young people to realise their potential; and
- Ensure excellent value for money.

3.3 We have decided to organise this partnership's prospectus under three themes

- More people more active, more often
- Putting alcohol in its place
- Individual services, empowered people

3.4 Many of the actions which can improve individual health also have other advantages for the borough. They offer several simultaneous "wins". For instance, a network of high quality green space will provide better opportunities for exercise and relaxation, but also contribute to making the borough a place of choice in term of housing, economic investment, and tourism. A healthy "green network" will also have other sustainability benefits – helping to mitigate some of the effects of climate change, such as increasing heat and flood risks.

3.5 Walking to and from school provides good exercise. It also reduces traffic congestion and local and global pollution. It encourages children to be more active and less car dependent from an early age. Road safety skills are

acquired, thereby reducing the risk of future involvement in a road traffic accident.

- 3.6 Participation in sport can play a key role in improving people's health. It can also bring people together, building community cohesion.

Healthier lives

4. The benefits of our plans

- 4.1 The health and well-being of Oldham people is inextricably linked to the development of the economy, educational attainment and the social and physical fabric of the borough. Better health means fewer days off school or work and more opportunity to engage in social activity. Better education and employment means better understanding of health and ability to resist harmful influences and behaviour.
- 4.2 Being physically active is one of those rare behaviours that the more you do of it the better it is for your health. Regular physical activity can help control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes, reduce your risk of some cancers, strengthen your bones and muscles, improve your mental health and mood, improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls and increase your chances of living longer. All that and it can be done with other people. Everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity – regardless of age, ethnicity, shape or size.
- 4.3 A reduction in excessive alcohol consumption will lead to health improvements, particularly with respect to stroke, heart disease and some forms of cancer. In addition it is likely to lead to reductions in antisocial behaviour and certain types of crime. The image of Oldham will be improved.

5. How we will make it happen

- 5.1 Under our three themes we have identified the actions that we will take.
- 5.2 More people, more active, more often**
- 5.2.1 Getting more people in Oldham to be more active more often can be done by highlighting and supporting changes to the daily routine and by supporting specific activities to get more exercise.
- 5.2.2 Changes to the daily routine will be supported by starting with the way people get to work. The public and private sector will do more to encourage people to use active transport to get to work and home again. Subsidising public transport and encouraging people to walk for at least part of their journey could do this.

- 5.2.3 Provision of cycling facilities including cycle racks, showers and changing areas in addition to safe cycle routes to work is essential. Cycling lessons and support to buy a bicycle are possible. Promoting such activity will also contribute to reducing our carbon footprint in Oldham and reducing the number of cars on the roads will improve air quality.
- 5.2.4 Well connected walking and cycling routes which are convenient for travelling to work will be provided to allow people to move easily within and between local neighbourhoods and offer opportunities for active leisure. The introduction of the tram to Oldham is a prime opportunity to promote walking as a means of getting more physical activity.
- 5.2.5 Employers will be encouraged to subsidise and support social networks centred on physical activity. Employees can be encouraged to get outside to walk at least once during each day. In addition to the health benefits this has been linked to greater clarity of thinking and productivity. Leadership by example should be established at the top of the business.
- 5.2.6 Specific activities to get more exercise can be promoted by commissioning access to excellent leisure services for all, not least by using the borough's sports centres, swimming pools and playing pitches. The emphasis should be on introductory sessions for people not used to such services, instruction classes for people new to activities and the option of same sex classes.
- 5.2.7 Emphasis will be given to using the parks and countryside that are in abundance in Oldham. Access to green space is essential to outdoor exercise and this green space must be of high quality and clean with facilities provided to encourage additional physical activity through, for example, trim trails.
- 5.2.8 People will be encouraged to access parks and other parts of the countryside by the provision of guided walks and walk leaders.
- 5.2.9 In the next two years the partnership will ensure that public sector organisations lead by example in encouraging staff to be physically active and ensure that more of the population access the green space and countryside of Oldham to increase their levels of physical activity.
- 5.2.10 We will also work with schools to ensure that they all have a sustainable travel plan in place by 2010 to reduce the risk of traffic accidents near schools and encourage children to travel to school without relying on car transport.
- 5.2.11 We will take action jointly as partners and through the borough's sports and physical activity alliance and the local area plan for football (with the Football Association), to develop the capacity of the voluntary sports sector to engage and support more people in sport and physical activity. We will also continue to seek to improve the sports and leisure facilities available to residents.
- 5.2.12 In 2010 the following actions will be delivered to contribute to the more people, more active more often theme.
- Delivery of Rochdale Canal off-road multi-user corridor signage and access scheme including improved towpath, signage and access improvements, allowing better access for cyclists and pedestrians.

- All schools to have developed a school travel plan by March 2010 and the first cycling to school project will be completed by 2010.
- The Sports Zone in Fitton Hill will be open to local residents offering first class sports facilities.

5.3 Putting alcohol in its place

- 5.3.1 The use of alcohol in Oldham contributes to the perception of the borough across the country. Alcohol consumption forms some part in the life of the majority of people in Oldham. However it should not be assumed that its importance is the same for everyone and for a significant minority of the population alcohol consumption has no part in their personal life.
- 5.3.2 In Oldham we want to establish ownership over the place of alcohol consumption in contributing to the physical appearance of our town and village centres, to establish ownership over its place in leisure and cultural activities in Oldham, its place in the lives of children and young people and finally in control of the part played by alcohol in establishing a sense of place and the image of Oldham.
- 5.3.3 This will be done by commissioning an integrated system of alcohol treatment services that has sufficient capacity to identify people at an early point when alcohol consumption is beginning to have an impact on health and quality of life and offer the right service at the right time. The service will also have sufficient capacity to provide effective treatment and social care for people with more established alcohol problems. This service will help individuals get their alcohol consumption under control in their own lives.
- 5.3.4 We will establish control over the licensing of premises to sell alcohol to limit the number of such premises across Oldham and their location. Tighter control of the sale of alcohol to underage drinkers will be established. We will work with the owners and managers of clubs to establish control over the irresponsible promotion of alcohol.
- 5.3.5 Finally we will engage in a discussion with the public of Oldham to establish a vision for a culture around alcohol that is clear about the need to have town centres that are open and inviting to all generations and to a wider range of cultural and leisure interests.
- 5.3.6 In the next two years the partnership will ensure that an integrated system of alcohol treatment and care services is in place and a care pathway is firmly in place linking criminal justice systems with treatment systems.
- 5.3.7 In 2010 the following actions will be delivered to contribute to the putting alcohol in its place theme.
- Establish a Best Bar None programme to include off-licence sales.
 - Extend brief interventions programme to include criminal justice services.
 - Establish a widespread alcohol awareness programme in all schools in Oldham.

5.4 Individual services, empowered people

- 5.4.1 Public sector services are a daily and highly frequent point of contact with the full range of people across Oldham. Oldham people provide many of the services to other Oldham people. Each interaction with a member of the public is an opportunity to listen to what people need and want and to give them the respect and power to get what they need to feel good about themselves and to help themselves and others.
- 5.4.2 Public sector services will be commissioned to deal with people as individuals and to tailor the services they provide to the people in front of them. Services will be expected to adopt a position of working *with* people to get the best outcome rather than providing a service *to* them. This will not be necessary on every occasion but would be a step change in the ethos of public service delivery. The focus will be on helping the most vulnerable people to engage on their own terms with Oldham and supported by a public sector that is confident in its inclusiveness, is proud of itself and what it can do on a daily basis to change Oldham for the better.
- 5.4.3 We will develop new and improved facilities which accommodate a range of health and social care services and other community services. Public bodies will collaborate to provide all these services in a single, highly accessible, location, in a way which is convenient to residents and uses resources efficiently. These facilities will also contribute to the regeneration of local town centres.
- 5.4.4 We will use new technologies to allow the safe sharing of information between health and social care staff. For patients this will mean that they can gain access to a wide range of health and social care services through one point of contact.
- 5.4.5 We will use new technologies to help people who need support to continue, nonetheless, to live independently at home and we will listen to what people want and treat them with respect. The outcome will be that they feel they have power to help themselves as much as possible, and that the services they need are being tailored to their individual circumstances.
- 5.4.6 In 2010 the following actions will be delivered to contribute to the individual services, empowered people theme.
- Improve access to psychological therapies that will enable to better care for themselves.
 - Implement the personal health budget pilot that will put people in control of the care they receive.
 - Improve access to community equipment that will enable people to support themselves in their own home for longer.

6. The impact

Jean and Tony

Jean and Tony live in Shaw. They have two children, a son aged 13 and a daughter aged 8. Tony works full-time in Oldham town centre, Jean works part-time in a local shop. A few months ago, Tony decided to stop driving to work and instead use the improved bus service, with a short walk at either end. Jean walks to her job along a well-lit pathway. Their daughter walks the half-mile to her primary school as part of a “walking bus”, and their son cycles the two miles to his secondary school along a designated cycle route, separate from the main road.

Through the secondary school’s involvement in the borough’s area plan for football, Tony – who was a keen player in his teens and twenties – has been attracted back into the game. He now coaches the school’s under 12s team (he decided that trying to coach a group including his son would be too stressful for them both!). His daughter came along a few times to watch, and has now joined her primary school team: her brother has started to give her tips on tactics.

The whole family are feeling fitter, and more involved in their community. They are starting to explore the local network of paths, and are planning longer walks towards the Pennine moors.

Pete

Pete is in his late twenties, and has always used alcohol as the focus of his social activity, spending most evenings in pubs, or drinking at home. A few weeks ago, after a Friday evening drinking, he fell while walking home and ended up at the hospital A&E department with a sprained ankle. This was not the first time he had appeared at A&E.

He was treated for the sprain, but also met an alcohol link worker based in A&E. The link worker discussed his drinking, and the impact it was having on his health and quality of life – not just sprained ankles and the like, but the longer-term risks of liver damage, heart disease and cancer. He agreed to join a group meeting at a local health and well-being centre that will support changes in lifestyle that are not so dependent on alcohol, including healthy eating and exercise.

Mr Raja Asgher

Since Mr Asgher’s wife died, he has lived on his own, but his daughter, son-in-law and their family live just a few streets away. He still wants to maintain his independence, but is finding a few things around the house just a bit more difficult. He has also had a couple of hospital admissions linked to a long-term heart condition.

His GP has ensured that he has been put in contact with the local well-being centre that brings together health and social care services. He started attending a drop-in session for older men, that helped him to understand the importance of lifestyle on his health, and gave advice on healthy eating and exercise.

He has been advised about telemonitoring of his condition, to give early warning of potential problems, so that interventions can be made in good time. He has been assured that this will not mean that health and social care professionals will be intruding into his home, just that services can be made available when they are necessary. Mr Asgher feels that his personal needs are recognised but that his ability to do most of what he needs for himself is supported by the GP's assessment and the technology that enables him to monitor his own condition and act accordingly.