

Tameside

Area Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



oneplace

for an independent overview
of local public services

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Tameside at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in Tameside. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

 Green flag: Getting local people involved

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for Tameside

The local area

The borough of Tameside is on the Eastern edge of Greater Manchester, stretching inland from the centre of Manchester to the moors of the Peak District. Around 214,000 people live there, mainly in nine towns - Ashton-under-Lyne, Audenshaw, Denton, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Hyde, Longdendale, Mossley and Stalybridge. It combines a mix of urban and rural landscapes and the area includes historic market towns.

Tameside is changing. The economy relies less on its strong manufacturing tradition with service industries now the largest employment sector. The population is also ageing and becoming increasingly diverse.

Tameside's public services have agreed six priorities that they are concentrating on to improve the quality of life and outcomes for all residents, with a focus on reducing inequalities across the borough. These are important as the borough has varying levels of wealth, poverty and quality of life.

The next section tells you how Tameside's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is Tameside doing?

Supportive Tameside

A strong desire to work with local people is paying dividends for partners. Partners place great importance on involving local people in the way they deliver services. Local people really make a difference in helping to shape spending decisions, redesign services and set future direction in important areas. People enjoy living in Tameside.

Tameside provides some of the best adult social care services in the country. These are helping people to live independent lives, with fewer people, particularly the elderly go into long-term care.

Schools and settings provide a safe environment for children and young people. The Council is taking firm action to strengthen the way it keeps children safe.

Too many teenage girls become pregnant. Despite attention from partners local targets to reduce this have been missed. We shall check in 2010 whether initiatives are having a positive impact on this.

The recession is making it more difficult for people to buy affordable homes. Housing developments have slowed significantly and there is a growing demand for affordable homes. Partners need to help meet this growing need.

The condition of homes is improving, especially in the poorest neighbourhoods. Partners continue to transform parts of the borough - demolishing poor quality homes, upgrading others, and developing a better blend of houses.

Prosperous Tameside

Local people continue to benefit from the growth of Tameside's economy. In recent years many new jobs have been created, with a good proportion of these going to people from the poorest neighbourhoods. Average wages and resident skills remain comparably low. Partners know that raising people's skills is important to help them access new jobs.

The response of local partners to the recession was rapid and robust and shows the strength of joint working. Co-ordinated effort across the Council, the Voluntary and Community Sector and other partners is helping to provide direct support to local firms and residents. The recession continues to put more pressure on youngsters, who are finding it hard to get on to the job or training ladder.

Tameside's transport links with Manchester are improving. Extensions to the Metrolink tram network and the long-awaited Ashton bypass will provide a real boost to those travelling to work across and outside the borough.

Learning Tameside

Most children and young people achieve good standards in Tameside's

schools. Good performance is achieved overall at primary school, and standards in secondary schools continue to rise. Local schools achieved their best GCSE results in 2009. School results are improving fastest in the worst performing parts of the borough.

School attendance is improving. The Council and its schools want to do even better. They are targeting their efforts on those secondary school pupils who regularly don't turn up for school. They also want to reduce permanent exclusions from school.

The numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment is fairly low. But, too many young people appear to drop out by the age of 17. By the age of 19, a growing number of young people are getting the equivalent of good GCSE and A-level qualifications.

More adults are getting access to the right courses, and are getting good qualifications. This is helping them to get better jobs and fulfil their potential. There are several organisations in Tameside who help volunteers to move into paid employment.

Attractive Tameside

Tameside has high-quality parks and open spaces, and a worthy reputation for its floral displays. This is a result of the time and effort that go into making the borough attractive. Residents are increasingly happy with their neighbourhoods as places to live.

Local people's pride in civic amenities continues to grow. Gardening clubs and allotment associations are getting more and more people involved in improving Tameside's appearance. This helps to regenerate areas and tackle issues like anti-social behaviour. Town halls and other public buildings provide excellent community facilities and are also a source of pride.

Recycling of household waste continues to rise. Not only does this help to support a better environment, but it also saves money. Local people help to decide what this money should be spent on. Tameside's streets are clean and getting cleaner. Partners know that this is leading to an increase in residents' pride in their neighbourhood and how safe they feel.

Local public bodies are committed to reducing their environmental impact, and are exploring ways to do this. The Council already has a good record of reducing the energy it uses. The public and local businesses are being encouraged to save energy, but partners know that much remains to be done.

Healthy Tameside

People in Tameside are generally less healthy than the rest of England. But life expectancy is rising though still well below the national average - especially for females. The area has significantly higher rates of death from heart disease, strokes and cancer.

Excessive drinking is a problem. This has a serious effect not only on people's health but also on the level of violent crime. The Police, Council and NHS are working hard to promote sensible drinking, and make town centres safer places to socialise.

Smoking rates are much higher than average, as are smoking related deaths and the numbers of pregnant mothers who smoke. But the smoking quit rate is one of the highest nationally and has increased significantly over the last year.

Local leaders play a valuable role in ensuring health remains a top priority. This includes investing in new buildings and initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles and improve access to health services. This is helping to improve health and raise levels of exercise which is important, given the levels of obesity in Tameside.

The local partnership knows it needs to continue to give this issue a high profile. Partners have an effective Health Improvement and Health Inequalities plan that they are working to deliver - the plan is being updated to strengthen the focus on cancer, heart disease, tobacco and alcohol.

Safe Tameside

Despite falls in recent years, crime remains too high. Crime is higher than similar areas and while the long-term trend is down there are signs that it is falling behind. Crimes which affect public confidence such as burglary remain too high.

The Police, Council and other partners work well together and have a good track record of making Tameside a safer place - they are taking firm action in response to a recent increase in crime. New ways of delivering services have been introduced which partners hope will have a significant and long-term impact on crime levels. We will look carefully at progress in the 2010 area assessment.

Partners respond well to areas in need of improvement. This is helping to improve youth offending services - levels of reoffending by young people compares with similar areas and partners now work well together.

Partners are clear about the link between excessive alcohol consumption and violent crime. Good partnership working combines police action with promotion of sensible drinking - this is having some positive impact, but the issue needs continuing focus.

About Tameside

A recent survey shows that in Tameside 67 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is lower than the average for similar areas and lower than the national average of 81 per cent.

The borough of Tameside lies to the east of Greater Manchester, stretching inland from the centre of Manchester to the moors of the Peak District.

Tameside shares borders with Oldham, Manchester, Stockport and the Derbyshire borough of High Peak. Tameside consists of nine towns - Ashton-under-Lyne, Audenshaw, Denton, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Hyde, Longdendale, Mossley and Stalybridge. The borough has a strong manufacturing tradition, mostly in the areas of textiles and engineering, but service industries are now the largest employment sector.

Tameside is changing. Over the next 20 years, Tameside's age profile is forecast to change dramatically, with a significant rise in the number of older people. The borough is also becoming increasingly diverse, with 7.7 per cent of residents from black or minority ethnic groups, of which people of Asian heritage make up the largest number, mainly living in Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde.

Tameside is the 56th most deprived borough in England - an improvement on its position of 49th in 2004. This means that the quality of life for Tameside's residents has improved overall. This includes areas of significant poverty, such as in parts of Ashton, Denton and Hattersley which are some of the poorest places in the country. Overall Tameside is a borough of contrasts, with some areas having many people claiming benefits or on low incomes, alongside much more well-off areas.

Unemployment is slightly higher than the national average, but lower than Greater Manchester as a whole. Over 35 per cent of residents aged 16-74 have no qualifications. Across Tameside, demand for housing generally exceeds supply. The area needs 24,000 extra homes over the next few decades including more affordable housing.

The Tameside Strategic Partnership is a group of different organisations in the area which includes the Council, health services, the police, the private sector, housing landlords and people from community and voluntary groups and organisations. Working together they aim to make Tameside an even better place to live and to reduce inequality across all areas of the borough.

These partners are concentrating on the six priorities identified by local residents: Supportive Tameside; Prosperous Tameside; Learning Tameside; Attractive Tameside; Safe Tameside; Healthy Tameside. The Partnership has agreed priority targets for the borough with central government within a Local Area Agreement (LAA). More information about the priorities for Tameside is available at <http://www.tameside-strategic-partnership.org.uk/>.

How well do priorities for Tameside express community needs and aspirations?

The way in which partners work together across Tameside is strong. The Tameside Strategic Partnership is a mature and effective body that provides clear community leadership for local people. This is vital given the challenges faced to improve the quality of life and outcomes for all residents. Partners are clearly committed to staying focused on these challenges.

Tameside's partners understand what people from different backgrounds

want. Partners want to tackle inequalities and improve services for everyone. Partners across Tameside work well with local people to understand their current needs and these are reflected in locally agreed plans such as the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 to 2019.

The Council, health providers, the Police and others have looked at people's changing needs and are delivering services differently. For example, they are clear about the future cost and other demands on public services of a significantly ageing population.

Important challenges for Tameside include: continuing to drive down the levels of poverty; continuing to reduce the number of people who are out of work and to improve people's skills; improving health, safety, well being and opportunities for Children and Young People; improving residents' health and well being, particularly tackling health inequalities; ensuring residents are safe and feel safe; responding to the challenges of an ageing population; continuing to deliver a programme of environmental improvements; and improving transport. Tameside's priorities and targets prominently reflect these challenges. Partners show strong ambition to help all local people to have better opportunities and a superior quality of life.

Extensive and on-going work with local people helps to support the Tameside partnership. Partners are active involving local people in shaping plans to address their needs; this includes working with black and minority ethnic groups and other groups who are at risk of disadvantage and to involve them in shaping plans. For example, St Peter's Partnership - an initiative involving public partners and local residents - helps local people to learn and find work opportunities. Networks such as Listen Here!, The Really Important Network, and the Big Chat involve more and more vulnerable people, helping to deliver services in different ways.

The results of the national Place Survey show fewer people than the national average think that people from different backgrounds do get along - but local data shows an improving trend on this issue. The Place Survey also found that fewer people than average have been involved in volunteering over the last year - again, this is not borne out by local figures, which show an increase in volunteering.

Partners are starting to make a difference in areas such as life expectancy, and have maintained improvements in school results. There is good involvement of children and young people who are in the care of the Council, and some good examples of gathering the views of children with communication difficulties. Adults who use health and social care services have a strong voice in running services, and these services work well to engage members of black and minority ethnic communities.

Fewer people in Tameside believe they can influence local decisions than is the case nationally, according to the Place Survey - this result is in contrast to the latest figures from the Council's Citizen's Panel, which were significantly higher on this issue. Local people do help to shape decisions, some of which are innovative. For example, young people have worked with the Council, the Police and a film company to produce a series of videos highlighting the effects of knife crime.

Supportive Tameside

Green flag: Getting local people involved

A strong desire to work with local people is paying dividends. Partners place much importance on involving local people in the way they deliver services. Views of service users and non-users from across Tameside are sought. This is helping to shape spending decisions, redesign services and set future direction especially in important areas such as supportive communities and making the borough an attractive place.

Within adult social care services, there are many excellent examples of working with people to improve Council and other services. By involving local communities in this way partners are able to improve social care services, but also other services such as leisure, health, community safety, transport and the environment.

People who use adult social care services help to decide how partners spend taxpayers' money. And many actively volunteer to help deliver services - this includes older people, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs.

Tameside's adult social care services are one of the best in the country and it is building on this by working closely with users and carers. This includes involving carers' groups and acting quickly to address any unmet needs.

Partners complement regular conferences for people who use services with other conversations to help inform their work. Examples include the Really Important Questions conference, Listen Here and the Big Chat. Partners listen to peoples' views using them to shape spending decisions and redesign services. A particular strength is the Local Involvement Network (LINK) which has strong connections to other people who use the services.

Partners know involving communities helps people to take responsibility and have pride in their neighbourhoods. Local housing associations, the Council, local community groups and others use events like Tameside in Bloom to encourage community involvement while also making Tameside a more attractive place. Winning events like North-West in Bloom for 4 years running is making a real difference - helping to improve resident satisfaction with their neighbourhoods, but also contribute to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving health outcomes.

Supportive Tameside

Tameside provides some of the best adult social care services in the country. Services are rated as excellent by government inspectors. Strengths include, helping more local residents to live independently than in similar areas, and giving people more control over the services they receive.

This has been achieved as a result of strong partnership working. A good example is the Active Ageing Programme, a pilot project for people 55+. The focus of activities has centred on Health and Well being. It includes exercise, health checks from medical professionals, and sessions from community safety

and Fire and Rescue Service staff.

Fewer people, particularly elderly people, go into long-term care. This is because partners provide a good range of services to promote independence. Increasing numbers of those who need care are given the money to pay for it themselves (called 'direct payments'). New Charter Housing with the Council also provides new specialist facilities to help promote people's independence. For example, Beaumont Place in Stalybridge for adults with learning disabilities. So, partners are working well to understand and respond to what people need.

People enjoy living in Tameside, according to the latest Council survey. More than 85 per cent of residents said they were happy with their local area. And more than two-thirds of people said they felt people from different backgrounds got on well together. A 10-fold increase in the number of older people taking part in volunteering is improving their sense of well-being.

Partners provide good support for vulnerable adults. This is helping them to keep vulnerable adults safe. A particular strength is the increasing number of different agencies who are working together. This includes local health services helping to fund partnership working, but at present the funding remains short-term.

Schools and settings provide a safe environment for children and young people - according to recent inspections. But there are some weaknesses in certain aspects of childcare as found in a 2008 inspection of children's services. It is clear the Council is taking firm action to strengthen the way it keeps children safe and can provide evidence of improvements. Performance against important targets is at least as good as similar areas and national averages on most measures. However, there has not been a full inspection to gauge progress. Until this further inspection takes place the findings of the 2008 inspection will remain valid.

Children placed for adoption experience fewer moves and this stability is good for them. Good progress has been made in reducing the numbers of children on the child protection register for more than 2 years. However the number is still above the national average.

The recession is making it more difficult for people to buy affordable homes. Calls for help from tenants living in poor quality rented accommodation have risen sharply; and fewer affordable homes are available as housing developments have slowed significantly. House prices are not particularly high in Tameside, but some people are struggling to afford a home. Housing associations and the Council need to continue to help meet the growing need for affordable homes.

Homelessness is low and falling. Fewer people live in temporary accommodation, and there's no Bed & Breakfast or hostel accommodation currently being used. New Charter Housing and the Council are working well together to support people who may become homeless. This includes a Sanctuary Scheme - helping those escaping domestic violence to find somewhere else to live. Not only is this supporting vulnerable people, but it is also saving more than £750,000 of taxpayers' money so far.

The condition of homes is improving, especially in the poorest neighbourhoods. This includes, demolishing poor quality homes in parts of Ashton, upgrading homes in the West End and St Michael's, and building new homes in Holy Trinity. This is helping to give people the accommodation they are looking for. In Hattersley, a long-term £40m plan to transform housing is progressing - aiming to deliver a better blend of 2 to 4 bedroom houses.

Almost one in five households cannot afford to keep their homes warm. This can have a serious effect on people's health - with figures showing an increase in the number of older people dying during the winter. The Council, NHS, and housing partners have a good strategy for tackling this problem; this aims to make homes more energy efficient and help people get the advice and financial support to keep warm.

Teenage pregnancy rates are not reducing despite partnership attention. Too many teenage girls become pregnant. Pregnancy rates are significantly higher than national averages, and targets to reduce this have been missed. This may make a real impact on the lives of these young girls - including their school results.

The Council, NHS, schools and others know that rates of teenage pregnancies are too high. They now have better information to help tackle this problem and have improved sexual health services offered to young people. These improvements have been acknowledged by external assessors. But, the impact of this approach is not yet clear. We shall look next year at whether this action is achieving results.

Prosperous Tameside

Local people have benefited from the growth of Tameside's economy. More people in Tameside have jobs or are looking for work, than most other places in Greater Manchester. Before the recession unemployment had fallen, with a slight drop in the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits and new business start-ups were rising.

The partnership works well with local businesses to create local jobs - developments include Ashton Moss, creating over 1,700 new jobs over the last few years. A good proportion of these jobs have gone to people from the poorest neighbourhoods. Projects such as St Peter's Partnership Pre-recruitment are helping more local people become employable - this is a two-week training programme that builds confidence, and develops interview techniques and time-management skills. Also, in response to the recession local partners are working with the Learning and Skills Council and Tameside College to help train people who've been unemployed for a long time with skills to help gain jobs.

Average wages are rising, but remain comparably low. Residents' skills are also still fairly low and this stops them getting better paid jobs. Partners know that raising people's skills will attract more firms to invest in the borough. They are also aware that a strong local economy has a positive impact on people's health and well-being.

Partners provide good opportunities for young people to achieve economic

well-being. The partnership is achieving outcomes generally in line with both similar areas and national figures. The numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment is relatively low. But too many young people appear to drop out by the age of 17.

The recession is putting more pressure on youngsters, who are finding it hard to get on to the job or training ladder. The Council, Job Centre Plus and other partners have a good track record of supporting youngsters into work or training, and figures support this. But recent performance is mixed - missing targets agreed with government. Also, some areas of Tameside are doing better than others - Ashton's youngsters are doing better than those in Denton South.

The response of local partners to the recession was rapid and robust. Partners set up the Tameside Business Family to help local businesses to support one another. There is also close working with the voluntary and community groups, co-ordinated through the Tameside Third Sector Coalition (T3SC). T3SC knows the recession will increase demand for services provided by voluntary and community organisations and an additional £150,000 is already in place to support this.

Partners took swift action to help local businesses. This included hosting events to offer support and help shape its approach. A good example is the Tameside Works First (TWF) initiative. Its first phase sees around £12m of Council funds being set aside. This money will help to improve the fabric of the borough. So far, 45 local companies are working on 125 projects worth £2.6m. The Council is paying local suppliers faster and providing free parking in Council car parks 3 days a week. The partners' response to the recession shows the strength of joint working in Tameside.

Tameside's transport links with Manchester are improving. The Metrolink tram extension to Droylsden is due for completion in 2012, and a recent announcement gave the go-ahead to the line being extended to Ashton, as well as building the long-awaited Ashton bypass. Partners know that these improvements will provide a real boost to those needing to travel to work outside the borough, as well as speeding up travel across the borough. Partners are investing heavily in improving bus travel - with four Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) schemes in Tameside. This has contributed to an increase in passenger numbers on these routes of between 5 per cent and 45 per cent.

Business growth and new jobs are helping people in the poorest neighbourhoods. The Council has stimulated nearly £450m of investment into the Economic Development Zone at Ashton Moss - attracting new businesses and a hotel, including Greater Manchester Police and the NHS. A new office development in St Petersfield has revitalised a previously run-down part of Ashton.

Learning Tameside

Most children and young people achieve good standards in Tameside's schools. Young children do well and at the end of primary school this good performance is maintained. At this age, some children from minority ethnic backgrounds do not achieve as well as the national average or their peers in

similar areas. However, this gap has closed by the end of secondary school. By the age of 16 young people achieve the same standards as those in similar areas and national averages and standards continue to rise. The overwhelming majority of indicators show a good performance in this area.

School results in Tameside continue to improve, and their gap with the national average is reducing. Local schools achieved their best GCSE results in 2009, up 9 percentage points on the previous year. School results are improving fastest in the worst performing areas - closing the gap between the worst and best performing areas.

School attendance is improving. The number of children and young people who are absent from school is getting lower, year by year. The Council and its schools want to do even better - they are targeting their efforts on those secondary school pupils who regularly don't turn up for school. They are also aiming to reduce the number of pupils who are permanently excluded from school - as despite improvement performance remains only average.

Provision for Making a Positive contribution is good overall. Relatively few young people become involved with the youth justice system and of those that do few are kept in prison or other secure places. The majority of them are also in some form of education or training. The rate has increased 61 per cent in 2008 to 75 per cent in 2009. This is giving them the opportunity to learn new skills and to be more able to find a job.

Provision for achieving economic well-being is generally very good and satisfactory for younger children. The partnership achieves outcomes in line with others - such as similar areas and national figures. The numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment is relatively low. But, too many young people appear to drop out by the age of 17. The target agreed with government for reducing the number of young people without jobs or work-based training has been missed.

By the age of 19, a growing number of young people are getting the equivalent of good GCSE and A-level qualifications. The recession is putting more pressure on these youngsters, who are finding it hard to get onto the job or training ladder - this is particularly the case, for example, in Denton South. Partners are working to better support these young people; for example, the Tameside V- involved project works with Northwest Employers to provide volunteering opportunities for young people. This helps prepare them for the workplace. In areas such as Ashton, work like this has led to fewer young people without jobs or training.

Through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, all secondary schools are being refurbished or rebuilt. The programme aims to transform what young people achieve at school. In Tameside, this is a £300 million investment - phase 1 sees the rebuilding of Mossley Hollins and St Damian's high schools; and New Charter Academy and Samuel Laycock school will benefit from new buildings.

Partners know that learning is not just about children and young people. More adults are getting access to the right courses, and are getting good qualifications. This is helping them to get better jobs and fulfil their potential. There are several organisations in Tameside who help volunteers to move into paid employment - one example is St Peter's Youth in Ashton, where over

50% of the volunteers go on to get a job.

Attractive Tameside

Tameside has high-quality parks and open spaces. So, residents are increasingly happy with their neighbourhoods as places to live.

The Council invests time and money in the borough's green spaces, with 15 of them getting national recognition for their quality. The area's floral displays have long attracted awards - in 2008 Tameside won the large city category of the North-West in Bloom competition for the fourth year running.

Local people's pride in civic amenities continues to grow. Gardening clubs and allotment associations are getting more and more people involved in improving Tameside's appearance. And this helps to regenerate areas and also tackle issues like anti-social behaviour. At Central Estate in Dukinfield, residents, their landlord New Charter Housing and the Tameside in Bloom team turned the estate into a floral display - helping to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour. Elsewhere, Haughton Green Community Forum in Denton South worked with the Council and Groundwork Tameside - residents created a space that boasts a new playground, a multi-use games area, and a wildflower meadow. Five community groups have received Green Pennant Awards for managing high-quality green spaces.

Tameside's town halls and other public buildings provide excellent community facilities. Partners have refurbished these buildings, which are a source of pride. Ashton Market Hall, for example, has been completely restored following a devastating fire; it now provides a modern environment for market traders and shoppers within an historic building. Dukinfield Town Hall, too, has been heavily invested in and provides a first-class setting for events.

Recycling of household waste continues to grow - it is now over 35 per cent, which is a big increase on a year ago. Not only helping to support a better environment, but also saving money. The Council has given £380,000 back to local communities through the 'Cash in the Bin' initiative - through their District Assemblies, people can decide what this money should be spent on to improve their neighbourhoods.

Tameside's streets are clean and getting cleaner. There is less litter and graffiti - a successful marketing campaign entitled "most people" has encouraged people to dispose of their litter correctly. Partners know the impact the appearance of an area has on residents' pride in their neighbourhood and how safe they feel - local surveys show that people are feeling increasing good about their neighbourhood.

Local public bodies are increasingly committed to reducing their environmental impact. Progress is gathering pace - with them exploring how this can be achieved. The Council already has a good record of reducing the energy it uses - it is starting to install energy-efficient street lighting; and a heat-exchanger has been installed at Dukinfield Crematorium to reduce energy use. The public is being encouraged to save energy through, for example, fitting loft or cavity wall insulation. Local businesses, too, are using less energy - 16 companies led the way in 2008 by saving nearly 2000 tonnes of carbon

dioxide.

Much remains to be done to encourage residents and businesses to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. However, the increasing commitment from public bodies both in Tameside and across Greater Manchester is an encouraging step forward - measurable impact is the next step.

More people are using the area's buses and this is helping the environment. Passenger numbers have increased overall, in contrast with a national trend of falling numbers - the Manchester/Ashton/Stalybridge route has seen an increase of 45%. A start has been made on extending the Metrolink tram network to Droylsden, due for completion in 2012. Funding has recently been agreed to extend the line from Droylsden to Ashton - this is a real success story for the borough. These developments will, in time, help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by reducing the number of cars on the road.

Healthy Tameside

People in Tameside are generally less healthy than the rest of England. Although life expectancy is increasing, it is still well below the national average - especially for females.

Someone in the poorest part of Tameside is likely to live 5-6 years less than someone in the wealthiest neighbourhood. The area has significantly higher rates of death from heart disease and strokes. Early deaths from cancer, too, are much higher than the national average - though there has been a decrease over last 10 years, and the gap between the area and England has narrowed.

Alcohol misuse is also a problem - whether it is alcohol-related admissions to hospital or binge drinking, both are well above the national average and continue to rise. Not only does this have a serious effect on people's health, but also on the level of violent crime. The police, Council and NHS are working hard to promote sensible drinking, and make town centres safer places to socialise. Partners have set up a task group to develop key actions and targets. Activity like Droylsden's Lose Booze Operation has had a good impact - removing over £6,000 of alcohol from being consumed on Tameside's streets.

Smoking rates are much higher than average, as are smoking related deaths and the numbers of pregnant mothers who smoke. The Primary Care Trust (PCT) and partners are working well to increase the smoking quit rate - which is one of the highest nationally and has increased significantly over the last year. Campaigns such as 'what will you miss' and leaflet campaigns are seen to have played a key part in this.

Local leaders play a valuable role in ensuring health remains a top priority. The Council has invested over £7 million to remodel three leisure facilities at Copley, Ashton and Hyde. This has helped increase the number of children and adults attending sport and leisure sessions by over 27,000 since 2006. Obesity among adults is higher than the England average and is coupled with comparably low levels of physically active children. Schools encourage healthy lifestyles, but some aspects could be improved to help the increase in

overweight children.

Better health services are now available for local people. The PCT has responded actively to reduce waiting times and improve the quality of services. For example, the waiting times for hearing aid systems has been reduced from three months to five days. The poor quality of stroke rehabilitation led to a new stroke rehabilitation centre, which reduced the time patients spend in hospital. A new £9.8 million Ashton Primary Care Centre was opened in 2009 - providing local people with better and more accessible health services closer to home. To help everyone have regular check-ups and treatment, a Dental Access Centre is now open in Hyde - this was a response to local concerns about dental health.

The NHS, Council, schools and other partners are doing a lot to encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles. This focus lies at the heart of partners' work to improve people's health - their success has been recognised through a national award for encouraging more women to be aware of breast cancer. Partners know they need to do more and must continue to give this issue a high profile. An example of this good joint working is the Festival of Sport & Physical Activity held at Medlock Leisure Centre. It involved the Sports Trust, New Charter Housing Trust, the Fire Service, and a range of local sports clubs.

Initiatives such as the Health Trainer Programme have been developed to help people improve their health. The programme started with a focus on those aged 50-64 living in the poorer communities. Its success has led to the programme being extended to anyone aged 18 or over. Also as a result of this programme, Health Mentors will be in place in 2010 to work with children on improving their health.

Partners have an effective Health Improvement and Health Inequalities plan that they are working to deliver - the plan is being updated to strengthen the focus on cancer, heart disease, tobacco and alcohol.

Safe Tameside

Despite falls in recent years, crime remains too high. Crime is higher than similar areas and while the long-term trend is down there are signs that it is falling behind. The Police, Council and other partners work well together and have a good track record of making Tameside a safer place - they have responded well to a recent increase in crime. We shall be looking carefully next year at whether this improvement is being maintained.

Partners work well with local communities to identify and tackle resident concerns - using Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings to bring together community representatives, Police, Patrollers and other Council staff to identify local priorities.

Crimes which affect public confidence such as burglary remain too high. Targets agreed with government to reduce burglaries and violent crime were missed. Serious violent crime numbers have risen in recent years, though the number of crimes represented by this increase was small. Latest figures show this is now falling.

Partners have taken firm action to respond to recent crime rises. For example, tackling rises in burglary hot spots such as Ashton via Operation Bridge. This involved police, Patrollers, New Charter Housing and others working with local people to tackle their concerns about crime; this led to the number of crimes falling. Because of its success, the approach is being extended to Droylsden.

Partners have put in place Integrated Offender Management - hoping this will have a significant and long-term impact on crime levels. It involves supporting those who persistently commit crime by dealing with their various problems - such as drug and alcohol misuse, not having a home, and not having the skills to get a job. It aims to stop them committing more crime. The impact of this work won't be known until January 2010, when it is going to be reviewed.

An inspection by HMI Probation confirms that levels of reoffending by young people compares with similar areas and partners work well together. The inspection findings were encouraging given the progress Tameside has made to improve the quality of its work with children and young people.

The difference between crime levels in Tameside's poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the area is falling. Ashton St Peter's has suffered as a crime hot spot; but there have been big falls in crime following good work by the police and Council. One idea uses text messaging to tell young people what's on locally, to help stop them getting into trouble.

There's a well-understood link between alcohol consumption and the number of violent crimes in the area. The Safer Tameside against Night-time Disorder (STAND) initiative combines police action with promotion of sensible drinking. It aims to make town centres safer places to socialise. As a result, alcohol-related disorder fell, as did the level of violent crimes in the area. Alcohol-related admissions to hospital, though, continue to rise and this needs continuing focus by health services, the Council and Police.

Partners are working well to tackle drug-related crime. The Tameside Drug Intervention project is helping more offenders to get effective treatment; in 2008, partners helped over 1,000 people get drug treatment. Initiatives are targeted at the needs of specific communities. Bridging the Gap aims to help ex-drug users and members of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities get into work or education. It also encourages them to do voluntary work aimed at helping others tackle substance misuse.

The number of fires across Tameside continues to fall. Cases of arson have reduced significantly, and the number of house fires has also fallen. This good performance is a result of the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police, the Council and schools working well together.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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