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Headline A STARRING ROLE FOR BOLTON?: LIGHTS, CAMERA, BOLTON!

A group of national film and TV location managers visited Bolton yesterday (Feb 27) as research for future dramas in which the town will play a leading role.

Eight members of the London-based Guild of Location Managers visited Bolton as part of a familiarisation trip to scout out locations for future films and TV productions. The trip was organised by Bolton Council and North West Vision and Media which promotes the region's own movie industry and the use of the region as a location for TV and movie productions.

The location managers visited the Grade II listed Town Hall, which doubled up as a Romanian courthouse in Channel 4's *Shameless*; as well as Victoria Square and Le Mans Crescent which have been used for everything from filming adverts for Kellogg's to BBC police drama *Between the Lines*.

Later, the managers took a tour of the Shree Swaminarayan Temple which has a stunning hand-painted ceiling and the Castle Street police station which contains the original courtroom, dock and cells and has been used for filming both *New Street Law* and *Coronation Street*. Finally, the location managers were taken on a trip around Bolton's stunning countryside and country houses, including Smithills Hall.

Bolton has appeared in numerous films and TV dramas, including Channel 4's *Shameless*, which used the Town Hall steps and dressed the entrance of the Town Hall as a Romanian courthouse, Peter Kay's *Phoenix Nights* which was filmed almost entirely on location in St Gregory's Club in Farnworth and BBC1's award-winning *Life on Mars*, which transformed streets in Farnworth and Great Lever into realistic 70s settings.

Susan Williams, Film Liaison Officer at North West Vision and Media said: "The Greater Manchester Film Office know that Bolton is a great place to film, bursting with diverse locations, friendly people and a willingness to help, so we were very keen to spread the word to members of the Guild of Location Managers, who are mainly London based. They were extremely impressed and found that the locations had a lot to offer a potential film crew. With the expansion of TV drama in the region, it won't be long until you hear 'Lights, Camera, Bolton!'

Mick Ratman, Chairman of the Guild of Location Managers said: "It's wonderful to see how Bolton welcomes film-makers and has opened itself up to filming, and it's been good to see so many varied locations so close together from the stunning Victorian Town Hall to the mediaeval grandeur of Smithills Hall."

Councillor Ebrahim Adia, Executive Member for Development at Bolton Council commented: "Bolton welcomes film makers and always tries to accommodate their requests. Filming puts the borough on the map, is interesting for local people, and of course brings economic benefits.

"Bolton has starred in a number of high profile TV dramas in recent years and we hope that this visit will help the town to play a leading role in attracting filmmakers in the future. We are proud of Bolton's unspoilt skyline, buildings and open spaces and whilst we are committed to regeneration, we are determined to keep the town's character intact. We hope that this blend of traditional and modern will continue to attract film makers to Bolton."