

Inspection report

December 2003



Supporting People Programme

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

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Summary

Introduction to the Supporting People Programme

- 1 'Supporting People' is the Government's long-term policy to enable local authorities to plan, commission and provide housing related support services that help vulnerable people live independently. The programme went live on 1 April 2003.
- 2 The aim of the Supporting People programme is to establish a strategic, integrated policy and funding framework, delivered locally in response to identified local needs, to replace the current complex and uncoordinated arrangements for providing housing related support services for vulnerable people.
- 3 The Supporting People programme brings together a number of funding streams including transitional housing benefit (THB), which has paid for the support costs associated with housing during the implementation phase, the Housing Corporation's supported housing management grant (SHMG) and probation accommodation grant scheme (PAGS) into a single pot to be administered by 150 administering local authorities.
- 4 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) is one of the first councils to be inspected. This report therefore reflects the current context for the council as it moves from implementation to the introduction of the programme and focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery and the outcomes of this for vulnerable people.

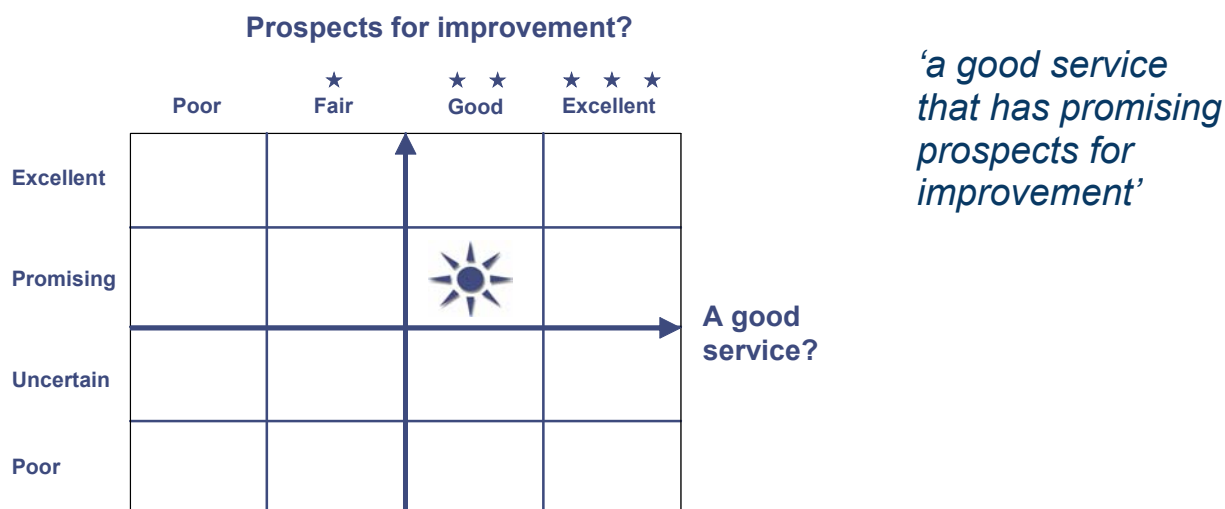
Background

- 5 Bury is a metropolitan council in the North West of England situated between Bolton and Rochdale in the Greater Manchester conurbation. Bury is comprised of six townships, Bury (West & East), Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom and Tottington, Whitefield and Unsworth.
- 6 The population of Bury is 181,000 of which 6.1 per cent are from minority ethnic communities. The borough has relatively low unemployment and high home ownership. Unemployment is 2.3 per cent, which is below the national average of 3.6 per cent. Of 16 wards in the borough, only one is in the top 10 per cent of the UK's most deprived wards.
- 7 The council is Labour controlled with 28 of 48 councillors. The council operates under a leader and cabinet style government, with an executive committee of 10 members, of which 8 have a portfolio of responsibilities.
- 8 The council employs 8,000 staff across all services. The council's revenue budget for 2003/04 is £277.5 million.
- 9 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council acts as the administering local authority for the Supporting People programme in its area. The council works in partnership with Bury Primary Care Trust and Bury and Rochdale Probation Service in commissioning Supporting People services.
- 10 The total amount of Supporting People grant funding available in 2003/04 is £7.2 million. The council receives £231,509 Supporting People administration grant to fulfil its role as the administering authority.

Scoring the service

- 11 We have assessed the council as providing a 'good', two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Scoring chart¹: Bury Metropolitan Borough Council Supporting People Programme



What works well

- 12 During our inspection we found a number of positive features in the way that the Supporting People programme has been implemented to date. These include:
- ◆ Positive outcomes for service users are beginning to be realised as a result of the Supporting People programme through additional services and a robust system of service reviews that is seeking to identify areas for improvement in terms of the quality of the services provided.
 - ◆ Arrangements for the commissioning of new services and the ongoing review of existing projects are robust leading to an improvement in the scale and quality of services available to the people of Bury. The authority has targeted high cost schemes for early review with a view to identifying cost effectiveness and value for money in the programme.
 - ◆ Linkages between the Supporting People programme and the local strategic partnership and area panels are beginning to develop. These are providing the programme with a better grounding in meeting the needs and aspirations of Bury's communities.
 - ◆ The current service demonstrates effective links between all the partner organisations including the voluntary sector. The partner representatives on the commissioning body are at a senior level and voluntary sector involvement is evident on the core strategy group.
 - ◆ There are sound mechanisms for the involvement of councillors in the delivery of the programme through the creation of a cross-scrutiny panel.
 - ◆ Providers of services have a positive view of the council's Supporting People team as a result of the help and assistance they have received in implementing Supporting People.

¹ The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the service or function is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent service (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the service, also on a four-point scale.

- ◆ Providers considered the council's charging policy, that will determine the level of financial contribution from new service users for long term housing related support services, to be accessible and clear.
- ◆ Consultation with service users is recognised as an essential part of the scheme review process and is being actively pursued.
- ◆ An action plan is in place to deliver the Supporting People five year strategy that, if followed, will meet the ODPM deadline of 1 November 2004.
- ◆ The council has met the published statutory conditions for the management of Supporting People grant.
- ◆ The council are in the process of appointing a team leader for support needs who will help co-ordinate access to Supporting People services and the duties described for this post holder will result in improved outcomes for service users.
- ◆ Initial mapping of housing related support needs in Bury was comprehensive and the council has fulfilled the commitment made in the shadow strategy to research further the needs of groups where service provision is not in place or underdeveloped.
- ◆ The council has been active in developing cross-authority arrangements with other Greater Manchester authorities and this will improve access to services for vulnerable people whose needs cannot be met within the administering local authority area.
- ◆ The transition to Supporting People funding has been managed successfully. Assessments for the purposes of transitional housing benefit, that determined the level of the majority of housing related support funding prior to 1 April, were thorough.
- ◆ The council's programme of service reviews are facilitating a further assessment of the Supporting People funding that will be required and are ensuring that appropriate services are funded within the guidelines for eligibility.
- ◆ Some work has been undertaken by the council with the relevant service providers concerning risks posed by offenders, for example, there is a multi agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) which is agreed through a forum, for partner agencies to meet and prepare plans for a number of individuals who pose a risk to public safety.

Areas for improvement

- 13 However, we found the following weaknesses with the Supporting People programme that need to be addressed. These include:
- ◆ The engagement of users is underdeveloped as are the visible means for communicating with users and potential users. The inclusive forum has operated primarily as a vehicle for discussions with providers and other arrangements for creating a dialogue with users, carers and advocacy groups are yet to be fully explored.
 - ◆ The priorities for future development have yet to be ranked and remain at the level of a broad desire to fill all the gaps in service provision that have been identified.
 - ◆ The commissioning body has yet to fully develop as the body that directs the course of the Supporting People programme, drives improvements and sets a clear strategic steer in Bury.
 - ◆ The partnerships with health and probation lack clearly expressed and shared aims and shared targets for the programme that are understood by housing related support providers, commissioning managers within the

council, health service providers and others involved in the criminal justice services in Bury.

- 14 We have judged that the Supporting People programme has promising prospects for delivering further improvements. We found the following strengths:

What works well

- ◆ The commissioning body has already taken some tough decisions in relation to the revenue funding of new schemes that did not receive the expected pipeline funding for the revenue funding of newly created schemes from the ODPM where money has been secured to fund the capital cost of buildings.
- ◆ The commissioning body has demonstrated that it is capable of taking bold decisions in a manner that demonstrates joint ownership of the needs of Bury's residents and the requirement to prioritise these needs.
- ◆ The commissioning body and core strategy group have begun the process of developing the five year strategy for the Supporting People programme in Bury.
- ◆ Performance monitoring and staff appraisal arrangements are in place. The aims of the programme in Bury are monitored and linked to individual work targets.
- ◆ The council's Supporting People team has sound operational practices and a clear commitment to delivering the programme in Bury to achieve improved outcomes for all vulnerable people.
- ◆ The service review process and reality checks are already instrumental in improving service delivery.

Areas for improvement

- 15 There are, however, some areas in which the council needs to improve:
- ◆ Although there are some examples of positive practice there are no consistent systems for communicating with and encouraging the participation of service users to help shape the future delivery of Supporting People in Bury.
 - ◆ The framework for the operation of the core strategy group and the commissioning body are in place but these would benefit from some further clarification in particular around the relationship with the administering authority, a clear definition of potential areas of conflict and proposals to address these.
 - ◆ The targets for the Supporting People team have yet to be developed to fully reflect that the programme has moved beyond implementation. The mechanisms for monitoring progress against these targets needs to be formalised. Partners are beginning to recognise the positive impact that the Supporting People programme can have on their own ambitions and goals but as yet the systems for identifying progress in these matters is not developed.
 - ◆ Risk appraisal and contingency planning in relation to the delivery of the Supporting People programme are underdeveloped.

Recommendations

- 16 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, councils need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. In this context, we are making the following recommendations:
- ◆ Develop a risk appraisal and contingency planning for the Supporting People services in Bury with an emphasis on the potential for service failure. These plans should be linked to the corporate programme of risk management, should be clearly recorded and agreed by the commissioning body.
 - ◆ The commissioning body must agree an action plan with clear targets for the development and delivery of the programme in the context of the five year strategy. Performance management and monitoring arrangements must be in place.
 - ◆ The commissioning body should consider how performance indicators and other statistical information provided by all the partners can be used to evidence the impact that the Supporting people programme is having in Bury.
 - ◆ Develop and deliver the five year strategy to reflect the information being gathered from service users about their views and needs for future services and the quality of existing services.
 - ◆ Take steps to ensure the representative nature of attendees at the core strategy group from service providers, including those from the voluntary sector.
 - ◆ The commissioning body with the administering local authority needs to agree the procedures under which the administering local authority will exercise its veto over decisions where there is a demonstrable financial risk to the council.
 - ◆ Implement the proposed additional elements of budgetary control for the administration grant as set out in the council's written response to the inspection team.
 - ◆ Undertake further work on risks and contingencies that includes the assessment of violent and sexual offenders and links to the multi agency public protection panels.
 - ◆ Protect users, staff and the public by ensuring there are information sharing agreements in place covering all high risk groups, agreed by all relevant agencies, and an updated housing allocation and support policy for offenders to make it consistent with the multi agency public protection arrangements.
- 17 We would like to thank the staff of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council particularly Susan Jordan, Glyn Meacher and the Supporting People team who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

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Report

Context

- 18 This report has been prepared by the Audit Commission ('the Commission') following an inspection under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, and issued in accordance with its duty under Section 13 of the 1999 Act.

The locality

- 19 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council is in the North West of England. Situated between Bolton to the West and Rochdale to the East, it consists of six townships, Bury (West & East), Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom and Tottington, Whitefield and Unsworth.
- 20 The population of the area is 181,000, living in 74,000 households². 6.1 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic communities³. At approximately 35,000 Bury has the second largest Jewish community outside of London.
- 21 45 per cent of the population commute out of the borough to go to work. Unemployment stands at 2.3 per cent compared with the national average of 3.6 per cent. It rises to 4.1 per cent in some wards in the East of the borough. Of the 16 wards in the borough, only one is in the top 10 per cent of the UK's most deprived wards.
- 22 The council has created six area boards to promote community participation and enhance democracy and the quality of decision making.

The Council

- 23 The council has 48 councillors. The Labour party has overall control. A leader and cabinet govern the business of the council.
- 24 The council's gross revenue budget for the year 2002/03 was £277.5 million.
- 25 The council's priorities as identified in the corporate plan are:
- ◆ transforming customer contact;
 - ◆ focussing on action by putting policy into practice, better managing our people, meeting targets and pursuing quality through continuous improvement;
 - ◆ developing policy led and sustainable approach to budgeting;
 - ◆ implementing ICT and e-government targets;
 - ◆ modernising service delivery;
 - ◆ delivering for young people; and
 - ◆ regenerating priority areas.
- 26 A comprehensive performance assessment was carried out in 2002 and the council received an overall score of 'weak'. The judgement on the council's overall ability to improve was given a score of two (good).

Supporting People – ODPM Framework for Delivery

- 27 The ODPM has set out the following structural arrangements for the development and delivery of the Supporting People programme:

² 2001 Census.

³ 2001 Census.

- ◆ Accountable officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process.
 - ◆ Inclusive forum: consults with service providers and service users.
 - ◆ Core strategy group: proposes strategic direction, service review procedures and timetables and work needed to secure the effective and efficient delivery and development of the programme.
 - ◆ Commissioning body: agrees strategic direction, compliance with grant conditions, outcomes of service reviews and monitors the delivery and development of the programme.
 - ◆ Elected members: approve key decisions of the commissioning body.
 - ◆ Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.
- 28 Supporting People commissioning bodies are a requirement under grant conditions and must have senior representation from the administering local authority (ALA), the local health services (usually one representative from each primary care trust) and the area probation service. In two tier ALAs each district council is entitled to one representative. Each named representative has one vote although the ALA has a veto where it can demonstrate a financial risk to the ALA.

Supporting People – Housing Related Support Services in Bury

Management Arrangements

- 29 The Supporting People team sits within the social services, health and housing directorate. The accountable officer is the chief housing officer.
- 30 The commissioning body comprises the chief executive of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, the chief executive of Bury Primary Care Trust and the chief probation officer for Bury and Rochdale. The commissioning body first met in December 2002. Terms of reference for this body have been agreed which set out its role of overseeing the Supporting People programme in the borough.
- 31 The Supporting People team comprises:
- ◆ a manager;
 - ◆ 1.5 full-time equivalent project officers (part time position has just been recruited);
 - ◆ a consultation officer (vacant post interviews 17 November 2003);
 - ◆ a strategy officer (temporary); and
 - ◆ an administration officer.

Supporting People Strategy and Budget

- 32 The ODPM required all Supporting People administering local authorities to submit a shadow strategy in the autumn of 2002. The shadow strategies were required to demonstrate a clear vision and strategic steer for the programme and to set out the map of existing housing related support provision. The ODPM assessed the council's shadow strategy as fair.
- 33 The shadow strategy sets out the context for Supporting People in Bury and provides guidance as to the intentions of the programme in the first year of operation. The shadow strategy explains the identified supply of Supporting People services in the borough. These services are mapped against the ODPM's suggested supply profile of Supporting People services in an area such as Bury.
- 34 The primary client group analysis of services and unmet need identified in the shadow strategy showed:

- ◆ Adequate levels of accommodation and floating support provision for people with mental health problems, single homeless people and people with learning disabilities.
 - ◆ Over 1300 units of accommodation for older people but no floating support provision.
 - ◆ A lack of floating support provision for people with drug or alcohol problems, women at risk of domestic violence and homeless families.
 - ◆ No provision for people with physical or sensory disabilities, offenders, people with HIV/AIDS and young people.
- 35 The shadow strategy data mapping of supply and unmet need is significantly different from the supply data as at 31 March 2003. This is due in the main to the number of new schemes coming on-line in six months prior to Supporting People implementation.
- 36 The actual supply of accommodation and support services as funded by Supporting People grant based on 31 March 2003 was:
- ◆ 1975 units of supported accommodation;
 - ◆ 196 individuals receiving floating support; and
 - ◆ 943 community alarm units.
- 37 The administration grant awarded to the council by the ODPM to assist in the costs of implementing, delivering and managing the programme is £231,509 for the financial year 2003/04.
- 38 The final Supporting People grant allocation to the council for the financial year 2003/04 is:
- ◆ £7, 214,477; and
 - ◆ £375,000 has been awarded to cover the revenue costs of schemes under development (pipeline funding).

How good is the service?

Are the aims clear and challenging?

- 39 Inspectors look to see how a council has agreed the key aims for the service being inspected, how clear these aims are to the people that receive the service and whether these reflect the corporate aims of the organisation as a whole.
- 40 Aims need to be challenging, address local needs and support national objectives. This requires the council to consider and demonstrate how a service contributes to its wider corporate aims and community plans.
- 41 The aims for the Supporting People service that the council and its partners identify are pragmatic and challenging. The approach and focus to date has been to ensure that the Supporting People funding was fully identified and existing services safeguarded post April 2003. The five year strategy currently being prepared will provide the longer term steer for the programme.
- 42 The aims of the service are set out in the shadow strategy. The shadow strategy set out some immediate priorities for the service:
- ◆ priorities linked to capital development programme 2003/04;
 - ◆ development of provision for frail elderly people;
 - ◆ provision of a long term, low level support mental health scheme;
 - ◆ provision for people with a learning disability moving on from local authority hostels; and
 - ◆ replacement care unit for Bury young persons housing link.

- 43 Future priorities:
- ◆ mentally disordered offenders;
 - ◆ women fleeing domestic violence;
 - ◆ people with a physical or sensory disability;
 - ◆ people with drug and alcohol problems; and
 - ◆ offenders or people at risk of offending.
- 44 Research priorities:
- ◆ BME communities;
 - ◆ refugees;
 - ◆ people with HIV/AIDS; and
 - ◆ travellers.
- 45 The shadow strategy demonstrated a clear understanding of where the gaps were in local provision at the point it was being drafted. Immediate priorities for service development are strategic because they link to the gaps in provision identified by the mapping exercise. Where the council felt unsure as to the nature of the need or the most suitable provision additional research was proposed.
- 46 There is no evidence in the shadow strategy of how the proposed service developments had been ranked and prioritised other than a general desire to fill gaps. There was no guidance on the development of floating support schemes separate from the capital development programme.
- 47 The shadow strategy set out a longer-term vision for the Supporting People programme based on three themes:
- ◆ Ensure the provision of services which will meet needs by:
 - ◆ by ensuring an up to date picture of local supply is maintained;
 - ◆ by continuing to seek ways of identifying gaps in provision, and need for services; and
 - ◆ by identifying priorities for services in partnership with all stakeholders, and by enabling service users to influence the way that the services are delivered.
 - ◆ Ensure the provision of high quality, cost effective services by:
 - ◆ by adopting a framework for reviewing all Supporting People funded services;
 - ◆ by adopting a commissioning process with obtaining value for money as its key aim; and
 - ◆ by promoting continuous self assessment and development for all housing related support services in the borough.
 - ◆ Develop effective partnership working:
 - ◆ by ensuring that Supporting People is integrated into wider strategic plans and priorities;
 - ◆ by ensuring that all stakeholders become increasingly involved in all key stages of the programme; and
 - ◆ by developing innovative ways of ensuring that services users are engaged in the programme.
- 48 The ODPM's initial assessment of the shadow strategy scored the document as fair. Two particular comments are of note from the ODPM assessment:

- ◆ 'logical and coherent... however, no evidence of how the strategy was to be disseminated'; and
 - ◆ 'not easy to see the extent to which users and providers were actually involved'.
- 49 The council acknowledges the developmental nature of the shadow strategy and that the main driver was the achievement of the ODPM timetable for Supporting People implementation.
- 50 There was recognition in the shadow strategy that a key theme is the integration of Supporting People into wider strategic plans and priorities and that Supporting People issues will increasingly be brought into the process of discussion and approval through the local strategic partnership and the area panels.
- 51 The achievement of links with other strategies has begun to take place. More recent council documents that touch on Supporting People, such as the corporate plan, have begun to recognise the importance of the programme. For example, the homelessness strategy is a well researched document that has been arrived at through an inclusive methodology. There is a clear linkage between the homelessness strategy and the Supporting People shadow strategy.
- 52 A link has recently been established between the Supporting People programme and the local strategic partnership (LSP) via the chair of the Bury housing forum who acts as the housing representative on the partnership. This involvement is still developmental. A presentation to the LSP on proposals for the development of the five year Supporting People strategy was made on 18 September 2003.
- 53 Supporting People issues are now to be tabled at the six area panel meetings scheduled to take place in early January 2004. The assistant chief executive of the council has been tasked to develop these links.
- 54 Aims for developing the systems to support the Supporting People programme reflect the national picture for Supporting People delivery in the first year of the programme. For instance the development of review processes and user involvement.
- 55 The shadow strategy stated that it was developed in consultation with groups representing stakeholders and users. However, the council's own self-assessment admits that service users were involved in a limited way in developing the shadow strategy.
- 56 The council have put in place an action plan to achieve the publication of the five year Supporting People strategy in line with the original ODPM deadline of 1 March 2004. The action plan is a four page document identifying who does what and by when. The plan does not identify the resources needed to achieve the goals it sets nor does it identify how the achievement of the plan will be monitored and who by.
- 57 A commissioning body meeting to set strategic priorities for the five year Supporting People strategy programme has now been set for 11 November 2003. This fits within the strategy development action plan.
- 58 There is the need to build into the plan actions that address areas of weakness identified by the ODPM in the council's shadow strategy for example the dissemination of the strategy. Following our onsite inspection the ODPM have extending the deadline for the submission of the final strategy document from to 1 November 2004 and this will help the council to achieve its action plan.
- 59 While the longer-term vision is still in development the council can demonstrate that the strategic links are being made and that these will achieve the delivery of the aims of the programme. The aims are challenging and reflect the identified needs of vulnerable people.

Does the service meet these aims?

- 60 Having considered the aims that the council has set for the service, inspectors make an assessment of how well the council is meeting these aims. This includes an assessment of performance against specific service standards and targets and the council's approach to measuring whether it is actually delivering what it set out to do.
- 61 The assessment was based upon the following key issues:
- ◆ commissioning services to meet local needs;
 - ◆ user involvement;
 - ◆ diversity;
 - ◆ partnership working;
 - ◆ quality and monitoring; and
 - ◆ outcomes for service users and carers.

Commissioning services to meet local needs

- 62 There is a high level of confidence that the schemes identified for funding by the Supporting People programme are comprehensive. The council has built successful relationships with local providers and has examples of some effective consultation with, and participation from, service users.
- 63 There is one scheme run by a registered social landlord that did not supply sufficient information before the deadline to allow staff from the housing benefits section to assess whether they qualified for Supporting People funding. However, the financial impact of including this scheme retrospectively is considered to be manageable within the constraints of the Supporting People budget.
- 64 Providers have an extremely positive view of the Supporting People team. The following comments were made by service providers during our inspection:

'I've found them very responsive at a busy and stressful time for them' – a provider.

'Good at putting things into plain English so we can understand - superb!' – a provider.

- 65 A provider representative, who has experience of working with a large number of administering local authorities, told us that when considering invitations received from the local authorities they make a positive effort to attend meetings and training in Bury due to the facilitative and informative style.
- 66 The survey of providers that was carried out as part of the inspection elicited an almost universally positive response. However, one provider stated that they were dissatisfied with the council's provision of information about Supporting People for service providers but then went on to state that the team were the most helpful that they talk to. Another stated that they were dissatisfied with the council's involvement of partners in developing Supporting People services although the Supporting People manager was approachable.
- 67 The significance of the positive nature of service providers' view of the team should not be understated. The approachable and helpful nature of the Supporting People team has allowed providers to understand the nature of the programme in Bury, their role, the information they have been expected to provide and the ongoing requirements for monitoring and review. Another provider told us:

'Very organised, well planned out, (the lead officer) is excellent, in depth knowledge of the subject, grasp of the finer details. The team are very supportive, responsive, go to forums, have a real pride in getting it right first time for Bury. Sound advice, meetings and training' – a service provider.

- 68 In order to maintain the quality of work achieved to date and to meet future requirements there is a need to have a full complement of staff in the Supporting People team. Some staff shortages have been experienced. However, vacant posts have been advertised and appointments are being made. Temporary staff are hired as needed and a full staff review is scheduled to be completed by December 2003.
- 69 Some confusion arose around the exact figure available to the council as an administration grant for the programme. The council has agreed that £231,000 is available from the ODPM for 2003/04. This is above the previously quoted figure and will enable the council to engage additional resources.
- 70 The council considers that proposals to improve budget monitoring procedures between the financial services manager and Supporting People manager will ensure that confusion we found over the administration grant funding is not repeated.
- 71 In terms of 2003/04 the council initially budgeted on a Supporting People grant of £159,600, and a maximum contribution from the council's own resources of £27,000. The arrangement is that the council's additional contribution is available to be drawn down, if there is insufficient grant income to ensure that Supporting People can be implemented effectively.
- 72 Approximately £72,000 in additional funding is available to the council in 2003/04, a figure equating to approximately 45 per cent more administration grant than the council has budgeted for. From the beginning of the financial year 2003/04 up to the point of the inspection an extra £36,000 could have supplemented the activities of the existing Supporting People team.
- 73 It would appear from initial discussions between the ODPM and the council that there will be the opportunity to carry forward £30,000 of the administrative grant under spend into the financial year 2004/05.
- 74 The council has met the statutory guidance and financial regulations for grant compliance in that:
- ◆ the local authority, the primary care trust and the probation service are all involved through the commissioning body;
 - ◆ each partner organisation has one vote only on the commissioning body;
 - ◆ joint working arrangements come within the framework of the local strategic partnership;
 - ◆ the commissioning body operates under a terms of reference that recognise the relationship between the commissioning body and the administering local authority;
 - ◆ the existing shadow strategy agreed by the commissioning body covers the range of issues set out in the guidance;
 - ◆ a list of Supporting People services in the commissioning body's area is maintained;
 - ◆ adequate systems in place to monitor Supporting People services;
 - ◆ the council attends regular cross authority groups;
 - ◆ the council has agreed a charging policy for Supporting People services;
 - ◆ the council are ensuring that the grant is spent only in connection with eligible housing related support services;
 - ◆ service reviews are being carried out with a view to managing the budget, ensuring value for money, cost effectiveness and service standards. The outcomes of the reviews are being reported to the commissioning body; and
 - ◆ contracts are in place and payments being made for services.

- 75 Arrangements for commissioning new or reconfigured services are robust and promote open competition. Evidence was supplied as to how the council has commissioned services falling within the scope of the Supporting People programme. Project briefs were issued detailing sources of referrals, levels of service required and the information that interested parties should supply. Potential suppliers have to attend an evaluation panel comprising representatives from interested stakeholders.

User involvement and access to services

Consultation

- 76 The council has recognised that the meaningful engagement of users in the development of the Supporting People shadow strategy was limited. The nature of many of the groups assisted by Supporting People is that they are amongst the most marginalised in society.
- 77 The need to ensure that service users were more fully involved in developing the long term Supporting People strategy has been recognised by the council and this resulted in a successful application for £20,000 from health action zone funding. This funding was used to recruit to the post of temporary consultation and involvement officer. This post is based within the Supporting People team. The original post holder took up the post in April 2003 and undertook the following:
- ◆ consultation with service users as part of the reality visits process;
 - ◆ attending residents meetings in projects to ascertain users views of services, and also their experiences prior to moving into supported accommodation;
 - ◆ research into access into supported accommodation from BME communities; and
 - ◆ an analysis of existing consultation methodologies for all Supporting People providers.
- 78 The post has been vacant since mid August 2003 and recruitment processes are underway with interviews taking place on 17 November 2003.
- 79 Whilst the post of the consultation and information officer, supported via health action zone funding, is commendable the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff have limited the impact of the role. Subsequently the council's achievements in this area have been limited.
- 80 There is evidence from one provider that their particular group of users was not actively encouraged to contribute to, or comment on the shadow strategy. There is no local user group and the provider was not encouraged to seek their views.
- 81 However, at individual service level we did see examples of users being involved in consultation about the service they received. Service users were asked their views and these were taken into account to inform service design.
- 82 With regard to users with learning disabilities the Supporting People team have been involved in service re-provision design and have consulted users about their preferences examining the type of accommodation users would prefer and which fellow users they would like to live with. In addition the University of Manchester have been commissioned to report on the mechanisms for service user consultation within the schemes for people with Learning Disabilities in the borough. The intention is that this research will be used to educate future attempts to engage with users.
- 83 The methodology for ongoing reviews of services includes consultation with service users. Providers are expected to engage in developing better ways of consulting service users based on the methods used by the learning disabilities team.

- 84 Supporting People team members recognise there is a need to engage more fully with users and are aware of the difficulties with particular client groups. They recognise that despite all the action taken to engage users to date, they need to facilitate the achievement of improved services that meet the stated aspirations of users.

Information

- 85 The council's arrangements for disseminating information specific to Supporting People have been limited. There is no access to general Supporting People information through the council's website. There is no access to information on the range of Supporting People funded services available through the council's website.
- 86 Despite the identified lack of information outlined above our reality checks revealed a positive outcome. We made an enquiry to the council's switchboard was made requesting information about local services for people with learning disabilities. The call was routed through to the disabled services team and then to a helpline. The officer taking the call established the nature of the enquiry took details and arranged a convenient time to call back the following day with appropriate information. A call was received within ten minutes of the arranged time from a volunteer worker of the Bury and district disabled advisory council (BADDAC). The nature of the enquiry was clarified and a promise was given that as much information as possible would be posted. This comprehensive information duly arrived.
- 87 The user leaflets available for residents of supported housing, either in short term or permanent schemes and for sheltered housing tenants are clear, well presented and informative. They indicate that the information is available on the national Supporting People website.
- 88 The user leaflets are available in English only and give no indication that users can obtain this information in braille, audio tape for the hard of hearing or in minority ethnic languages.
- 89 Three editions of a newsletter have been issued to users and providers. The first two issued in June and November/December 2002 follow a similar format. They introduce and inform readers about the new procedures for Supporting People, include a jargon buster and give details of team members and contact telephone numbers and are of a high standard. The first edition includes a feedback form. The third newsletter in August 2003 is in an entirely different format and mentions our forthcoming inspection and the possibility of involvement in focus groups.
- 90 Whilst the series of three newsletters are informative only the early edition included a language statement at the bottom of each page, and this was in English. None of the three indicated that the newsletter could be available in braille, audio tape or in minority ethnic languages.
- 91 One service provider we interviewed has access to an interpreting service, produces information on their housing related support service in different written languages and using audio tapes. Customer satisfaction questionnaires that are issued are also available in a variety of languages.
- 92 Another individual provider had done what they can to explain Supporting People to users. They have produced a tenants handbook to supplement the tenancy agreement which is also translated into Punjabi.
- 93 The council does offer a translation service via language line but use of this facility is not publicised on any of the communication materials relating to Supporting People.
- 94 The council has a corporate communication strategy. This document takes the form of a toolkit for staff to utilise in communicating with staff, users and the public in general.

- 95 In summary, although the council has made attempts to communicate with service users, and to provide opportunities for user participation, there is no co-ordinated approach across supported housing services in the borough.

Diversity

- 96 The council's shadow strategy recognises the need to research further the needs of the borough's black and minority ethnic (BME) population and this recognition has been translated into actions. A number of initiatives are in place to assess BME needs for housing related support services including:
- ◆ A BME housing forum was held in June 2003 to identify the needs and aspirations of these communities for inclusion in the BME housing strategy. A member of the Supporting People team was involved in the preparation for this event.
 - ◆ A questionnaire has been sent by the consultation and involvement officer to all providers to consider unmet need. The results of this research are still awaiting analysis. The Supporting People team links into the social services BME consultation network.
 - ◆ A Supporting People team member attends the BME housing strategy working group and contributes to the draft BME housing strategy.
 - ◆ A Supporting People team member sits on the equality action group that monitors the housing services action plan to tackle BME access to and satisfaction with services.
- 97 These actions reflect the shadow strategy's recognition that the needs of BME groups in relation to supported housing require further investigation. However, the council acknowledges that these are initial steps but more work needs to be undertaken to engage with the various different BME communities in Bury.
- 98 The shadow strategy also recognises that the needs of people with HIV/AIDS and travellers are not catered for by existing housing related support services in the borough. These identified areas for research have been undertaken by the council. The results of this research are detailed elsewhere in this report. Initial findings suggest the need for a worker to assist people with HIV/AIDS in a manner that will minimise the potential for housing related problems. Supporting People funding may also have to be channelled towards the growing elderly population amongst travellers which is another area identified by the research.

Partnerships

- 99 Co-ordinated and effective partnership working is key to the success of the Supporting People programme that delivers real improvements to the housing related support available to vulnerable people. The council has a range of mechanisms in place to achieve this as described in the following sections of this report.

Inclusive Forum

- 100 Initial guidance from the ODPM⁴ stated that council's should operate an inclusive forum that would meet regularly and involve all partners in consultation. It is not evident that the group operating in Bury acts in this manner in particular due to the lack of representation from users, their carers and advocates.
- 101 The Bury Supporting People inclusive forum has met four times. The initial meeting was on 20 November 2002. Prior to this there was a meeting of a providers forum on the 29 May 2001. The council has accepted that the inclusive forum has acted mainly as forum for service providers and has not engaged with users, their carers and advocates.

⁴ ODPM Supporting People Guidance – October 2001.

- 102 The council has held additional training events for providers and other stakeholders to facilitate the preparation and completion of ODPM Supporting People returns and to explain the availability of welfare benefits.
- 103 The core strategy group has liaised with the inclusive forum through reports from the Supporting People team to inclusive forum meetings.

Core Strategy Group

- 104 Good links exist between partner organisations for example the health primary care trust, the council's social services department and the probation service at the core strategy group.
- 105 Terms of reference for the core strategy group are in place, are effective and are subject to review by the group. There is, however, a lack of clarity about the status of the service providers that attend this group. There has been a lack of robustness around potential conflicts of interest for internal and external service providers as the Supporting People programme develops. The core strategy group will discuss the outcomes of service reviews and decisions on reconfiguration and decommissioning services will be recommended to the commissioning body. It is therefore imperative that access to these discussions from service providers, internal and external to the council, does not compromise the independence of the decision making process.
- 106 The core strategy group determined the priorities for the capital bid for the approved development programme. Each provider submitting a proposal for service development had to complete a standard form co-ordinated by the Supporting People team leader. Priorities for determining successful bids were made with reference to the gaps in provision identified by the supply mapping exercise.
- 107 All proposals for new housing related support services that did not require capital funding were also approved by the core strategy group. Applications for this approval had to be submitted using a standard template to help to achieve consistency in the decision making process. Again these proposed developments were assessed against the gaps in supply.
- 108 The local probation services have been engaged in Supporting People since its inception. Although Supporting People is not built into its core work, probation is felt to be a significant player with a strong commitment from senior management. In addition the probation service's strategic input is furthered through the work of the drug action team (DAT), the targeted offender's initiative and the street crime group.
- 109 The primary care trust's (PCT) programme director for priority services sits on the core strategy group. Her portfolio within the PCT covers older people, mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse. Her place on the core strategy group provides a linkage between Supporting People, related strategies and plans for these vulnerable groups.
- 110 The Supporting People core strategy group meeting on 1 October 2003 included representatives from Bury Primary Care Trust and from the probation service as well as from other agencies, demonstrating the commitment within the community to partnership working.
- 111 The meeting of the core strategy group on 1 October 2003 also provided a forum for disseminating and sharing information with partners but there was little evidence of active discussion of priorities or decision making. We recognise that this may not have been a typical meeting, but a more proactive and action orientated approach might have been expected.
- 112 A review of minutes of meetings of the core strategy group shows that attendance by all partners at the group has been sporadic and therefore the strength of the partnership approach to decision making is weakened.

Commissioning Body

- 113 Key senior officers from the partner organisations, the council, the primary care trust and the probation service sit on the commissioning body. The first meeting was on 10 December 2002. The membership demonstrates the importance attached to Supporting People by the partners. The commissioning body is robust and has grappled with some difficult decisions, notably those around the funding for new schemes.
- 114 The terms of reference for the commissioning body include:
- ◆ voting arrangements: three voting members, the chief officer of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, chief officer of Bury Primary Care Trust , chief probation officer Bury and Rochdale;
 - ◆ core strategy group and finance representatives to attend in an advisory capacity;
 - ◆ decisions by consensus with voting only as necessary;
 - ◆ chair elected annually;
 - ◆ oversight of consultation and reference to involving BME groups;
 - ◆ delegation of authority to Supporting People team and core strategy group for specified actions;
 - ◆ review of achievement of best value; and
 - ◆ quarterly meeting schedule.
- 115 The terms of reference for the commissioning body lack some fundamental criteria around the resolution of potential disagreements and conflicts. There is also no reference to how the council's right to veto decisions, where a financial risk to the council can be demonstrated, will be exercised. There is no specific mention of how disagreements will be resolved beyond the reliance on the split in the three available votes.
- 116 The commissioning body has already taken some bold decisions in relation to the funding of pipeline developments. There was agreement to commit Supporting People revenue grant to capital schemes, enabling project development to continue, despite a reduction in the bid to the ODPM for funding. This was a key decision taken by the commissioning body and was made in the context of agreed local priorities.
- 117 The importance of the pipeline decision to Bury was a considerable one. £842,000 revenue funding was required to support eight capital projects. All of these schemes were considered to meet the gaps in supply evident in Bury. Only £120,000 was allocated to Bury by the ODPM resulting in a £722,000 shortfall. All of these projects had already secured capital funding following significant development run-in periods. Two schemes were already under construction or built and were due to open in April 2003.
- 118 During the four months following the announcement of the pipeline funding in February 2003 the commissioning body's focus was on securing the future of these key capital projects. Through a successful appeal an additional £256,000 was allocated by the ODPM, and with the approval of a merger between schemes developed by two providers seven of the projects were secured.
- 119 There is evidence that members of the commissioning body are yet to develop their own understanding of what the stated vision for Supporting People is. There was some confusion over what the current programme of Supporting People service reviews were. The council's additional written documentation around the commissioning body note the developmental nature of some aspects of the commissioning body.

- 120 There is a need to develop an overarching shared vision for Supporting People taking account of related policy initiatives for example the modernisation agenda for community care, valuing people and the national service frameworks for mental health and older people. The work to develop the five year strategy should help to resolve this.
- 121 A specific training event for councillors on the impact of Supporting People was held on 11 December 2002. Following the training event reporting arrangements for Supporting People to councillors were formalised at their request.
- 122 A cross-scrutiny panel was established that includes representatives from the health scrutiny committee, the economy scrutiny committee and the resources scrutiny committee. This panel will meet quarterly and its establishment has been approved by the council's executive committee.
- 123 The cross-scrutiny panel of elected members signs-off the actions of the council's chief executive's on the commissioning body. Copies of the reports tabled at the panel are forwarded to the PCT and probation service. Whilst these arrangements are still relatively new they are commendable in their comprehensiveness.
- 124 The Supporting People charging policy statement agreed by the commissioning body is clearly defined and available to users and providers. Providers are positive about the clarity of the documentation.

Cross Authority Issues

- 125 Cross authority working is required in order to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable people for whom specialist housing related support services may not be available in their own administering local authority areas and where people needs may need to met outside their immediate area. For example, women fleeing domestic violence and ex offenders who cannot be housed in the area. The council has been a member of cross authority working in Greater Manchester and has been proactive in its approach.
- 126 A council representative sits on the Greater Manchester Supporting People forum and the contracting and practitioners group. Key outcomes from these groups to date include:
- ◆ Work being undertaken to develop cross authority standards on reviews, accreditation to ensure joint standards are adopted for providers, working across Greater Manchester.
 - ◆ Joint cross authority statement agreed for the shadow strategy.
 - ◆ Funding being sought from all ten Greater Manchester authorities to develop a Greater Manchester research and consultancy project, to influence the development of cross authority protocol and procedures. The council has agreed to be host administering local authority for this process.
 - ◆ Joint training was organised by Greater Manchester authorities for cross authority providers on supply mapping with Bury's Supporting People Manager delivering the key presentation.
- 127 The potential for the jointly funded Greater Manchester development worker is positive but the decision on this post has been delayed. We understand that this delay has been due to other authorities' delays in committing to the expenditure. The proactive approach that the council has adopted in offering to host this position is to be commended.

Quality and Monitoring

Contracts and Payments

- 128 The council has successfully negotiated the signing of contracts with service providers and has implemented the payment of Supporting People grant in a timely and efficient manner.
- 129 Only one contract and service agreement remains outstanding where there is a question over whether or not the scheme should have been eligible for transitional housing benefit and there is therefore a question over its eligibility for Supporting People funding.
- 130 The transition of funding streams from 1 April 2003 has been seamless. No difficulties with Supporting People payments are reported by the Supporting People team or the providers we contacted.
- 131 The social services finance section has linked well with the Supporting People team at the development stage of Supporting People implementation. Efficient IT systems have been developed and payments have been timely. The resource implications for the finance section have been reported as being fairly limited and they feel able to continue to provide the levels of support required.

Performance Management

- 132 The ODPM Supporting People grant conditions require all administering local authorities to review all of their contracted services within a three year period from 1 April 2003. Service users are currently providing services under interim contracts and a service review is required before a contract can be renegotiated. The outcomes of service reviews and any associated decisions to reconfigure or decommission a service must be agreed by the commissioning body. The ODPM has published extensive guidance on how service reviews should be conducted.
- 133 The council has adopted a positive attitude to the development of a performance management framework for service providers as part of the service review processes. Further work needs to be carried out to define the targets against which the work of the Supporting People team will be monitored and a reporting mechanism to the commissioning body needs to be agreed.
- 134 Procedures for the desktop monitoring of returns from service providers are all in place and service agreements are signed. The council designed a user friendly method for providers to return monitoring returns and this was offered either by e-mail, disc or hard copy. Pro forma forms to record changes in service users have been issued allowing for the regular processing of changes and queries in particular those that impact upon payments.
- 135 Performance management data is collated from providers to ensure they are delivering to expectations in relation to their contract. There are clear procedures in place that allow queries to be answered and concerns to be raised.
- 136 Progress targets are in place for Supporting People implementation. However, a system of performance indicators, targets and outcome measures is not in place to allow regular reporting of progress. The council is aware of this deficiency and are proposing to develop these indicators.
- 137 Although there are no formal systems in place to monitor the impact that Supporting People funding is making on achievement of health targets, Bury Primary Care Trust believe that the preventative help that Supporting People schemes provide, such as floating support, are already paying dividends. For example, the psychiatric readmission rate for adults in the last quarter is quoted as being 7 per cent, against a figure in 2002 of 21 per cent. The PCT believes that the additional floating support services and the new supported housing developments that have come on stream through Supporting People have played a part in this.

- 138 Systems are in place to monitor the budgets of individual service providers and the Supporting People budget overall. However, we note that the under estimate of the administration grant from the ODPM had not been picked up in the first six months of this financial year.

Value for Money and Cost Effectiveness

- 139 The council reacted well to the demands to assess claims for transitional housing benefit in order to define the level of Supporting People funding that would transfer from 1 April 2003. The council is now moving beyond this initial assessment to consider how value for money judgements will influence the outcomes of service reviews.
- 140 The initial assessment of Supporting People funding was a thorough process involving reviews of documents, financial data on scheme cost and site visits to assess the level of housing support being provided. These checks were carried out by staff from the housing benefit section. Additional funding resources sourced from the Supporting People administration grant were made available to the housing benefit team to facilitate this process.
- 141 Despite this approach it is acknowledged by officers that there may have been some mismatch in the levels of Supporting People grant being claimed for some schemes and that there could be an element of care being paid for by Supporting People and vice versa. The intention is that the scheme reviews, being undertaken with external consultants and council officers with specialist skills, will allow for a reassessment and reallocation of Supporting People resources in line with grant conditions. This rigorous process will ensure that council only renews contracts for services that are eligible for grant funding.
- 142 The Supporting People team has prepared and submitted unit cost comparisons for specific housing related support services for consideration by the core strategy group and the outcome of this process will be used as an additional assessment tool in ensuring the value for money and cost effectiveness of services.

Risk and Contingency Planning

- 143 The council has yet to undertake a risk analysis of the Supporting People programme in Bury in a manner that protects the users from potential service failure and puts contingency plans in place.
- 144 There does not appear to have been any objective risk assessment and contingency planning of the Supporting People programme. An assessment of the likelihood and impact of risks and proposals to meet their eventuality through contingency planning needs to be undertaken. For example assessments of the impact of sudden scheme closure caused for example by fire or allegations of abuse against staff should be considered.
- 145 The Supporting People team do carry out a risk analysis on all service providers. However, this is predominantly finance based as part of the accreditation process. The council accept they don't have contingency plans in place for scheme failures, although the social services department do have experience of this and it would be relatively straightforward to read across the existing systems into Supporting People services.

Service Reviews

- 146 Supporting People administering local authorities are required to review all their contracted services within a period of three years from 1 April 2003. The council has implemented a robust and objective review process that has initially focused on higher cost schemes in accordance with ODPM guidance.
- 147 Service agreements for individual schemes were reviewed as part of the inspection. Scheme Reviews had been set for these services, scheduled for autumn 2004. A self-assessment has already been carried out and monitoring

returns were in place. One provider felt that the Supporting People team had been extremely helpful in the implementation stage and that the monitoring requirements were not onerous.

- 148 The Supporting People team have contracted with a well qualified ex-social services employee from another local authority to undertake a comprehensive review of mental health services for adults that are provided by seven different agencies in Bury. The methodology has involved visits to all sites, interviews with staff and service users, case file reviews and a review of training records and policies and procedures. The review process has not, however, involved discussions with the local community mental health teams who may have views on the services provided and any shortfalls. It is understood that this cross checking with local stakeholders will occur after the Supporting People team have arrived at their initial assessment of the scheme based upon the review information.
- 149 The reviews of mental health services and learning disability services have already identified poor performance from one provider and the need for more robust information on how Supporting People funding is being used from others. One provider is piloting a daily log for each service user to show the activity and duration of face to face contact with the service user. This information will be used to assess whether the service is providing low level housing related support and to determine the level of housing related support being provided.
- 150 Reviews had been completed in a systematic way to a tight timescale, and information from reviews has been used to improve baseline information about services.
- 151 We observed that a review of one provider service was in progress, case files have been examined, some recommendations had already been made and the Supporting People team are now selecting a sample of service users to contact to obtain their views.
- 152 The reality checks would appear to be a useful supplement to the scheme review programme providing an annual check on all schemes. The Supporting People team provided written evidence of how issues that have arisen from reality check visits have been progressed with providers. Matters raised included staffing levels and insurance cover for schemes.
- 153 The outcomes of all service reviews are reported to the commissioning body with recommendations for further action as required.

Needs mapping

- 154 The council was at the forefront of the initial work done to deliver a standard method of assessing the needs of vulnerable people for Supporting People funding. The council has maintained this focus on need as the driver for services throughout the period leading to Supporting People being introduced and has backed smaller research projects to develop it's understanding further.
- 155 In 2000 the core strategy group commissioned pathways research, who at the time were DTLR advisers on needs analysis, to undertake a needs and supply analysis of supported accommodation. This action was in line with the core strategy group's view that the development of new services should be based upon identified gaps in need.
- 156 Bury had no offender specific accommodation at the point when the initial supply mapping was undertaken. Since then one provider has altered their primary client group to offenders. This issue was the subject of some discussion at the core strategy group of 1 October 2003 where it was noted by the representative of the probation service that many local providers do cater for offenders but that as this was not their primary client group their provision would have been missed from the supply mapping exercise.

- 157 There are still some gaps in service provision which though identified by the homelessness review and strategy have not been catered for. The lack of housing related support services for homeless clients with a physical disability is yet to be addressed.
- 158 Work on assessing and researching the needs of groups that have no evident Supporting People provision has been undertaken. The priority given to this assessment of local need is resulting in a clearer picture of demand although some of the research was still work in progress at the time of the inspection.
- 159 The research work referenced in the shadow strategy has been advanced. For example:
- ◆ It has been identified that there are currently 64 people living with HIV/AIDS in the Bury Primary Care Trust area (52 men and 12 women mainly in the 30-44 age group). This population is analysed by ethnic group. This research suggests that there is the need for a housing link worker to access council services in an appropriate manner and a floating support worker to provide advice and prevent problems that might result in homelessness. The report notes that the HIV policy in Bury is outdated.
 - ◆ The official site for travellers in Bury houses approximately 50 people all of whom class themselves as being of Gypsy ethnic origin. The interim report acknowledges that further research is required involving consultation with site residents and the traveller education service. It was noted that the site population was ageing and that this may have implications for the provision of housing related support services that are sensitive to the needs of this minority group.

Outcomes for service users and carers

- 160 The Supporting People programme in Bury is delivering tangible positive changes to the services it funds and thereby the lives of service users. This process of change is now being linked systematically into scheme reviews and the outcomes are being recorded and reported.
- 161 The work of the council's Supporting People team has helped housing related support service providers to understand the programme and how services could be developed.
- 162 One service for homeless families was reported by users as being effective in meeting the needs of families and supporting them through a period of crisis and establishing a stable return to independent living within the community.
- 163 In the services we visited for single homeless people we found that support workers were providing help with benefits, back to work programmes, assistance in accessing college courses and help with life skills. These services were received very positively by service users.
- 164 Some accommodation for people with learning disabilities that we visited is dated and unsuitable. However, programmes are in place for the re-provision of this accommodation. Capital funding has been secured for new accommodation and the revenue funding secured under the Supporting People grant allocation will cover the support costs through service contracts.
- 165 We visited other accommodation for people with learning difficulties, where housing related support was funded through the Supporting People programme, which was of a high standard.
- 166 One provider stressed that Supporting People programme has enabled projects to increase staffing of support workers and keep the projects developing in response to the needs of service users.
- 167 The review of Supporting People mental health services has begun to identify outcome measures such as users who are being helped to build skills and

confidence to a level that enables them to move on to independent living. The expansion of such services can be incorporated in future contracts subject to funding being available.

- 168 There is now greater clarity about the actual housing related support being provided and how appropriate these are to users' needs and how these relate to needs identified in the assessment care and support plans. One new scheme for frail older people provided a useful support for users that is popular and allows for an interim level of support that helps prevent these service users having to access residential care.
- 169 The council also recognise that delivery of services in the future is an issue around funding. The council is concerned that there is uncertainty over future funding and a member of the Supporting People team told us that they are:

'Not sure we'll have enough resources to carry out our good intentions' – Supporting People team member.

- 170 The following case studies illustrate positive outcomes for service users and demonstrate the effectiveness of the council's work in this area:

Supporting People Case Study 1

Service User Group: learning disabilities

Type of Service: accommodation based

Key Players: Supporting People team, housing related support staff, social services, the service user, her family and her psychologist

Issues to be addressed :

- ◆ Miss A is a 25 year old with learning disabilities and hyperactive behaviour.
- ◆ Her needs challenged main stream services resulting in difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation to enable independent living even though this was her clearly expressed wish.
- ◆ Miss A had particular problems with regard to her behaviour towards her parents. Although she received some floating support from a provider commissioned by social services it was apparent that there was an urgent need to increase her independence from the family.

Actions taken :

- ◆ In partnership with the provider, her psychologist, her social worker and her family, Miss A was able to draw up a plan that would meet her care and support needs in an independent environment.
- ◆ An ex council house was secured and transitional housing benefit was secured as a vital contribution towards her resettlement plan.
- ◆ Other appropriate funding partners were found to cover care elements of the package.

Outcome for service user :

- ◆ Miss A now has her own home. She is very house proud, enjoys gardening and is able to choose how she spends her day.
- ◆ Miss A is now able to visit her local shop with assistance and held a party in her garden to thank her family and support staff.

Supporting People Case Study 2

Service user group: single homeless

Type of service: accommodation based

Key players: Supporting People team, housing officer, advocacy group, housing related support staff.

Issues to be addressed:

- ◆ Mr P is aged 36. He came to a Supporting People funded project for the single homeless from the streets.
- ◆ He had very limited social skills, had issues with alcohol abuse and was receiving medication for depression.

Action taken:

- ◆ Mr P now receives the support programme linked to his tenancy and has a dedicated housing support worker.

Outcomes for service user:

- ◆ Mr P has become involved with the men's group at the project and makes use of the gym.
- ◆ He has expressed an interest in arts and craft centre classes and has volunteered to work at the local furniture store.
- ◆ Mr P has been elected as a house representative and speaks at weekly house meetings.
- ◆ He has signed up for basic literacy and numeracy courses.

How does the performance compare?

- 171 In order to judge the quality of a service, it is important to compare the performance of that service against other suppliers across a range of sectors. The aim is not exact comparison, but an exploration of how similar services (or elements of services) perform in order to identify significant differences, the reasons for them, and the extent to which improvements are required.
- 172 The details of the data used to inform comparisons are included in the data appendix to this report. Where possible, we have compared the council with other councils in its Audit Commission family group (councils with similar general characteristics). We have also compared the council with average indicator for all England and all metropolitan councils.
- 173 Generally the council compares well in the resources it has secured for both the administration of Supporting People and the grant available to fund the whole programme.
- 174 The pragmatic approach to Supporting People implementation in Bury has ensured that the level of grant being received is comparable with other councils in Bury's 'nearest neighbour' set.
- 175 Significant developments have occurred in the supply of housing related support in Bury in the 18 months preceding Supporting People implementation. When an estimate of the level of transitional housing benefit funded housing related support was made in 2001 it was assessed as being in the region of £900,000. The total grant funding secured for 2003/04 is £7.2 million.
- 176 Accommodation based services have been developed for:
- ◆ people with learning disabilities;

- ◆ people with mental health problems;
- ◆ single homeless people with support needs;
- ◆ people with alcohol problems; and
- ◆ frail elderly.

177 Floating support schemes have been developed for:

- ◆ single homeless people with support needs;
- ◆ frail elderly;
- ◆ people with learning disabilities;
- ◆ people with mental health problems;
- ◆ homeless families with support needs; and
- ◆ women at risk of domestic violence.

178 In the performance assessment framework indicators for 2001/02:

- ◆ The council performed significantly above the average for the number of adults with mental health problems helped to live at home and the minimisation of delayed discharge for all ages.
- ◆ The council performed above the average in the admissions of supported residents aged 18 to 64 to residential/nursing care; the number of adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home; the number of users who said they got help quickly; and the waiting time for care packages.
- ◆ The council performed averagely in relation to avoidable harm for older people (falls and hypothermia), the percentage of items of equipment and adaptations costing less than £1000 delivered within 3 weeks and the number of users who said that matters relating to race, culture, or religion were noted.
- ◆ The council performed below the average for the level of intensive home care as a percentage of intensive home and residential care, the number of adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home, the number of older people helped to live at home and the level of emergency psychiatric re-admissions.
- ◆ The council performed significantly below the average for the level of employment, education & training for care leavers and the number of admissions of supported residents aged 65 or over to residential/nursing care.

179 In the best value performance indicators for 2001/02:

- ◆ The council were in the best 25 per cent of authorities in the renovation of local authority dwellings (over £5,000).
- ◆ The council were average in the provision of buildings accessible to disabled people, the number of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished, the energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings, the number of local authority dwellings renovated (£5,000 and under), the time taken to process renewal claims; the number of racial incidents recorded by the authority and the number of domestic violence refuge places.
- ◆ The council were below average in the processing of homelessness decisions within 33 days, tenant satisfaction with the overall service, tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation, the average time for processing new claims, the average time for processing changes of circumstance and the number of racial incidents that resulted in further action.

Summary

- 180 Overall, we judge that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council is delivering a good, two-star service. The current delivery of the Supporting People programme by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council demonstrates effective links between all the partner organisations including the voluntary sector. The council can demonstrate some positive outcomes for service users and previously excluded groups of vulnerable people at this early stage of the Supporting People programme delivery.
- 181 Providers of services have a positive view of the council's development and delivery of the Supporting People programme and the help and assistance they have supplied in implementing Supporting People. Service providers understand the requirements of the council as the administering local authority and these are being effectively delivered and managed.
- 182 The engagement of service users in the development and delivery of the programme is underdeveloped. There are some positive examples of the full engagement of service users by individual service providers but there is a lack of a consistent approach to involving and communicating with service users and potential users.
- 183 The council's approach to diversity is underdeveloped although the research that is being carried out, to fully identify the needs of a number of identified marginalised groups of vulnerable people, will help to inform future developments needed in this area. The council can demonstrate that where this research has been completed it has acted to put new services in place.
- 184 The membership and terms of reference of the commissioning body are compliant with grant conditions. The framework for the operation of the core strategy group and commissioning body are in place, although these would benefit from some further clarification.
- 185 There are sound mechanisms for the active involvement of elected members in the delivery of the programme and systems are in place for elected members to approve the commissioning body decisions.
- 186 Arrangements for the commissioning of new services and the ongoing review of existing projects are robust leading to an improvement in the scale and quality of services available to the vulnerable people of Bury. The council is actively pursuing value for money and cost effectiveness from all service providers including the services provided by the council.
- 187 There is a lack of performance monitoring and management arrangements in place and this, combined with a lack of a clear vision and targets is a constraint on the council's ability to demonstrate the effective delivery of the programme.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

- 188 Inspectors have judged the service's prospects for improvement based on its capacity to improve using the four building blocks for effective improvement:
- ◆ ownership of problems and willingness to change;
 - ◆ a sustained focus on what matters;
 - ◆ the capacity and systems to deliver performance and improvement; and
 - ◆ integration of continuous improvement into day to day management.

Ownership of problems & willingness to change

- 189 The council has demonstrated that it can work within new structures with its partners to resolve shared problems. This is being achieved through the core strategy group and the commissioning body. Difficult decisions are being taken to change the way in which housing related support services are provided through the new Supporting People programme.
- 190 Bury Primary Care Trust (PCT) is satisfied that there is strong and effective partnership with the council, which is broader than just the Supporting People agenda. For example, the deputy chief executive from the council will be presenting the PCT's public health annual report to the strategic health authority. The membership of the leader of the council on the PCT board is also seen as extremely positive in promoting active partnership working from the council and the director of health, social care and housing from the council sits on PCT's professional executive committee (PEC). This robust health partnership is demonstrable of shared agendas and willingness to respond to new ways of working.
- 191 The probation service has been engaged in the Supporting People programme in Bury since its inception. Probation is felt to be a significant player with the commitment of senior management. Probation's strategic input is enhanced through their close involvement in work with the drug action team, the targeted offenders initiative and street crime group. The chief probation officer chairs the multi agency public protection panel and there is good commitment from Bury in participating in the wider multi agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA).
- 192 The commissioning body has taken some bold decisions with regard to the up front funding of pipeline schemes that have not received the revenue funding that was applied for. All pipeline schemes were supported with the exception of the scheme for young people with high levels of support need. The rationale for this decision was that firstly the level of revenue funding available would not allow the scheme to be staffed in the manner that was required and secondly the underdeveloped nature of the proposal meant that withdrawal of the proposal would not adversely impact on any stakeholders.
- 193 The transfer of health action zone funding to employ a consultation officer within the Supporting People team is another positive example of the council's ability to identify a problem, in this case the lack of constructive engagement with service users, engage the interest of the relevant partners and secure joint ownership of the problems by the partners.
- 194 Bury had an early joint review which reported in April 1998 and identified significant weaknesses in social services performance. It resulted in Bury being subject to 'special measures'. Key areas for development identified in the joint review were:
- ◆ containing expenditure within budgets;
 - ◆ identifying high cost services and taking action to reduce costs;

- ◆ commissioning a balance of services for older people which reflected their needs;
 - ◆ building partnerships with all stakeholders;
 - ◆ ensuring access to essential management and financial information; and
 - ◆ providing effective leadership and management of services.
- 195 Bury has responded well to the challenges of the joint review and the inspection of children's social services in November 2002 which found that Bury was serving most people well with promising prospects for improvement.
- 196 By the council's own admission the commissioning body for Supporting People is still at a developmental stage. The commissioning body has recognised that it needs to move beyond its previous role of endorsing and approving reports and become more proactive.
- 197 Given the focus on the practicalities of implementation that have been inherent in the Supporting People programme to date the underdeveloped nature of the commissioning body in some aspects is understandable. However, initial guidance from the ODPM on the role of this body was published in October 2001 and we would have expected to find the commissioning body better prepared to take an active lead in determining strategy than is currently evident.
- 198 It is acknowledged by some partners that the shadow strategy was essentially a position statement and that there is still more work to be done to identify and agree local priorities and research needs amongst groups that have been overlooked or hard to reach. This work is underway but has to be converted into specific conclusions and actions.
- 199 Implementation of Supporting People has been achieved through the sound and proactive practices of the council's Supporting People team.

A sustained focus on what matters

- 200 The primary focus for the Supporting People programme in Bury has been the delivery of schemes to meet the perceived local needs. This focus has brought about tangible results in raising the profile of housing related support services across the area and is bringing about improvements in the range and quality of services available for vulnerable people.
- 201 Links between the Supporting People programme and the local strategic partnership are now embedded. However, discussions with local area panels are not scheduled until January 2004 and it is not possible to test whether this linkage will be a driver for improving the service. Local members have been engaged in the debate over Supporting People programme through the cross scrutiny arrangements that have been put in place.
- 202 The council's Supporting People team has a clear sense of direction and can provide examples of the successful use of Supporting People funding to provide new services for individuals. These service developments have been discussed by the core strategy group, agreed by the commissioning body and approved by councillors.
- 203 The council have utilised the development of floating support schemes for vulnerable older people, enabling them to remain independent in the community for longer. This work contributes to central government's national preventative agenda for Supporting People funding by reducing admissions to residential accommodation. It also conforms to the positive practice outlined in the government's national service framework for older people.
- 204 The mutual engagement of the Supporting People team and the learning disabilities team is a practical example of policy linking with practice. This partnership has already led to the developments that will improve the quality of life for this vulnerable group through the provision of a scheme to provide new

homes with support. We would expect that this partnership will continue to yield improved outcomes and better service design. This work is in line with the department of health's guidance valuing people for improving services for people with learning difficulties.

- 205 However, the future priorities for Supporting People, backed by funding have not been clearly defined yet. The council have reiterated that their view is that until the level of Supporting People funding for future years is more certain there is little scope for determining what future priorities will be. It is difficult for service providers to plan in the medium and longer term. One provider made it clear to us during our inspection that they intended to withdraw their proposals for new service developments because of the funding uncertainties.
- 206 The process leading to the development of the five year strategy, beginning in November 2003 and involving the commissioning body and core strategy group, will tease out some of the areas on which the Supporting People programme will focus in the future.

The capacity and systems to deliver performance and improvement

- 207 The council has sound mechanisms in place to continue the programme of service reviews and there is capacity in the existing team to supplement this activity with reality checks and ongoing desktop monitoring. Both the reviews and the reality checks are already instrumental in improving service delivery. There is the need to quantify these improvements through more effective mechanisms for performance monitoring and management.
- 208 The identified under spend of the council's Supporting People administration grant offers the council an opportunity to invest further in the capacity and systems delivering Supporting People in Bury. Further investment may be possible in 2004/05 given the ODPM's agreement to roll forward £30,000 from the 2003/04 administration grant. The level of administration grant is thought to be adequate in comparison to other councils in Bury's 'nearest neighbour' set.
- 209 Whilst the healthy relationship between the Supporting People team and local service providers during implementation is not in question there are workload concerns over the capacity of the Supporting People team at its current level to deliver all aspects of the infrastructure required for Supporting People delivery. The key role of consultation and involvement officer has proved difficult to recruit to and this vacancy is hampering progress with the work to engage service users.
- 210 Given the under spend of administration grant in 2003/04 there is the prospect of additional resources being available to bolster the work of the existing team. Indeed in their written response with regard to the administration grant under spend the council comment that they will be bringing forward long term review of Supporting People staff team structure to 29 October 2003.
- 211 The council has yet to establish clear local performance indicators that define what Supporting People funding is delivering to the people of Bury. Links between Supporting People and the achievement of corporate aims and targets and achievement of partner agency targets such as reducing delayed discharges, psychiatric re-admission rates are understood but not clearly articulated. This area of work needs to be progressed through the commissioning body. The council are in the process of redrafting the service plan for the Supporting People programme with the aim of including more robust performance targets and indicators.
- 212 There are efficient information technology systems in place to deliver the programme and high levels of confidence by service providers in the Supporting People delivery and monitoring systems. The review process has improved baseline knowledge about services and should lead to improved outcomes for

individuals through a greater matching of need to available housing related support services.

- 213 The experience of successful working relationships between the housing benefit team and the Supporting People team demonstrates effective working across departmental barriers to achieve positive outcomes. This cross departmental co-operation will assist the council in making progress.
- 214 A new post, team leader support needs, has been agreed to sit within housing services. This post will be expected to co-ordinate access to all supported living services in the area. In particular the post holder will when appointed be expected to focus on move-on from short-stay accommodation to units receiving floating support and full independent living. If successful this will improve the effectiveness of the Supporting People programme.
- 215 The jointly funded Greater Manchester research into provision in the sub-region has the potential to increase capacity by identifying appropriate specialist resources for vulnerable people that may not be available in the borough.

Integration of continuous improvement into day to day management

- 216 The council is engaged at the highest levels in the Supporting People programme. Councillors have themselves suggested a means of cross scrutiny reporting to ensure that progress of the Supporting People programme is given prominence and that a swift decision approval process is in place.
- 217 The partners in the Bury Supporting People programme have an effective working relationship. There is an understanding that while they each have their own agendas these can be achieved by harnessing the Supporting People programme. The major partners on the commissioning body, the primary care trust and the local probation service, are committed to contributing to effective partnership working.
- 218 The links between wider priorities and goals and individual targets for the Supporting People programme are underdeveloped. There is no regular individual and recorded supervision for members of the Supporting People team through a corporate staff appraisal system.
- 219 The Supporting People team receive direction via team meetings that take place monthly. Team targets are set and action plans discussed. Team members felt that they are up to date with the immediate actions they have to undertake but there was no clarity over how the performance of an individual linked to the achievement of wider aims and objectives set for the programme that then related to corporate priorities for the council. The council is adopting a corporate employee review process and Supporting People team members are due to attend training for this process in October with initial appraisals being carried out by mid November 2003.
- 220 At a Supporting People individual service level there is evidence that both the annual reality checks and the service reviews introduced by the council are leading to improvements in service delivery. There is a need to ensure a consistent approach to this across all service providers.
- 221 There is evidence that the Supporting People team are promoting the importance of service user satisfaction surveys to drive improvements to individual projects. However, there is no mechanism in place that allows for the systematic collation of findings from the surveys and no discussion of how the findings might then inform the future direction of the programme. There is also no system in place for making sure that users are regularly informed about the outcome of their input into the reviews of their services.

Summary

- 222 Overall, we judge that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has promising prospects for delivering further improvements in the delivery of its Supporting People programme.
- 223 There are effective mechanisms for consulting with members and seeking their endorsement for the development of the Supporting People programme through the cross scrutiny panel that has been devised.
- 224 The partners involved with the council in setting the agenda for the Supporting People programme consider that they are well integrated into the decision making structures and there is a history of problems being shared by the partners.
- 225 The commissioning body has acted to tackle problems and rise to challenges. The commissioning body and core strategy group have begun the process of developing the five year strategy for Supporting People in Bury that will determine the future direction of the programme.
- 226 There are effective systems in place to deliver service reviews that service providers understand and that can deliver improvements to users while ensuring the value for money and cost effectiveness of the services provided.
- 227 Staff supervision and appraisal arrangements have not been formalised in the past. However, the new employee review process will ensure that the aims of the programme in Bury will be fully understood by staff and linked to their individual work targets.
- 228 The targets for the achievement of agreed priorities for the programme have yet to be agreed although this work is now underway through the revisions to the service plan. The mechanisms for monitoring and managing progress against these targets still need to be formalised.
- 229 More rigorous monitoring of the Supporting People administration and grant budgets has been recognised as a requirement by the council and these arrangements appear robust.
- 230 There are no consistent systems for communicating with and encouraging the participation of service users. There are some encouraging signs that service users are being consulted in some areas but the benefits of these positive developments need to be captured and disseminated.
- 231 The commissioning body has been effective to date but its operational effectiveness in providing strong leadership for the future delivery of the programme has not been established.

Appendices

The purpose of a best value inspection is to make two judgements. The first is how good is the service being inspected? The second is what are the prospects for improvement? We carried out a range of activities to enable us to reach our judgements.

Documents reviewed

Before going on site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that the council provided for us. These included:

- ◆ Service Review timetable document.
- ◆ Supporting People Shadow Strategy.
- ◆ Older Peoples Best Value Review Reports and Action Plan (2000) and Committee Report 2002.
- ◆ Bury Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan.
- ◆ Community Strategy.
- ◆ Procurement Strategy.
- ◆ Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04.
- ◆ User leaflets relating to Supporting People and newsletters issued to users.
- ◆ Corporate Plan 2003-2008.
- ◆ Minutes of the Core Strategy Group and Commissioning Body.
- ◆ Terms of Reference for the Commissioning Body.
- ◆ Briefing Notes to the Commissioning Body.
- ◆ Charging and Contracting Policy.
- ◆ Annual Audit Letters 2001/02 and 2002/03.
- ◆ Reality Visit Policy and related spreadsheet.
- ◆ Homelessness Strategy.
- ◆ Housing Strategy 2003-2008.
- ◆ HRA Business Plan.
- ◆ Local Community Strategies.
- ◆ Bury Metro - free paper.
- ◆ Supporting People Development Strategy - Action Plan.

Reality checks undertaken

When we went on site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. We also followed up on issues relating to the management of the review and the improvements flowing from it. Our reality checks included:

- ◆ Heathlands Frail Elderly Scheme, visit, staff interview and interview with tenants.
- ◆ Knowle Hill View, visit and staff interview.
- ◆ Bethany Project, visit and staff interview.
- ◆ Southview scheme, visit, staff interview and interview with residents.
- ◆ The TAP and Rachel House, visit.

- ◆ Anchor Trust Scheme, Naseby Court, visit, staff interview and interview with residents.

List of people interviewed

Bernadette Ashcroft	Staff Turning Point
Linda Bamford	Staff Southview
Violet Bernard	Staff Castlecroft Hostel
Carole Bates	Staff Anchor Staying Put Scheme
Evan Boucher	Chief Executive Bury PCT
Jean Bray	Anchor Trust Service Manager
Cllr. Tim Chamberlain	Executive Member for Housing
Peter Collinson	Staff The TAP and Rachael House
Marcus Connor	Service Manager Housing Strategy BMBC
Andy Crawford	Staff Carelink and Extra Care
Andrew Eland	Housing Benefits Deputy Manager BMBC
Graham Evans	Staff Castlecroft Hostel
Lesley Fleming	Staff Knowle Hill View
Trish Geimaeit	Staff Stepping Stone
Ray Godwin	Team Leader Learning Disabilities BMBC
Emma Harrison	Service User
Deborah Hather	Director for Priority Services Bury PCT
Tracey Hayes	Director West Pennine Housing Association
Eleni Loannides	Director Social Services, Health and Housing BMBC
Diana Johnson	Chief Probation Officer Bury and Rochdale
Sue Jordon	Acting Chief Housing Officer
Linda Kennedy	Service Manager Housing Needs BMBC
Janine Lyanda	Manager Richmond Fellowship
Dylis McDonald	Contracts Manager BMBC
Pauline Marcroft	Housing Benefits Manager BMBC
Helen Marrow	Finance Manager (Income) BMBC
Eamon McKeown	Service Manager Learning Disabilities BMBC

Glyn Meacher	Supporting People Team Leader
Kath Mitchell	Staff BUILD
Harriett Norman	Manager West Pennine Housing Association
Mark Sanders	Chief Executive BMBC
Wendy Sloane	Mental Health Review Officer
Graham Smallman	Staff Bethany Project
Nicola Smith	Staff The TAP and Rachael House
Gerard Wade	Finance Manager BMBC
	Staff Focus Group - Supporting People Team

Appendices

Demographic information

This section includes demographic information relevant to Supporting People, comparing the Council with its nearest neighbours⁵ and with England.

Measure	Bury	Nearest neighbours	England
Population (mid-2001)	180,700		
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2001)	14.7	15.2	15.9
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2001)	9.2	8.3	12.5
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate April 2003)	1.9	-	2.6
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ⁶	135	-	-
Multiple deprivation - wards in the most deprived 10 per cent ⁷	1 of 16	-	-
Access to services - wards in the most deprived 10 per cent ⁸	0 of 16	-	-
Households accepted as homeless and in priority need (2001/02) ⁹	225	-	-

⁵ A comparator group of similar councils.

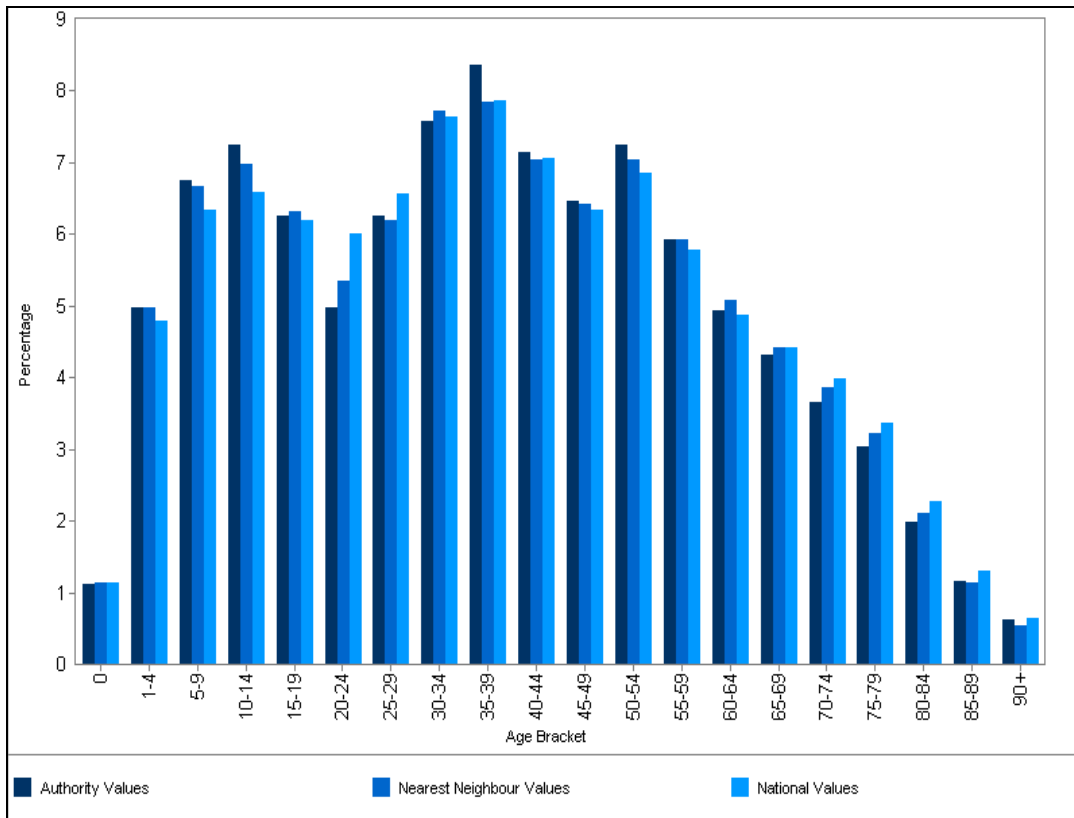
⁶ Indices of Deprivation 2000, average ward score for the authority.

⁷ Indices of Deprivation 2000, rank of index of multiple deprivation rank (out of 8414 wards).

⁸ Indices of Deprivation 2000, rank of access domain (out of 8414 wards).

⁹ Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2002.

Percentage of the population in each age group compared with the Council's nearest neighbours and with England



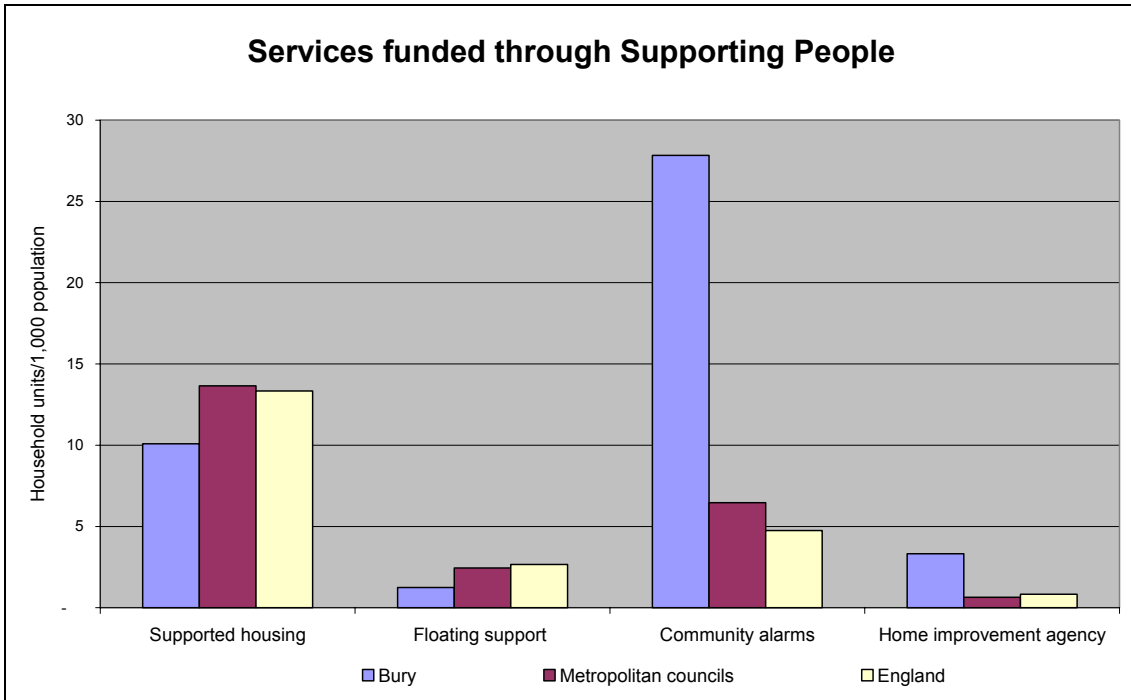
Performance information

This section highlights strong and weak areas of the Council's performance in services that are relevant to Supporting People. We have used the following information to help us reach our judgements:

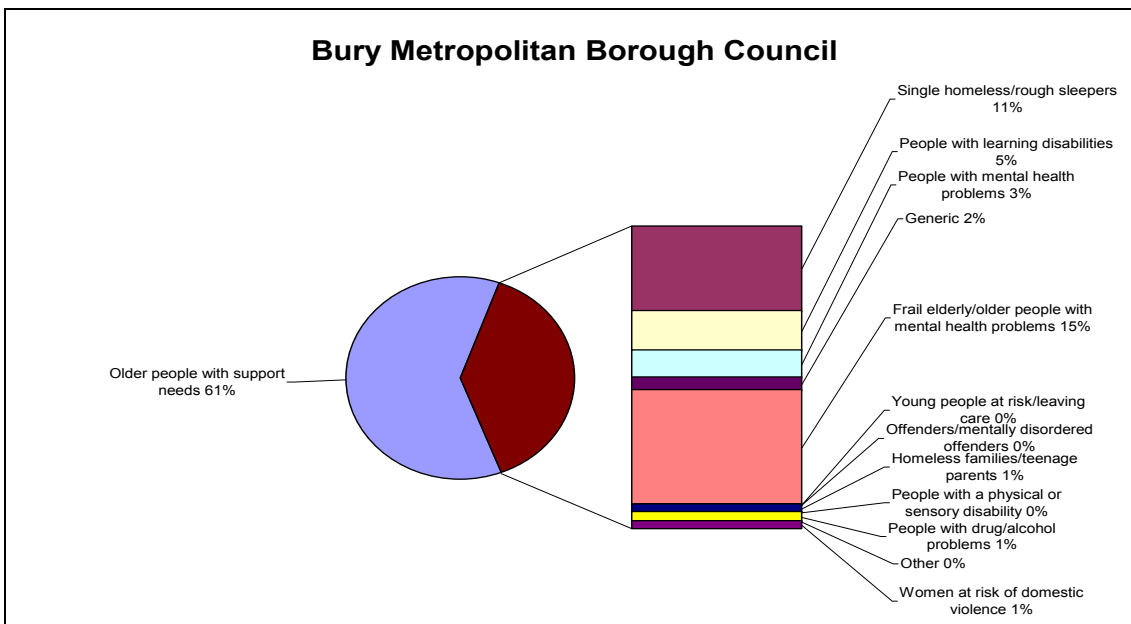
- ◆ data for services funded through the Supporting People programme;
- ◆ Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores;
- ◆ star ratings for social services;
- ◆ Performance Assessment Framework indicators for social services; and
- ◆ relevant best value performance indicators.

Supporting People data

Service provision funded through Supporting People¹⁰

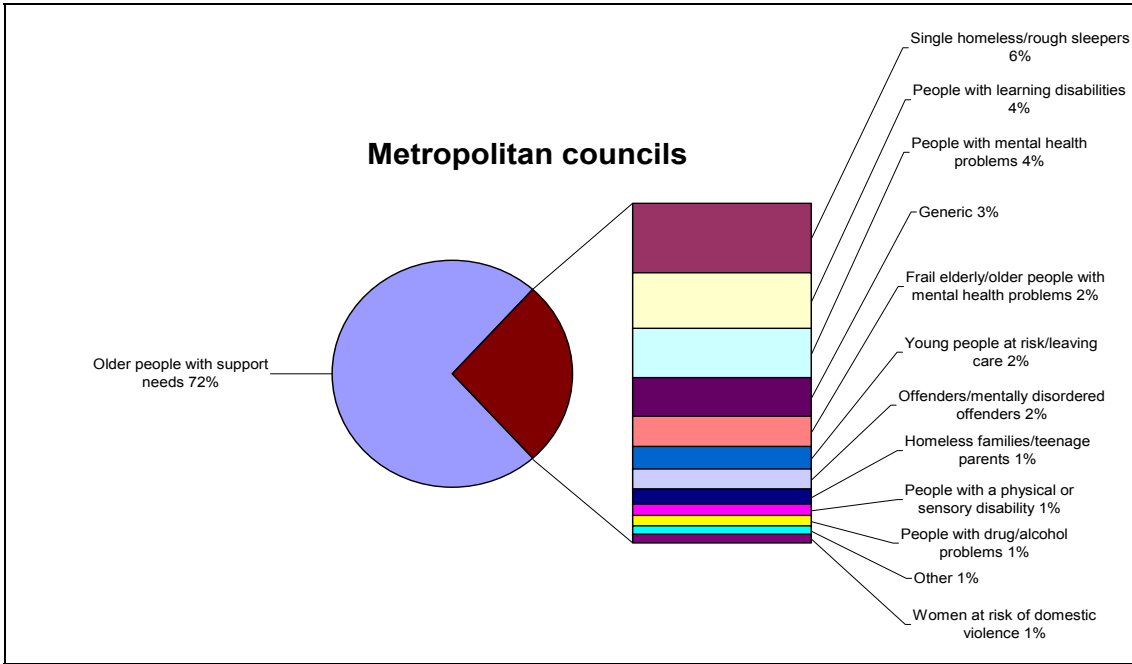


Percentage of Supporting People-funded provision for specific user groups compared with metropolitan councils¹¹



¹⁰ Source: ODPM December 2002 supply reporting data, tables 1a, 3, and 4. Floating support includes resettlement and move-on support services.

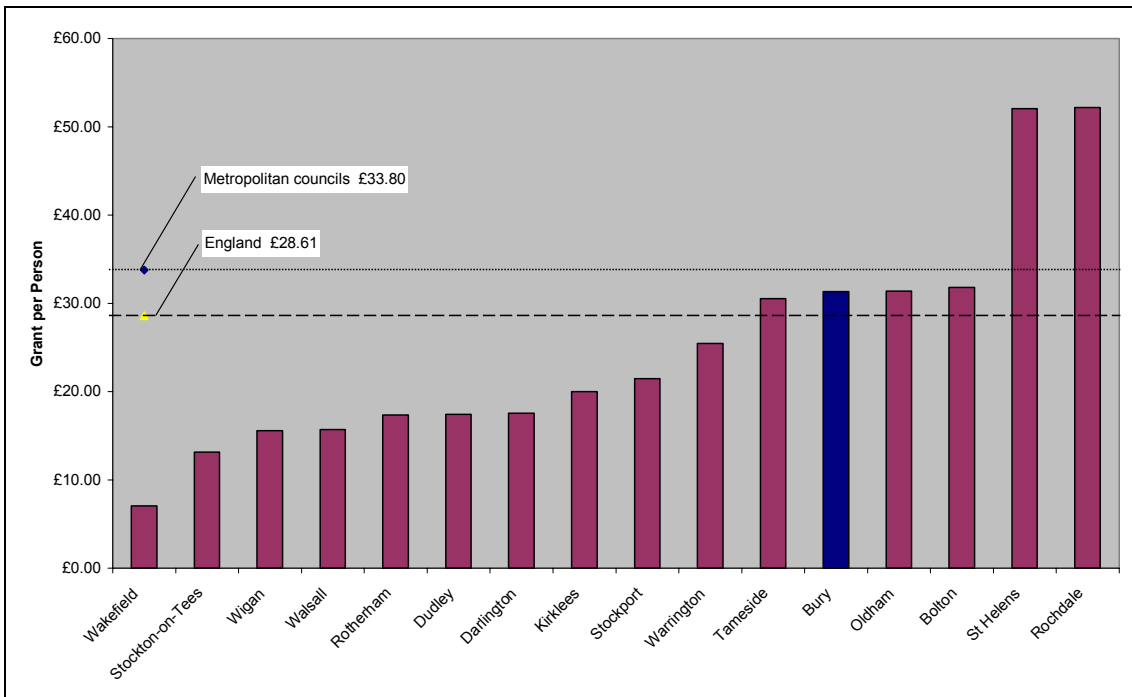
¹¹ Number of household units. Source: ODPM December 2002 supply reporting data, Table 1: Total provision of services (SP funded) excludes pipeline, home improvement agency and community alarm services.



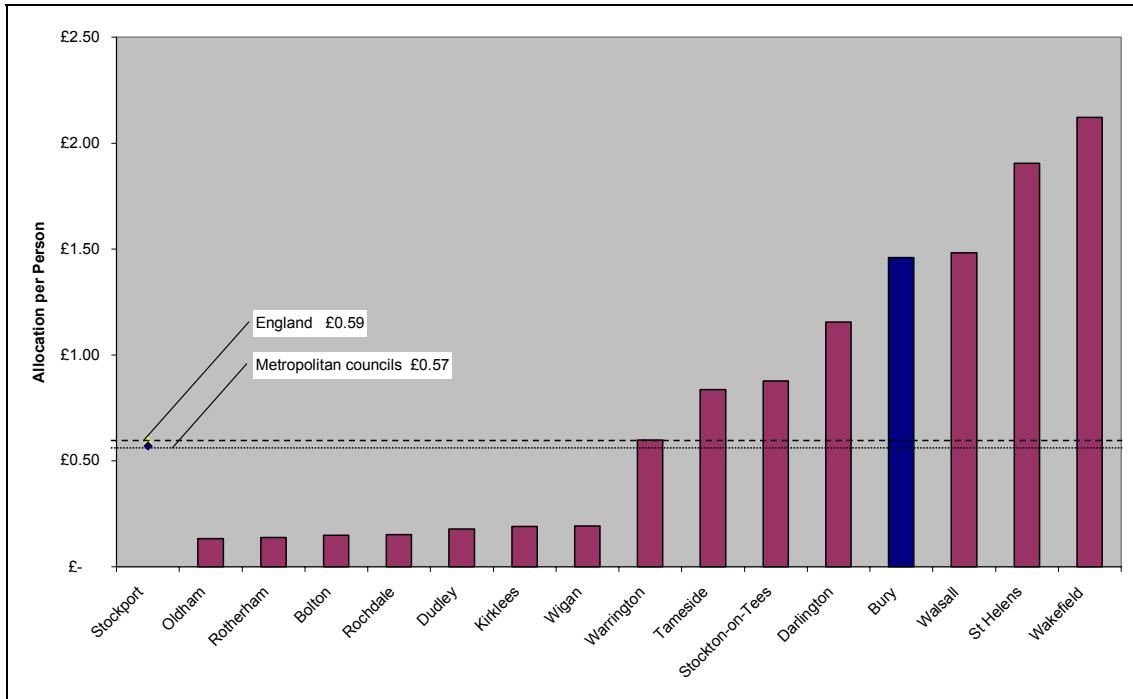
Funding for Supporting People in 2003/04

	Estimated Supporting People grant 2003/04	Pipeline allocation June 2003	Administration grant 2003/04
Bury MBC	£5,660,884	£263,782	£231,509

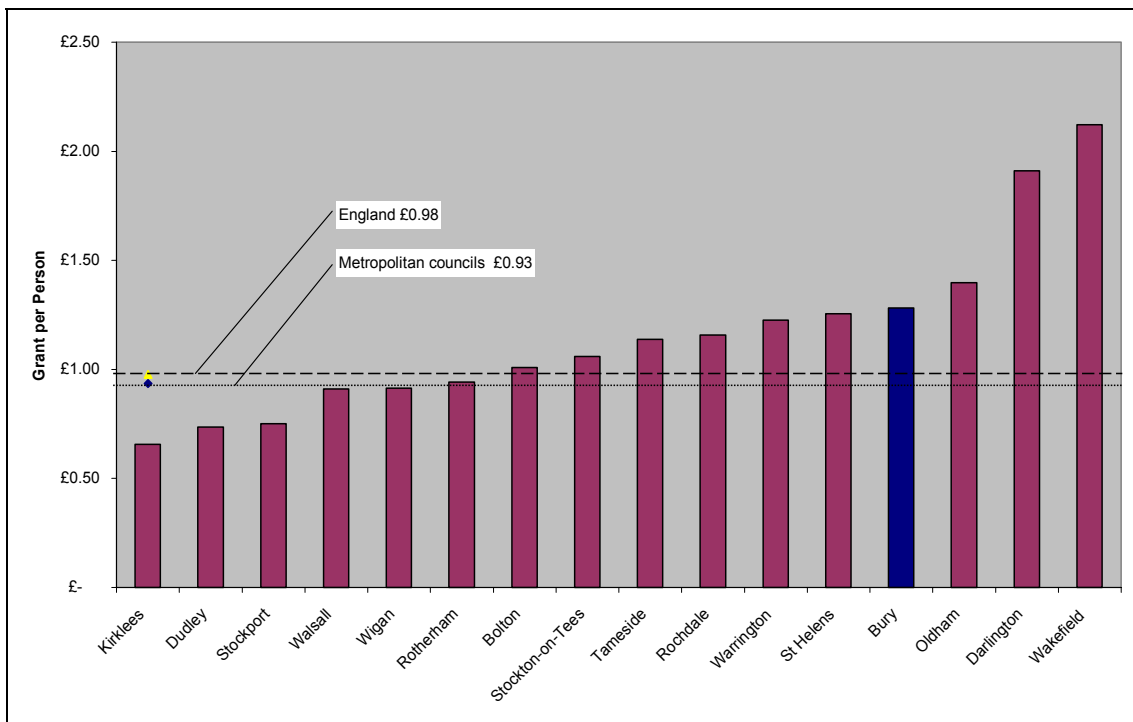
Estimated Supporting People grant per head of population compared with nearest neighbours, all metropolitan councils and all English councils (2003/04)



Estimated pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours, all metropolitan councils and all English councils.



Administration Grant per head of population compared with nearest neighbours, all metropolitan councils and all English councils (2003/04).



Social services performance indicators

Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2001/02

The table below shows how the Council's social services performed on indicators relevant to Supporting People.

Significantly above average (•••••)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home Delayed discharge (all ages)
Above average (••••)	Admissions of supported residents aged 18-64 to residential/nursing care Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home Users who said they got help quickly Waiting time for care packages
Average (•••)	Avoidable harm for older people (falls and hypothermia) Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations costing less than £1000 delivered within 3 weeks Users who said that matters relating to race, culture, or religion were noted
Below average (••)	Intensive home care as a percentage of intensive home and residential care Intensive home care Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home Older people helped to live at home Emergency psychiatric re-admissions
Significantly below average (•)	Employment, education & training for care leavers Admissions of supported residents aged 65 or over to residential/nursing care

Best value performance indicators**Performance on relevant indicators in 2001/02 compared with metropolitan councils**

The table below shows how the Council performed on best value performance indicators relevant to Supporting People.

Within the best 25 per cent	Local authority dwellings renovated (over £5,000)
Average	<p>The level of the Commission for Racial Equality's standard to which the authority conforms</p> <p>Buildings accessible to disabled people</p> <p>Unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished</p> <p>Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings</p> <p>Local authority dwellings renovated (£5,000 and under)</p> <p>Renewal claims processed on time.</p> <p>Racial incidents recorded by the authority</p> <p>Domestic violence refuge places</p>
Within the worst 25 per cent	<p>Homelessness decisions within 33 days</p> <p>Tenant satisfaction with overall service</p> <p>Tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation</p> <p>Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing</p> <p>Average time for processing new claims</p> <p>Average time for processing changes of circumstance</p> <p>Racial incidents that resulted in further action</p>

Supporting People – Housing related support services

'Supporting People' is the Government's long-term policy to enable local authorities to plan, commission and provide support services which help vulnerable people live independently.

The Supporting People programme brings together significant funding streams including transitional housing benefit (THB), which has paid for the support costs associated with housing during the implementation phase; the Housing Corporation's supported housing management grant (SHMG) and probation accommodation grant scheme (PAGS) into a single pot to be administered by 150 administering local authorities.

Unitary and metropolitan authorities and counties are designated as an administering authority with the county taking the lead in most cases for the districts in their area.

Administering local authorities work in partnership, with districts where this is relevant, to agree Supporting People strategies and delivery mechanisms for support services with housing, social services, health and the probation service. Negotiation and consultation is also required with all housing and support service providers, other statutory service providers, the private sector and voluntary organisations to plan and commission support services to meet identified needs.

The programme allows for greater diversity of provision tailored to individual needs and delivered in a local strategic context. For example:

- ◆ support services for people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities whose needs have previously not been met in an appropriate or timely manner;
- ◆ support services for vulnerable older people who wish to live independently, including those in sheltered housing;
- ◆ temporary hostel accommodation – including probation hostels and those providing support for women fleeing domestic violence;
- ◆ support services for people with mental health problems and learning difficulties;
- ◆ floating support to a range of vulnerable people including young people leaving care; and
- ◆ Home improvement agency services whose work includes providing practical support to older owner occupiers to enable them to live independently.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has published a number of consultation papers on the developing programme and a work plan setting out what local Authorities would need to achieve in order to deliver the programme effectively. All the relevant papers for Supporting People can be found on the Supporting People k-web that can be accessed through the Supporting People website: www.spkweb.org.uk

Positive Practice

'The Commission will identify and promote good practice. Every inspection will look for examples of good practice and innovation, and for creative ways to overcome barriers and resistance to change or make better use of resources.' (Seeing is Believing).

Positive practice is something which makes a service more effective and, ultimately, more able to deliver what the customer wants. This appendix summarises areas of positive practice found during the inspection of Supporting People services at Bury Metropolitan Borough Council in September/October 2003.

Item 1

Mechanisms for the review of services

- ◆ The employment of well qualified external consultants the review process to be conducted in a robust and objective manner. This methodology ensures that the Supporting People team are able to remain impartial in their dealings with providers.

Item 2

Scrutiny arrangements

- ◆ The development of a cross-scrutiny panel to consider progress in the delivery of Supporting People allows the council to consider the programme in a holistic manner. The circulation of papers from the cross-scrutiny panel to other partners assists in the creation of an inclusive agenda for Supporting People.