

**T u r n i n g   t h e   K e y  
T o g e t h e r**

**Bradford District  
Homelessness Strategy and Review**

**J u l y   2 0 0 3**

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# I n t r o d u c t i o n

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The commitment to tackling homelessness by the government goes back to December 2001 when the White Paper on Local Government, 'Strong Local Leadership- Quality Public Services', advocated that homelessness strategies should be brought under the umbrella of the authority's housing strategy. More recently, the Homelessness Act 2002 placed a new duty on local housing authorities to adopt a homelessness strategy based on a review of homelessness in the district. Under the Act authorities are required to carry out a review of homelessness in their district and adopt a strategy that looks at:

- Ways to prevent homelessness
- Ensure that there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless
- Provide adequate support for those that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

This means adopting a much wider approach to preventing and tackling homelessness, one that involves a comprehensive and concerted effort by all partner agencies.

The Homelessness Act is expected to bring about radical changes in the way that central and local government and all other partners work together to tackle homelessness. The government has identified six key objectives to underpin the new approach:

1. To strengthen help to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness
2. To develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness
3. To encourage new responses to tackling homelessness
4. To reduce the use of B&B hotels for homeless families with children
5. To sustain the two thirds reduction in rough sleeping
6. To ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all

(Secretary of State's response to the report *More than a Roof*, DTLR, March 2002)

The Homelessness Strategy for the District of Bradford, outlined in Part 1 has been developed after a review that provides a good understanding of the homelessness situation in the district. Part 2 of this report aims to provide an account of that understanding and was used to shape and formulate the strategy. The scope of the strategy is all homeless people whether visible or hidden as well as those that are at risk of becoming homeless. The strategy will be firmly rooted in the overall District effort to achieve a more cohesive and prosperous district.

***“At long last our District now has a vision for it's future, a sense of direction and unmistakable focus, a District with drive, purpose and energy”***

*(Councillor Margaret Eaton Leader of the Council, CBMDC, Best Value Performance Plan, 2002/03)*



## Section 2

## The Principles

### Principle 1

**All partner agencies will work together to develop a deeper understanding of the causes of homelessness and its effects**

### Principle 2

**All partner agencies will work together to prevent homelessness for those at risk and reduce its damaging effects on the individuals who experience it**

### Principle 3

**All partner agencies will work together to tackle the effects of the wider social environment within which homelessness flourishes**

### **A Understanding the Causes and Effects**

A wide range of risk factors makes people more vulnerable to homelessness. These can be financial, health related, social e.g. family breakdown or leaving prison or care, or behavioural e.g. due to anti-social behaviour. In Bradford relationship breakdowns and violence particularly to women are prominent factors. The groups most affected by homelessness in Bradford are women with children and single people through family breakdown. More work can be done to delve more deeply into the effects of homelessness and how we can learn from those that have experienced homelessness, in order to prevent it from happening. We also need to look into repeat experiences of homelessness amongst certain categories.

These are the tools we will use to gain an even greater depth of understanding than we currently have: Assessment Systems; Research; Reviews; Consultation-Users, Frontline Workers, Agencies; Surveys; Information Sharing; Good Practice

### **B Preventing homelessness and reducing it's damaging effects on vulnerable individuals and groups**

If we are to be effective in helping the homeless to cope and to reduce the damaging effects, we need to ensure that services provided for the homeless are accessible, available and well publicised and that they are appropriate and of good quality. Good quality comprehensive advice and information provision will help people threatened with homelessness to retain their current home or where this is not possible or appropriate to obtain accommodation either in social housing or within the private sector. We will also need to ensure for those that cannot be helped through advice and information that we pursue appropriate accommodation with the right level of support. We then need to ensure that this help and support works for them so that they never need to present themselves as homeless again.

These are the measures and services we will develop to ensure our aims are achieved: Identifying and dealing with the risk factors; Advice & Information Services which will cover the full range of provision e.g. housing, debt counselling, welfare benefits, employment, life skills etc; Supported Housing Schemes; Sustained Tenancies; Quality and Standards; Accessible Services; Effective Assessment & Decision Making; Joint Protocols & Partnerships including improved links between health, social services, housing and other agencies; Mediation Services; Drug Rehabilitation; Temporary Accommodation; Allocations Policy; Access to Private Sector Housing

## **C Tackling the effects of the social environment and the context within which homelessness flourishes**

The economic climate as well as the wider social environment can work adversely to create conditions, which allows homelessness to manifest, to fester and to cause damaging spiralling effects on the wider community. There is, today, a major transformation going on within the District with a comprehensive, wide-ranging effort by all partners and agencies to make the quality of life for all our citizens much better. The people working towards tackling the effects of homelessness cannot under estimate the value of the wider work being carried out within the District and need to engage meaningfully with that wider agenda if we are to be truly successful in achieving our aspirations for the homeless.

These are some of the initiatives we will link into and influence: District Community Strategy; Measures in the Housing Strategy to supply suitable affordable accommodation; Working with Regeneration Partners to ensure a healthy local economy; Working with Health and Social Services; Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour; Achieving Social Cohesion; Creating a Safer District

All this will be achieved through the Homelessness Action Plan below, to be monitored on a monthly basis, and reviewed annually by the Homelessness Core Group. We will use yearly Action Plans to get to where we want to be, in incremental stages, rather than try and achieve everything in one go and risk failure. A review of the strategy itself will be carried out within five years. The strategy will be delivered and resourced jointly by our partners either through the reshaping of services and from within existing resources or by identifying and exploring additional funding opportunities. Supporting People funding already forms a major element of meeting identified need. Some new funding for 2003/04 has already been secured from the ODPM Homelessness Directorate to further individual aspects of the strategy. Crucially, there is enough goodwill and commitment within the district to ensure the successful delivery of the Action Plan and we will build on the strength of partnership working built up over many years.

**“Bradford has good relationships with a wide range of external partners and stakeholders, and joint working between the agencies has been amongst the best we have seen”**

*(CPA Gap Inspection of Bradford's Homelessness & Advice Service, Audit Commission, 2002)*

## Section 3

## Homelessness Action Plan 2003/2004

### P1: Working together to develop a deeper understanding of homelessness

**Objective P1A:** Strengthen links with users and former users and consider opportunities for them to participate and influence the policy of agencies and services

**Action:** Implement the recommendations of the 2002 Speakout event (See Section 8A below)

**Target 1:** Arrange joint meeting of the Core Group with Speakout by September 2003

**Target 2:** Set up short life working team to progress the issues raised and report back to the Core Group by December 2003

**Target 3:** Draw up a timetable for implementation by March 2004

**Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:** Neal Heard/David Palethorpe

**Objective P1B:** Clarify and promote the issues surrounding homelessness particularly those related to prevention

**Action:** Carry out desk top research and identify and analyse national, regional and local sources of research and information with a view to raising the general awareness of homelessness

**Target 1:** Identify resources/staff member/student to undertake the study by December 2003

**Target 2:** Complete study by April 2004

**Target 3:** Agree awareness raising plan May/June 2004

**Target 4:** Launch awareness raising with high level Homelessness conference in September 2004

**Target 5:** Other smaller events and activities including leaflet on homelessness to follow the conference

**Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:** David Palethorpe

**Objective P1C:** Identify the reasons for and levels of repeat homelessness

**Action:** Develop a monitoring system for instances of repeat homelessness in order to inform ways of reducing/eliminating future occurrences

**Target 1:** Agree a definition of repeat homelessness

**Target 2:** Identify the factors that need to be measured and the means of monitoring

**Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:** David Palethorpe/Pam Bennett

**Objective P1D:** Identify the specific needs of homeless people from rural areas

**Action:** Establish links with the Rural Housing Enablers operating within the District

**Target 1:** Ensure that the Rural Housing Enablers are represented on the Core Group

**Target 2:** Investigate the need for a sub group to address the issues of rural homelessness

**Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:** David Palethorpe/Pam Bennett

**Objective P1E:** Ensure a broader and more meaningful measurement of the rough sleeping problem is undertaken

**Action:** Incorporate transient homelessness into the current monitoring arrangements

**Target 1:** All agencies to supply the additional information by March 2004

**Target 2:** Report results to Core Group Bi Annually

**Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:** David Palethorpe

<b>Objective P1F:</b> Ensure effective strategic links between Health, Housing and Social Services in order to raise the profile of homelessness as a joint issue
<b>Action:</b> Develop Homelessness as a joint issue and raise its profile
<b>Target 1:</b> Joint Meeting between the Core Group and the Housing, Health & Social Care Group by October 2003. <b>Target 2:</b> Agree arrangements for sharing of information and working on joint initiatives beyond October 2003. <b>Target 3:</b> Nominate a Core Group representative on the Health Improvement Forum
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Sarah Possingham

<b>Objective P1G:</b> Monitor the level of usage of supported accommodation within the voluntary sector to inform ongoing needs analysis
<b>Action:</b> Carry out periodic snapshot surveys
<b>Target 1:</b> Supporting People Team to establish quarterly snapshot surveys by December 2003. <b>Target 2:</b> Report results to Core Group on an ongoing basis <b>Target 3:</b> Use this information along with other needs analysis to determine gaps in service provision
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Carol Sherrard, Supporting People Team

<b>Objective P1H:</b> Identify solutions for gaps in provision raised by the Homelessness Review (i.e. Part 2 of <i>Turning the Key Together</i> )
<b>Action:</b> Establish links with the Supporting People research programme and carry out joint working where relevant
<b>Target 1:</b> Supporting People Research Manager to update the Core Group on a regular basis on the progress of the research programme <b>Target 2:</b> Core Group to have input into the formulation of relevant elements of the research programme
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Sarah Possingham/Carol Sherrard

## **P2: Working together to prevent homelessness and to reduce its damaging effects on the individuals and groups who experience it**

<b>Objective P2A:</b> Pilot a mediation service for young people in order to prevent homelessness or enable a planned move and maintain family support
<b>Action:</b> Develop a pilot scheme through the Community Mediation Service
<b>Target 1:</b> Set up pilot referral system with Community Mediation Service by July 2002 <b>Target 2:</b> Monitor effectiveness of the pilot by December 2003
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett

<b>Objective P2B:</b> Ensure that the victims of domestic violence are offered appropriate accommodation and support
<b>Action:</b> Develop additional family refuge places for women in line with government guidelines and encourage good practice within housing agencies
<b>Target 1:</b> Develop a minimum of 14 bedspaces over the next four years <b>Target 2:</b> Ensure that all RSL's and housing agencies within the District adhere to guidance within "Relationship Breakdown, A Guide for Social Landlords" and other relevant policy guidelines
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Sarah Possingham/David Palethorpe

<b>Objective P2C:</b> Identify a range of mediation and counselling services within the district to provide support for those experiencing relationship difficulties of a non violent nature in order to prevent homelessness
<b>Action:</b> Identify relevant services and build referral links into housing advice service provision
<b>Target 1:</b> Identify services by December 2003
<b>Target 2:</b> Ensure relevant guidance/training for housing advisors by February 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe/Sarah Possingham
<b>Objective P2D:</b> Reduce levels of homelessness presentations from private sector tenancies
<b>Action:</b> Improve Management Standards within the private rented housing sector
<b>Target 1:</b> Invite representative from private sector housing onto the Core Group by August 2003
<b>Target 2:</b> Promote the 'Best BD Homes' Accreditation scheme and increase its membership amongst private landlords on an ongoing basis
<b>Target 3:</b> Promote good standards of practice through the Landlords Forum and other initiatives e.g the "Lets Talk" Newsletter on an ongoing basis
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe/Liam Jowett
<b>Objective P2E:</b> Eliminate Bed and Breakfast use except in exceptional cases and keep length of stay within local targets
<b>Action:</b> Monitor usage and keep under permanent review
<b>Target 1:</b> Families in B&B for a maximum of 1 week in 100% of cases
<b>Target 2:</b> Single people in B&B for a maximum of 2 weeks in 100% of cases
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett
<b>Objective P2F:</b> Ensure adequate and appropriate support provision within the district including schemes that aim to sustain tenancies with a joint commitment to homelessness prevention and quality of provision
<b>Action:</b> Homelessness Core Group role in the Supporting People review process
<b>Target 1:</b> Agree role of the Core Group with Supporting People Manager by September 2003
<b>Target 2:</b> Identify gaps in provision for homeless people and those at risk on an ongoing basis jointly
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe/Sarah Possingham
<b>Objective P2G:</b> Ensure existing joint protocols between Housing, Health, Social Service, Probation, Prisons, Police etc are effective and identify other areas where protocols are needed
<b>Action:</b> Review joint protocols already in place
<b>Target 1:</b> Complete review exercise by December 2003
<b>Target 2:</b> Develop joint protocols and establish mechanisms to monitor on an ongoing basis
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett
<b>Objective P2H:</b> Ensure Homehunter is effective in enabling homeless people to obtain settled accommodation
<b>Action:</b> Monitor homelessness lettings statistics
<b>Target 1:</b> Quarterly lettings reports to the Homelessness Core Group
<b>Target 2:</b> Homehunter Manager to consult on changes to system as appropriate
<b>Target 3:</b> End of year analysis report on homeless lets by Homehunter Manager to Core Group
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett

<b>Objective P2J:</b> Ensure households spend minimal time in temporary accommodation and avoid moves between units of temporary accommodation
<b>Action:</b> Monitor length of stay and where clients moved between units
<b>Target:</b> Ensure appropriate reports are in place to provide the necessary information. <b>Target 2:</b> Determine grounds where moves within temporary accommodation are acceptable and report on exceptions
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett
<b>Objective P2K:</b> Promote good practice within supported housing sector for BME groups
<b>Action:</b> The BME Housing Working Party to work alongside other agencies to share information and good practice
<b>Target 1:</b> Develop an out-of-hours telephone helpline in order to signpost vulnerable 16-25 year olds to services that would prevent homelessness by August 2004 <b>Target 2:</b> Include information on the Homehunter and local authority websites providing information for young people and agencies on services available by February 2004 <b>Target 3:</b> Promote the Connexions Strategy to BME clients within the supported housing sector to ensure that they benefit fully from these services <b>Target 4:</b> Offer advice and support to the Supporting People Team on BME needs and issues <b>Target 5:</b> Deliver equality and diversity training to frontline staff in the supported housing sector with the first set of training sessions running by October 2003 and maintained on an ongoing basis
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Rubina Bukhari, BME Housing Working Party
<b>Objective P2L:</b> Improve access and facilities in housing Advice Service Offices including review of opening hours
<b>Action:</b> Review accommodation requirements to ensure equality of access, to meet legislation and to address concerns in the Audit Commission Best Value Inspection report
<b>Target 1:</b> Review offices in line with Audit Commission report, BCHT relocation plans and Council Asset Management Strategy <b>Target 2:</b> Produce plan with costed options <b>Target 3:</b> Report to Council with resource implications by February 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Pam Bennett/David Palethorpe
<b>Objective P2M:</b> Improve the effectiveness of services to homeless people who use drugs
<b>Action:</b> Develop and promote better working links between drugs and housing agencies
<b>Target 1:</b> Develop information resource of drugs related support undertaken by housing providers, in conjunction with DAAT review, and an information resource of housing related support undertaken by drugs agencies, by October 2003 <b>Target 2:</b> Develop protocol between supported housing agencies and the police, by Dec 2003 <b>Target 3:</b> Explore feasibility of joint housing and drugs agencies event, by June 2004 <b>Target 4:</b> Encourage all supported housing providers to review and update their drugs policies, through recommending the release model policy as a blueprint for housing providers to adapt as appropriate, by June 2004 <b>Target 5:</b> Analyse gaps in provision identified at the Housing and Drugs Conference and include relevant targets in future years Action Plans <b>Target 6:</b> Continue to disseminate changes in legislation and guidance to housing and drug agencies, on an ongoing basis <b>Target 7:</b> Identify opportunities for improved user consultation in relation to housing and drug services, on an ongoing basis
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Sarah Clark, Housing & Drugs Working Party

<b>Objective P2N:</b> Better co-ordination of Advice Services across all current providers (as recommended by the Audit Commission CPA Gap Inspection)
<b>Action:</b> Develop a vision of what level of housing advice needs to be provided in the District and ensure full co-ordination of housing advice services through the variety of outlets available (Audit Commission CPA Inspection report)
<b>Target:</b> Hold a series of workshop sessions with Advice Agencies to develop a shared vision of advice services to homeless people and those with housing problems by September 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Information Group

<b>Objective P2P:</b> Raise the awareness of the accommodation and services available for homeless people and those that are at risk
<b>Action:</b> Carry out a high profile awareness campaign amongst users, those at risk, providers and other agencies
<b>Target 1:</b> Re-launch Hostels Online to agencies by February 2004
<b>Target 2:</b> Re-launch the Homelessness Directory to agencies by February 2004
<b>Target 3:</b> Produce a credit card sized drop down leaflet informing potential users of services available, by March 2004
<b>Target 4:</b> Organise area seminars and consult on establishing local forums for information exchange/networking
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Information Group

<b>Objective P2Q:</b> Consider the feasibility of introducing a wider rent deposit/guarantee scheme including a review of the effectiveness of schemes currently being operated
<b>Action:</b> Carry out a feasibility study into the appropriateness of a wider bond deposit facility
<b>Target 1:</b> Set up sub-group to draft terms of references by August 2003
<b>Target 2:</b> Complete review and report to Core Group by July 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Information Group

<b>Objective P2R:</b> Provide appropriate support for NASS leavers with positive decisions enabling sustained and successful move on accommodation
<b>Action:</b> Tackle the barriers which present as obstacles to NASS leavers accessing appropriate accommodation e.g language difficulties, cultural needs, harassment etc
<b>Target 1:</b> Carry out an assessment of the language requirement of NASS leavers and the resource implication arising out of the assessment by April 2004
<b>Target 2:</b> Identify a budget for interpretation services by May 2004
<b>Target 3:</b> Assess other gaps in support services within the district and report to Supporting People Group by 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe

### **P3: Working together to tackle the effects of the wider social environment within which homelessness flourishes**

<b>Objective P3A:</b> Ensure the 'Breaking Down the Barriers Action Plan' plays a key role in the homelessness agenda through its measures to improve access to social housing for Asian communities and the achievement of a cohesive, more harmonious community
<b>Action:</b> Establish links between the Core Group and the BDTB Implementation Group
<b>Target:</b> Identify Core Group Member to be represented on the BDTB Group
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Rubina Bukhari

<b>Objective P3B:</b> Ensure that the issue of homelessness as a result of domestic violence is firmly on the agenda of the wider DV Partnership
<b>Action:</b> Ensure closer working relations between the Homelessness Core Group and the Domestic Violence Partnership
<b>Target:</b> Standing item on agenda of Core Group with report back from Core Group representative on the DV Partnership
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Sarah Possingham
<b>Objective P3C:</b> Ensure that the Community Cohesion Plan for the district acknowledges and addresses the issue of homelessness
<b>Action:</b> Core Group to input into the current consultation process
<b>Target 1:</b> Core Group Members to consider the draft Cohesion Plan for a joint response
<b>Target 2:</b> Invite Lead Officer on Community Cohesion to meeting of Core Group in August 2003 for a briefing and arrangements for joint working
<b>Target 3:</b> Core Group members to attend a series of seminars to be held on Community Cohesion during 2003
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe
<b>Objective P3D:</b> Recognise the part the Safer Communities Partnership can play in reducing and tackling homelessness through measures to create a safer more harmonious district
<b>Action:</b> Strengthen working links with the Safer Communities Partnership
<b>Target:</b> Arrange meeting with SC Partnership Co-ordinator by December 2003.
<b>Lead Officer (s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe
<b>Objective P3E:</b> Ensure the Housing Strategy is relevant to meeting the needs of the homeless and those at risk by reviewing appropriate elements
<b>Action:</b> Review Affordable Housing Policy; Empty Homes Strategy; Private Sector Housing Policy and other relevant elements of the housing strategy
<b>Target:</b> By September 2003 and ongoing
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> Yusuf Karolia
<b>Objective P3F:</b> Identify and develop linkages with relevant agencies/programmes that can play a positive role in tackling and preventing homelessness especially Connexions, Sure Start, Quality Protects, Progress2Work, Joint Investment Plans, Primary Care Trusts, DAAT, Youth Offending Teams, Schools, Learning and Skills Council, Healthy Bradford Group, Bradford Adult Protection Committee, Community Cohesion Task Group
<b>Action:</b> Set up sub-group of the Core Group to identify agencies and programmes and work out ways to establish working links
<b>Target 1:</b> Set up sub group by October 2003 and agree terms of references
<b>Target 2:</b> Report to Core Group by March 2004
<b>Lead Officer(s)/Group Responsible:</b> David Palethorpe

## Section 4 Key Outcome and Assessment Indicators 2003/04

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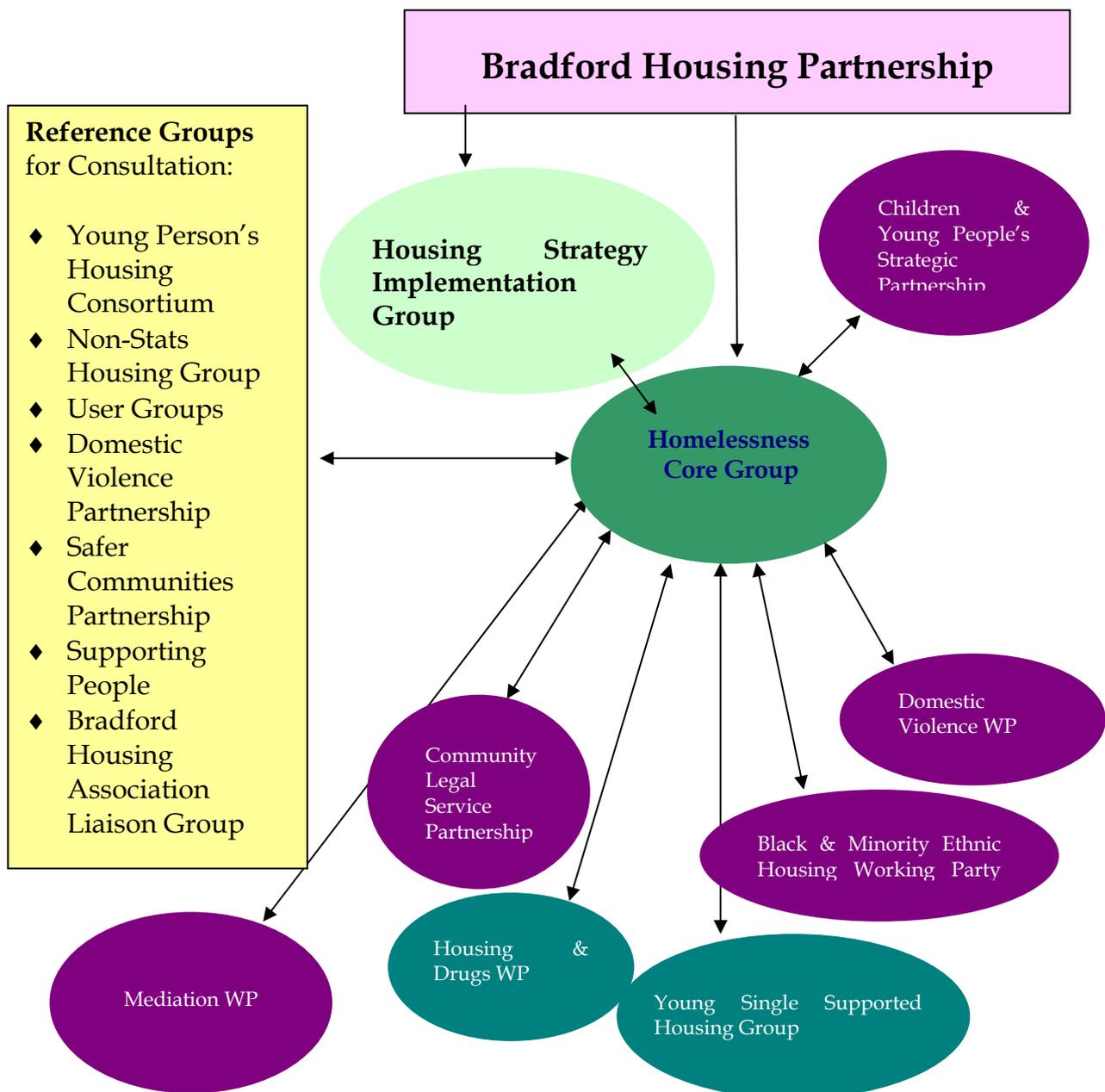
1. The number of households applying as homeless and the numbers accepted as statutory homeless under legislative criteria **Baseline: 1618 presentations Target: Reduce presentations by 10%**
2. The numbers of people presenting as homeless and those accepted by ethnicity
3. The numbers of people presenting as homeless and those accepted by priority need group
4. The numbers of people presenting as homeless and those accepted by age groups
5. The numbers of people presenting as homeless by reasons for loss of accommodation
6. The proportion of households placed directly into permanent accommodation **Baseline: Number of 'Homeless At Home' as a proportion of overall in temporary accommodation Target: Increase number of Homeless At Home by 10%**
7. The number of households presenting as repeat homeless- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
8. The total number of homeless households placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation **Target: Reduce 2003/04 Baseline by 50%**
9. The number of homeless households placed in B&B that have one or more children, or where a member of the household is pregnant
10. Time spent by households in B&B accommodation **Baseline: 5 Days Average Target: Reduce to an average of 3 Days Target: 1 week for families with children in 100% of cases, 2 weeks for those without children in 100% of cases**
11. The number of households in types of temporary accommodation and time spent in that accommodation **Baseline: 389 all types Target: Reduce by 10%**
12. Average length of time taken to reach decisions on homelessness cases **Baseline: 98% in 33 days Target: 99%**
13. The number of people sleeping rough presenting as homeless- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
14. The length of time people sleeping rough before presenting themselves as homeless- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
15. The numbers of people sleeping rough within the district- **Baseline 2002/03- 3**
16. Numbers of homeless people for whom accommodation with support is secured- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
17. The numbers of people presenting from rural areas of the district- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
18. Numbers of homeless people or those at risk reconciled with parents, friends or relatives through the Community Mediation Service- **Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
19. Numbers of women fleeing violence referred to 'Staying Put'
20. Numbers of people helped to stay on with private landlords where they were at risk of the tenancy being terminated-**Establish 2003/04 Baseline**
21. The level of usage of supported accommodation by client groups within the voluntary housing sector
22. The numbers of households approaching voluntary agencies for direct access accommodation
23. The numbers of households accommodated by voluntary agencies in direct access accommodation



These consultations have included members of key groups such as the Inclusive Supporting People Forum, Non Statutory Housing Group, Bradford Housing Association Liaison Group, Domestic Violence Partnership, Primary Care Trusts, Safer Communities Partnership, Bradford Community Housing Trust, Bradford Council’s Policy Forum, Bradford Vision’s Partnership Delivery Team etc.

During the process of review the ODPM Advisor linked to Bradford was consulted on a regular basis. Shelter has also played a key role in helping to undertake the review and to shape the strategy. The Review and Strategy were then presented to the Board of the Bradford Housing Partnership for endorsement in June 2002 as a partnership strategy and submitted to the local authority’s Executive for political approval in July 2003.

**Diagram 1 Homelessness Planning Structure**



## Section 2

## District Profile<sup>1</sup>

Bradford is the fourth largest metropolitan district with a population of 467,900 (2001 Census) representing a slight fall from the 1991 population of 468,800. The population is ethnically diverse with one in five people classifying themselves as other than 'white'. Of these 15 per cent are Pakistani; 3 per cent Indian; 1 Per cent Bangladeshi; 1 per cent African/Caribbean and 2 per cent other. Indian, Bangladeshi and Caribbean have all maintained their numbers, while the largest ethnic group, Pakistani, has had the most significant increase since the 1991 Census, and now represents the largest grouping in the Country at 15% of the districts population. Young people make up a larger proportion of the population than the national average due to the district having fewer deaths compared to the number of births. There are however more people over 75 since 1991 and the workforce is getting older. 34% of households in Bradford have dependent children compared to the national figure of 29.5%. The proportion has decreased from 47.4% since 1991. Over the last ten years to 2001 the age distribution of dependent children has altered with the proportion of 0-4 year olds doubling to 13.9% and the proportion of 5+ halving to 20%. The number of lone parents has also increased significantly from 7900 to 13000.

The average household size in the district has fallen from 2.63 in 1991 to 2.55 in 2001. At the same time the average number of rooms per household has increased from 4.90 in 1991 to 5.23. Despite this 8.3% or almost 15,000 households are overcrowded representing the highest levels of overcrowding in Yorkshire & Humberside. Situations of overcrowding often manifest into homelessness and we will need to ensure that we properly address the issue of overcrowding through the housing strategy to minimise its effects.

Bradford's unemployment rate is at its lowest for the last twenty years, however, at 4.6% it is well above the national average of 2.8% and rises to 12% in parts of the inner city and outlying estates and Keighley. 35.12% of the 16-74 age group do not have any qualifications.

Poverty in Bradford is still a major problem with 44% of children in the District living in low-income households compared with a national figure of 26.7%.

Educational attainment is well below the national average but this year there are signs of some progress being made in increasing educational attainment in the District.

The health of the people in the District is below the national average and key areas of concern are cancer, coronary heart disease and diabetes particularly among the Asian community. There are also problems with disability and teenage pregnancy. 36.5% of households have one or more persons with a Limiting Long Term Illness, compared to 34% nationally. This is an increase from 26.2% since 1991. 48,000 people are providing unpaid care in the district.

Since the summer of 2001, there has been an increased focus on measures to achieve community cohesion. The riots that took place on 7 July 2001 is a stark reminder that Bradford is vulnerable and may face risks in achieving the district's vision of '*a district in which people are justifiably proud of where they live, learn, work and play*'. (Bradford District 2020 Vision).

**1 Sources:** Census 2001; Local Housing Assessments, CBMDC, 2002; State of the District Report, CBMDC, 2002

## Section 3

## The Housing Market<sup>2</sup>

The Bradford district covers an area of 141 square miles over Airedale, Wharfedale, and the Worth Valley, and it includes Bradford City, and the towns of Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Ilkley as well as a number of small villages such as Denholme, Cottingley, Thornton and Haworth. The area, although generally viewed as urban is in fact, two thirds rural. The population is concentrated in the urban areas of Bradford, Shipley, Bingley and Keighley. Concentrations of inhabitants from the Asian communities are found in the inner city areas of Bradford and Keighley. Despite being two thirds rural, the number of people per hectare is high at 12.8 compared to the national average of 3.4. The figure for inner city areas is likely to be much higher. The topography of the district is diverse and spawns a range of settlement sizes with sharp distinctions between local housing markets.

The 2000-2010 Housing Strategy has predicted 15,000 more households within the ten-year timeframe of that strategy. These are predominantly Asian, with larger family sizes and more adults within the family. It is anticipated that a further 9,000 housing units based on the current year will be needed to cater for this growth. The Housing Strategy has therefore set itself a target of achieving an output of 1,300 dwellings per annum.

74% of the district stock is owner occupied (with 31% owning their homes outright), representing the second largest private stock in the Yorkshire & Humber region. 17% of stock is managed by a social landlord and 9% is privately rented. The housing stock is generally older than the national average. The bulk of the private rented stock is at the lower end of the market and located in the urban areas. 21% of this is unfit. Vacant properties amount to about 11,500 across the district concentrated mainly in the private sector.

The bulk of stock within the district has two or three bedrooms and the housing strategy has identified the need for larger properties of 4 or more bedrooms. Within the inner city nearly 60% live in terraced housing, 5000 of these being back-to-back houses. Almost 15,000 households are living in overcrowded conditions.

Council stock was transferred to the new Bradford Community Housing Trust in February 2003 and numbers almost 26,000. The Bradford Community Housing Trust with its six local subsidiaries has a 30 year Business Plan that aims to ensure optimum stock utilisation. Homehunter, the choice based lettings system run by BCHT is already providing valuable information regarding local demand and preparatory work is being carried out exploring remodelling and demolition as tools to create suitable and appropriate accommodation. The other RSL's operating in the district manages a stock of just over 10,000.

The stock of "affordable housing" amounts to approximately 95,000 comprising of 36,000 social rented, 58,000 private sector including private rented and 300 subsidised private rented e.g. Living Over the Shops (LOTS) and low cost home ownership schemes. The housing strategy classes all social rented housing as affordable as well as all Council Tax Band A properties in the owner occupied sector.

The District has about 200,000 dwellings with sharply contrasting property values ranging from an average of £177,000 in Wharfedale to an average of £39,000 in the inner city. Rent levels vary greatly depending on size and type of property and social landlord. For example the average rent for a former council house is £52.00 whilst Housing Association rents vary from averages of £40.00 to £80.00. In the longer term rent levels should converge at similar levels due to the governments new rent setting framework.

A study carried out by the Northern Consortium in 2000 on behalf of Bradford Council, looked at the balance between affordable housing and low-income households. The study found that there were marked differences between market areas. In Wharfedale for instance 32% of households could not afford the mortgage on a dwelling of £40,000 but only 6% of dwellings in the market area are valued under £40,000. In the inner city areas of Bradford although 62% of households could not raise the mortgage on a £40,000 dwelling, 78% of the dwelling stock is below that value. In broad terms it was found that there are areas both of severe shortage and of substantial oversupply of low cost housing. This has an obvious impact on supply of housing suitable for people likely to face homelessness.

The challenge that the housing strategy therefore set itself is to address both the under and over supply of affordable housing by seeking to improve the balance of stock in all areas where there is significant imbalance. This will mean in broadest policy terms to use planning powers under PPG3 to increase provision in market areas of under supply, and in areas of over supply to raise property values through measures contained in the private sector renewal policy. The strategy also seeks to maintain the social housing stock at its current level while carrying out major restructuring to dispose of obsolete stock and meet the specific needs of inner city residents, the bulk of whom are from Asian backgrounds. The target is for an output of 3500 units of social rented housing over ten years divided as follows: Minority Ethnic, 65%; General Purpose, 25%; Elderly, 10%.

The key issues identified for its effects on the housing market and consequent impact on the homelessness situation include:

- Unfit private sector housing particularly in the private rented sector
- The need for larger homes of 4 or more bedrooms particularly for the Asian communities
- Overcrowding and the level of 'concealed' households which hides a significant potential demand
- Undersupply of affordable housing within suburban and rural areas and the inadequacy of the market to meet the needs of vulnerable people within these areas
- Sharp differences in property values within the district
- The impact of Homehunter, the choice based lettings system, on offering choice as well as protection to the vulnerable
- The impact that the investment plans of Bradford Community Housing Trust (the LSVT company to which council stock was recently transferred) will have on provision of suitable, appropriate accommodation, and its plans to deal with areas of low demand
- The flight of affluent people, often from the white community, from inner city areas
- The effectiveness of policies to attract members of the Asian community (currently heavily under-represented) in social housing
- The long term ability of Supporting People to resource the provision of suitable temporary and supported accommodation for all those that need it

**2 Sources:** Census 2001; Local Housing Assessments 2002, CBMDC; Modelling Housing Markets, 2000, Northern Housing Consortium

## Section 4      The State of Homelessness in the District<sup>3</sup>

### A Definition of Homelessness

Many people, understandably, consider only those without a roof over their heads i.e. rough sleepers, as homeless. However, the numbers of people sleeping rough in our towns and cities are relatively small compared to the large numbers of people who are termed homeless by legislation. Beyond what is termed as 'statutory homeless' there are large numbers of people who are in insecure housing or in overcrowded households. These people are often termed as the 'hidden' homeless. The numbers of people at risk of homelessness can be even greater and include people who may be finding it difficult to sustain their tenancies due to debts, illness etc. The scope of the homelessness strategy will be all homeless people including those that are at risk of facing homelessness at some stage in their lives.

*"Rough sleepers are only the tip of the iceberg"*

*(Homelessness, responding to the new agenda, Audit Commission, 2003)*

### B Causes of Homelessness

We know from studies carried out nationally and at local levels that homelessness is caused by a number of factors, some relate to the wider state of the economy and the inadequacy of the housing market to supply the right levels and quality of accommodation. These are known as structural factors. Other reasons are more personal to individuals and families and include relationship breakdowns, failure to sustain a tenancy due to a variety of reasons including mental illness, release from prison and other institutions with no accommodation to go to, etc. The causes of homelessness can be exacerbated by overcrowding, racism, living in poor neighbourhoods, unemployment etc. Local users have told us particularly through the Speakout conferences how they have become homeless and how it has affected their quality of life.

*"I had no money, was on drugs and alcohol, due to wars breaking out within my family, my health was affected and I went into a state of depression, my family got split, I had no job. I was lonely and had nowhere to go, so I slept in a graveyard for four nights before someone told me I should go to the Cyrenians"*

*(Bradford Speakout Conference)*

There will be many people facing the prospect of homelessness or become homeless who sort themselves out but there will be many that require help. This help is often provided by voluntary agencies either in the form of advice, referral or provision of temporary accommodation or supported housing. Often however, the first port of call for many people facing the prospect of despair due to homelessness will be to the local authority that under the Homelessness Act 2002 has a duty to:

- Accommodate people who are homeless through no fault of their own and who are in priority need
- Provide accommodation for people who are homeless through no fault of their own but do not have a priority need, where there is suitable available housing
- To provide advice and assistance to ensure that the needs of all homeless applicants are thoroughly assessed. This assistance includes providing information on the likely availability of accommodation that is suitable for the applicant's needs.

## C Homeless Applicants to Bradford Council

In February 2003 Bradford Council transferred responsibility of delivering a homelessness and housing advice service to the newly established Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) Company, Bradford Community Housing Trust. The local authority, nevertheless, retains its statutory responsibilities under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 to help the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. The Council will discharge its legal duty under the legislation through a contractual arrangement with BCHT, which will be reviewed after five years.

### 1. Trends in Applications and Acceptances

Since its peak in 1993/94 homelessness trends have steadily decreased from 5184 presentations and 2581 acceptances to 1618 presentations and 1089 acceptances in 2002/03. In recent years the ratio of applications accepted to those not accepted has significantly increased. This is because solutions are found through provision of timely and effective advice and the taking up of other housing options without the need for clients to go through the homelessness route. Applications are only taken when all other options are fully explored resulting in a higher acceptance rate compared to presentations.

**Table1: Applications and Acceptances 1993-2003**

	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/2000	00/01	01/02	02/03
<b>Accepted</b>	2581	1888	1816	1619	1386	1116	1286	1377	1125	1089
<b>Not Accepted</b>	2673	2797	2380	1715	1629	1233	351	318	349	529
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5184</b>	<b>4685</b>	<b>4196</b>	<b>3334</b>	<b>3015</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>1637</b>	<b>1695</b>	<b>1474</b>	<b>1618</b>

### 2. Priority Needs Groups

By far the largest group to face problems of homelessness contain dependent children (569 in 2002/03); this is followed by women fleeing violence in the home (103 in 2002/03), and then young pregnant mothers without other children (93 in 2002/03). There are significant numbers (114 in 2002/03) in priority need due to some sort of incapacity e.g. old age and disability (mental and physical). Young people aged 16/17 number 45 in 2002/03, sufficient enough to cause concern.

**Table 2: Priority Needs Groups 2002/03**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
Dependent Children	569
Pregnant no dependent children	93
Old Age	34
Physical Disability	36
Mental Illness	44
16/17 year olds	45
Domestic Violence	103
Non Domestic Violence	31
Care Leaver	3
HM Forces	2
Custody/Remand	3
Formerly in Care aged 18-20	8
Emergency	4
Other special reason	114
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1089</b>

### 3. Reasons for Homelessness

In terms of the reasons offered for loss of accommodation, the main reasons are a breakdown in sharing relations due to families and friends no longer willing to accommodate (most of these being young people) and domestic violence. Linking these to priority needs groups suggest that a major priority for the strategy should be women with children fleeing violence and young people. Asylum Seekers with positive decisions who come out of NASS contracts and present as homeless appear to be a growing problem. They come with ongoing accommodation and support needs and have varying language needs that have to be catered for through interpretation services. Loss of private rented accommodation whether it is through ending of shorthold tenancy or otherwise also presents as a serious issue.

**Table 3: Reason for Loss of Accommodation 2002/03**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
Parent no longer willing to accommodate	77
Relatives/Friends No longer willing to accommodate	220
Violence	330
Harassment, threats etc	16
Non-Violent Relationship Breakdown	49
Mortgage Arrears	18
Rent Arrears - LA	0
Rent Arrears - HA	1
Rent Arrears - Private	12
Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	64
Other Loss of Rented Accommodation	196
Institution/Care	16
Leaving NAAS Accommodation	35
Other	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1089</b>

#### 4. Homelessness and Ethnicity

Presentations by ethnic group appear to be broadly in line with the population profile of the district. The issue for BME communities is more of accessing social housing provision available within the district and of culturally appropriate support services. Improved access to social housing planned by the local authority for Asian communities should have a positive impact in reducing levels of homelessness within those groups.

**Table 4: Presentations by ethnicity for 2002/03**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
White	891
African/Caribbean	39
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	116
Other Ethnic	19
Origin Not Known	24
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1089</b>

#### 5. Temporary Accommodation

Use of bed and breakfast has more than halved from last year. The average length of stay has also been brought down from 12 days in 2001/02 to 5 days last year. In line with government guidelines Bradford will aim to eliminate the use of B&B for families with children except in the most urgent of cases. The voluntary sector has played a significant part in housing the homeless in temporary accommodation and the majority of clients were dealt with as 'homeless at home'.

**Table 5: Use of Temporary Accommodation 2002/03**

<b>B &amp; B Hotels</b>	<b>Norman Bank</b>	<b>Dispersed</b>	<b>Women's Refuges</b>	<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	<b>'Homeless At Home'</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
22	175	137	51	22	682	<b>1089</b>

#### D Wider Homelessness Situation

It is a reality that there are many homeless people who manage to sort their own problems out sometimes with the support of friends and relatives and end up in accommodation of their own. There are others that turn to the voluntary sector for help and are often assisted into finding suitable accommodation with adequate levels of support. The local authority figures therefore may not reflect the fuller picture of the true homeless situation within the district. In terms of people that help themselves out of homelessness or a potential situation of homelessness we will never know the real extent of this but we do have some idea of the levels of homelessness that is dealt with by the voluntary sector. This is entirely due to successful partnership working and also due to the integration of supported housing into the Supporting People funding framework. Supporting People has provided us with information on the levels of supported housing needs and the review therefore relies heavily on the supply mapping and needs analysis carried out by our Supporting People team.

## 1. Voluntary Sector Accommodation

The number of people accommodated in emergency accommodation is a good indicator of homeless people who seek help from the voluntary sector rather than the local authority. It is highly likely that many of these people had they approached the local authority would end up being assessed as statutorily homeless. The figures show that during 2002/03 the Districts ten emergency access projects accommodated a total of 1172 people that includes 263 children accompanying women. The figure also includes 117 individuals provided with a bed through Bradford Nightstop, a project that provides overnight emergency accommodation in the homes of volunteer hosts.

**Table 6: Emergency Accommodation by Voluntary Agencies 2002/03**

Project/Hostel Type	Numbers Accommodated	Accompanying Children
Men Only Hostels	424	-
Men and Women Hostels/Projects	231	-
Women's Refuges/Hostels	200	210
BME Women's Refuges	54	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>263</b>

A wider survey was also carried out in early 2003 as part of the Cross Authority Supporting People Survey and Table 7 provides a snapshot of the numbers of people accommodated by voluntary agencies on a certain day.

**Table 7: Numbers of People in Voluntary Sector Accommodation March 2003**

Client Group	Number of Users
Young People at Risk	50
Single Homeless	176
Offenders	173
Physical/Sensory Disability	8
Domestic Violence	45
Drug Problems	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>473</b>

## 2. Supply Mapping

The number of supported housing units available within the district funded by Supporting People Grant is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Supported Housing Units funded with Supporting People Grant**

Service Type	No of Units
Accommodation Based Service	7401
Accommodation with floating/resettlement/outreach support	148
Community or Social Alarm Service	3640
Floating Support	334
Home Improvement Agency	100
Resettlement	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11633</b>

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) 'Typical Supply Profile' offers a range of typical supply against which the provision in Bradford can be compared. See Table 9. The key issues arising out of the comparison analysis are:

- There is relatively low provision for people with learning disabilities and physical/sensory disabilities. The local needs analysis shows that the growing ethnic minority population has particular needs for provision in these areas. There is also growing evidence that disabled people (with physical, sensory and mental impairments) experience more abuse and violence than the rest of the population and there is therefore a need to provide housing with safety and support to people with care needs.
- There is under-provision for people with drug and alcohol problems. Needs analysis indicates a particular demand for specialist services from these groups.
- There is low provision for offenders, compared to the level of local need. The needs analysis shows that this group exceeds maximum occupancy of the available accommodation.
- There is under-provision for people living with HIV/ AIDS.
- There is under-provision for refugees. Although Bradford Council contracts with the National Asylum Support Service, NASS, to provide a Reception Centre and some properties for Asylum Seekers, these NASS properties are not counted in the supported housing provision.
- There is over-provision of supported housing units for elderly people. In addition, there are 337 bedsits in former council sheltered housing schemes, which have been categorised as 'low demand' by government criteria.

**Table 9: Typical Supply Profile**

Client Group	Higher	Lower	Actual	Explanation
Older people	7767	3718	10851	Over-provision
Care-leavers	156	71	55	Under-provision
Drug problems	95	52	21	Under-provision
Alcohol problems	45	23	18	Under-provision
Learning difficulties	442	82	287	Below mid-range
Physical/sensory disability	500	37	61	Below mid-range
Offenders	287	55	200	(low provision for local need)
AIDS/HIV	322	40	0	Under-provision
Refugees	20	1	15	Possible under-provision
Single homeless	619	9	475	
Homeless families	203	67	148	
Mental health	740	119	327	
Domestic violence	369	22	48	

### 3. Needs Profiling

**People with Mental Health Problems-** There is evidence from across the sector that acute hospital beds are blocked, and throughput restricted because suitable accommodation is lacking. Housing workers are currently looking into a single assessment process with the Hospital Trusts to allow more effectively planned discharges. Unmet needs at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: BME accommodation with “culturally inviting settings”; specific accommodation and information for younger and older people; gap in provision between leaving children’s services at age 16 and the start of adult services at 18; ‘Homes for Life’ with specialist services; More 24-hour floating and accommodation based support.

**People with Learning Disabilities-** Young people from the Asian communities are heavily over represented now making up over 50% of school and college leavers coming into adult learning disability services and children aged 16 and under from BME households make up 48% of this total group. People with multiple disabilities often include challenging behaviour requiring 24-hour care from one or more people. Since the closure of the long stay hospitals resources to meet the needs of this population have either declined or remained static. Unmet needs specified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: Support & advocacy for people leaving long-stay hospitals; More accessible housing for people in rural areas; More “bricks & mortar”, especially shared housing with own bathrooms; Specialist housing for people with complex needs and profound disability; Specialist help for young people about to move to adult services; Specialist services for people living with older carers; Help with financial issues.

**People with a Physical or Sensory Disability-** Physical disability is increasing among the elderly and child population in Bradford. Half of all disabled children or those with complex health needs are of Asian origin. This figure indicates a large future demand for supported housing for this particular group. Unmet needs identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: Fully accessible housing schemes for families; Sensitivity to cultural and physical needs; Attention to households with ageing carers; A stop to building one-room accommodation for older persons; Attention to the needs of ageing people with disabilities

**People with Drug Problems-** The trend shows growth in the use of illegal drugs in Bradford and this growth is reflected in people accessing the services of supported housing providers. The trend includes increased crack use and Bradford is a designated ‘high crack area’. A survey carried out in October 2000 by the Housing and Drugs working Party reported that supported housing staff considered 45% of their residents to be drug users. Bradford Drug & Alcohol Action Team’s Treatment Plan projected that additional capacity should be built, and that rehabilitation and social care services helping to lead to and maintain abstinence should be developed. Housing provision in relation to drug users and referral pathways between housing and drug agencies forms part of the DAAT Treatment Plan. Issues identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: Backup for hostel staff in dealing with substance misuse; more support and counselling for children of drug users. The 2002 Speakout event, which was attended by current and ex drug users identified various gaps in provision, including: out of hours emergency housing information; publicity around housing and drugs agencies in appropriate locations; drug free accommodation for ex users; accommodation for couples. A conference held on Housing and Drugs in 2002 identified further gaps in provision and these are being looked at by the Housing and Drugs Working Party with a view to influencing future years Homelessness Action Plans.

**Young People At Risk-** There has been a shift in the profile of homeless households towards younger single people. A range of accommodation is currently available, but perceived gaps in services include direct access/short stay accommodation and longer stay housing support provided through floating support. Information about the more specialist needs of other groups is emerging and being identified, such as young people at risk from prostitution who require safe accommodation. Unmet needs identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: mediation service for young people and carers; advocacy; legal advice, e.g. on employment legislation; more cultural sensitivity and BME staff; provision for young lesbian and gay people; more information about other services; information on sexual health

**Care Leavers-** There is under-provision for Care Leavers with 45 units of supported accommodation, and 10 floating support units. Research by S Chance for NCH Stepping Stones, in 2002 found that only 75% of Care Leavers were living in suitable accommodation. The research revealed worrying levels of vulnerability with care leavers living independently at younger age levels, having lower levels of educational attainment, and being more likely to be unemployed, to experience teenage parenthood and homelessness.

**Single Homeless People-** In Bradford, Single people, with or without children, form the largest group presenting as homeless to the Local Authority reflecting the national picture. In terms of rough sleeping, the issue is not as significant within Bradford as it is in other major towns and cities. A street count in 1997 found only 2 people sleeping rough. However research and monitoring that went alongside the count reveal a number of issues including, a shortage of direct access accommodation and the lack of provision for couples or people with pets. An action plan and bi annual monitoring amongst all the agencies was set up since which has shown no evidence of a significant problem with long term rough sleeping with only 2 cases reported as sleeping out on any one night. What we have not been able to determine as yet is the total number of individuals sleeping rough over a year including incidences of repeat rough sleeping. The issues in Bradford are more linked to transient homelessness with single people spending short periods of time with nowhere to go and in between staying with friends and family or in hostels. Incidences of tenancy breakdown and repeat homelessness is of particular concern and the priority is to further develop tenancy support to help create sustainable homes, allowing vulnerable people to lead better quality lives. Unmet needs identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Forum include: more accommodation for women; more emergency, 24-hour access accommodation; display of information in public places; street-level support workers; help lines; specific support for drug users; specific support for people with medical problems; specific support for refugees; orientation to long-term needs e.g. education, training, move-on with continued support.

**Offenders or at Risk of Offending-** There are 6 Probation Hostels to meet the needs of the entire West Yorkshire catchment area. Current occupancy is at more than 95%, with 8.5% black and minority ethnic offenders. Probation-contracted accommodation providers are not able to meet the current level of need. In 2001/2002, the number of referrals to the Contracted Accommodation Services (PAS) was 505, of whom 269 were accommodated. Occupancy within PAS averaged 103%. Many prisoners serving sentences of fewer than 12 months do not fall within the remit of Probation and it is likely that many of these prisoners are released from custody with no fixed abode. Those who would be eligible for early release under Home Detention Curfew ('tagging') arrangements will spend proportionately more of their sentence in prison if they are homeless. Of the 11,000 prisoners released from the region's prisons in 2000-2001, approximately 1,500 were released to no fixed abode, but expected to remain in the local area. A scheme linked to Homehunter is being discussed with

Armley Prison with a view to allowing prisoners to apply for housing well before release. Unmet needs identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum were largely concerned with provision for specific groups of offenders: short term prisoners; non-statutory priority groups; mentally disordered offenders; disabled offenders; offenders from BME communities; offenders with complex needs; female offenders with children; arsonists. In addition, there were concerns about the availability of short-stay emergency accommodation, storage facilities in accommodation, and generally the need to pre-plan provision.

**Domestic Violence-** The prevalence of domestic violence in the district means that in order to fulfil Audit Commission requirements (one refuge place per 10,000 head of population) we need to increase our overall provision by 14 family refuge places within the next four years. It is expected that this will include the needs of ethnic minority women as well as offering a greater range of choice in accommodation types, such as dispersed units and supported move-on properties for families resettling in the community after leaving refuge accommodation. Research also shows that supported resettlement from refuge accommodation increases a woman's chance of sustaining a new tenancy and rebuilding her and her children's life after violence. Services for the needs of children who have experienced or have witnessed violence have been developed within the refuge movement and are vital to the recovery of families as a whole. The recent addition in Bradford of a Home Office funded short-life scheme 'Staying Put', which can provide services for women and children experiencing violence who do not want to leave their homes, has expanded choice for this client group. However, this is not an option when, for safety reasons, women and children must leave. 'Staying Put' is a welcome complement to the refuge services. Recently, some evidence has emerged that a growing number of Asian men who have entered the Country on the basis of marriage may be subject to physical and emotional abuse by the female partner and her family and the problem is not always reported due to the taboos associated with both culture and gender. Unmet needs identified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: funding for child support work; more temporary accommodation for specific groups, i.e.: women and children with disabilities, larger families and families with older boys; women who are drug or alcohol users; women with mental health issues, women who are refugees or asylum seekers; cultural awareness; sensitivity to separation/bereavement issues.

**People with HIV/AIDS-** Bradford has no specific supported housing provision for this group. Feedback at the June Inclusive Supporting People Forum indicated that there is considerable delay in obtaining housing adaptations for patients, and plans are being formulated to work more closely with the Disabled Persons Housing Service, and with Occupational Therapy, to address this issue. The demographics, future projections and needs of this group need to be researched more thoroughly.

**Homeless Families with Support Needs-** People with dependent children remain the largest group of priority need homeless applicants. Domestic violence is a major issue for many homeless families and the issues outlined under domestic violence above are relevant here. The needs specified under 'Single Homeless' are also relevant here as many applicants are lone parents with children.

**Refugees-** when decisions on asylum seekers' claims are made, they are no longer eligible for support through NASS. Although the scale of the problem for those receiving a positive decision is only just emerging it is clear that there is a gap in the service available to these people in the District. They often require support to enable them to find and sustain

accommodation and may also suffer additional problems such as isolation, communication difficulties, and the after effects of trauma.

**Teenage Parents-** The District has a higher teenage conception rate than the national average - 47.6 per 1,000 under 18s in 2000 as compared to a rate for England of 43.8. This figure, however, represents a dramatic fall of 16.4 per cent since 1998 and is ahead of government targets to reduce teenage pregnancies by 15 per cent by next year. The preference of many of Bradford's ethnic groups to start families at an early age is reflected in these figures and many of the pregnancies are not necessarily unwanted. In Bradford, there is no specific project targeted at under 18 lone parents. However, there is a range of 11 supported housing projects with 192 bed spaces, which can house this group. There are three projects specifically for lone parents with 22 bed spaces. The specific support issues for young mothers (aged 16 to 18), and Bradford's exceptional level of need, indicate that some specialist provision would be desirable for this group. The Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation Fund has allocated resources to MASTS (Multi-Agency Supported Tenancies Scheme) to carry out some good practice research on housing and support for teenage mothers. More recently, Horton Housing Association have been allocated some floating support units and are currently evaluating the acquisition of four bricks & mortar units, all of which would be ideal for this client group. The Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health Strategy launched in 2001 aims to tackle the causes of teenage pregnancy, including low expectations, poor academic performance, ignorance and being given mixed messages.

**Older People with Support Needs-** Homeless People accepted as homeless by the local authority in 2002/03 due to old age totalled 34. Sheltered Housing forms a very large proportion of the supported housing, which has been provided by Bradford Local Authority and is monitored regularly on a 'local housing area' basis for the numbers of voids, lettings, and refusals. Although the number of elderly and very elderly people in the District is expected to increase greatly, the demand for Local Authority Sheltered Housing appears to have decreased steadily in recent years. The needs of older people who are living in private sector accommodation, and are seeking support to stay in their own homes, are addressed by Home Improvement Agencies such as Anchor Staying Put in Bradford. Unmet needs specified at the June 2002 Inclusive Supporting People Forum include: Attention to the special needs of people with sensory impairments; Attention to the special needs of ethnic minority people, including their geographic locations - they form the majority grouping in some areas, but are isolated in others; a domestic cleaning service

**3 Sources:** Homelessness Act 2002; More than a Roof, DTLR, 2002; Bradford Homelessness Statistics Annual Reports, 93/94/-02/03; Supporting People Shadow Strategy, 2002; Supporting People Cross Authority Survey, West Yorkshire SP Group, 2003; Private Sector House Condition and Energy Survey, The Housing Consultancy, 2001; Single People, Why Should We Care? Horton Housing Association, 1997; Developing Accommodation and Support for Young People leaving care, S Chance, NCH Bradford Stepping Stones, 2002; A study of services for asylum seekers in West Yorkshire Dec 1999- Mar 2001, R Wilson, Joseph Rowntree Trust; Teenage Pregnancy Annual Report, CBMDC, April 2001-March 2002 ; Young Single Homelessness Report, CBMDC, 2001; Homelessness, responding to the new agenda, Audit Commission, 2003

## **Section 5 Provision to Tackle Homelessness in the District<sup>4</sup>**

There is a wide range of services available within the District to prevent homelessness and respond to the housing and support needs of homeless people. Agencies within the district are known for their strong partnership links and the voluntary sector plays a major role in helping to tackle and prevent homelessness.

### **A Local Authority Homelessness & Housing Advice Service**

The local authority has a legal duty under the Housing Act 1996 to provide a comprehensive housing advice service, free of charge, to any person living within the district. The Act also imposes duties on local authorities to assess any person presenting as homeless and also to provide advice, assistance, and accommodation to homeless people who fit the legislative criteria.

The homelessness and advice service in Bradford was contracted to Bradford Community Housing Trust as part of the LSVT transfer package in February 2003. The service is integrally linked to Homehunter, Bradford's Choice based lettings system and offers 'Priority Cards' to homeless people and those requiring adaptations (See Section 7D on page 37). The service is delivered through three centres located for their geographic convenience. These are in the centres of Bradford, Keighley and Shipley. The Council also provided temporary accommodation, now the responsibility of BCHT. The provision of temporary accommodation includes a general needs hostel at Norman Bank and dispersed units of accommodation throughout the district (See Section 5B page 31).

The local authority has always been keen to improve access to services and when it had responsibility to provide the homelessness and advice service (i.e. until February 2003) it introduced a set of positive measures including female and bi-lingual staff within the Housing Advice Centres. A number of Council enquiry offices are wheelchair accessible, including the Hear to Help Centre, the Manningham One Stop Shop and Keighley Town Hall. The service also offers interviews with advisers of the same sex as the applicant and women who do not want to come into the office for reasons of safety are seen in a different location. The same named advisor deals with cases all the way through the process in order to provide continuity in service. Opening times of the Housing Advice Centres are generally based around office hours. There is an out of hours telephone service operated by staff at the Norman Bank hostel where staff are able to conduct an immediate assessment of the relative priority of a client and ensure that they are provided with emergency accommodation as necessary. A joint protocol between Housing and Social Services is in place to ensure a smooth operation of the out of hour's service. Norman Bank and the Social Services emergency numbers are widely publicised.

The homelessness advisors work to a target for clients to move out of temporary accommodation within 10 working days of receiving an offer and for finding an offer of permanent housing within six weeks. This is to avoid temporary accommodation from becoming silted up and so that it can be used to maximum efficiency and enable a homeless household to be resettled sooner. Permanent housing is linked to the provision of floating support where there is an ongoing need.

## **B Other Help and Support for Vulnerable Groups**

The local authority, voluntary sector and RSL's provide a range of temporary, supported accommodation of good standard and schemes that offer practical help for vulnerable people. The projects vary widely in size, target group, support provided, referral procedure, length of stay etc. These include:

**Norman Bank-** The local authority's provision, now contracted out to Bradford Community Housing Trust, is in the form of a general needs hostel at Norman Bank. Norman Bank provides 34 bed spaces in single and family rooms and shared accommodation including kitchen and bathroom facilities. The hostel includes a play area and garden for children. A Support & Resettlement worker at the hostel works with the residents including ensuring move-on accommodation is found. The worker also provides information to residents on local schools, health services and sources of further advice and assistance. This provision has been extended by the provision of two additional support workers through Supporting People funding. The hostel has two designated bi-lingual support workers. The hostel also contains a wheel chair standard resettlement bungalow.

**Emergency Hostels-** There are five projects within the voluntary sector that provide emergency accommodation to the homeless. This includes four hostels and Bradford Nightstop which provides emergency accommodation for young single people in the homes of trained volunteer hosts. Length of stay is usually quite short and they do not operate a waiting list. Staff often provide advice and assistance in finding longer-term accommodation. Either self-referral or through an agency.

**Women's Refuges-** These provide emergency accommodation for single women or women with children fleeing violence or oppression. The accommodation is usually temporary and includes family units. The addresses are confidential and will only be given out once an applicant is accepted during referral. There are five projects with two that cater specifically for women and children from the black and ethnic minority communities.

**Supported Housing-** These provide non-emergency hostels and supported housing schemes for homeless people. Some projects are in a single building whilst others are in dispersed flats and shared houses. Some operate a waiting list. The level of support and length of stay vary widely between them. There are a total of twelve projects operating within the district.

**Specialist Housing-** These projects provide housing for people with specific needs, including ex-offenders, people with mental health problems and people with drug and alcohol problems. There are fourteen such projects within the district.

**Day Centres and Practical Support** -These provide practical support including a day centre for homeless people, tenancy support, furniture projects and a project that offers meals, clothing and blankets. There are ten projects, which include the Community Mediation Service, and the Neighbourhood Warden Service, both formerly local authority projects that have now transferred to Bradford Community Housing Trust.

**Housing and Homelessness Advice-** In addition to the Housing Advice Centres and Housing offices, there are seven projects providing housing advice, which include the local authority's private sector housing service. The Council's 'Hear to Help' centre also deals with housing enquiries and makes referrals to the Housing Advice Teams. Two agencies, Key House in Bradford and Keighley, and CHAS Housing Aid Centre are commissioned by the Community Legal Service, to provide specialist housing advice and can therefore provide independent professional advice on homelessness and complex housing problems. They also

offer representation in the County Court on mortgage/rental repossession cases and are able to assist clients to appeal against local authority homelessness decisions, thereby providing an independent check on the quality of service provided by the local authority's homelessness service.

**Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health Services-** There are thirteen agencies that provide non-residential services for people with drug, alcohol or mental health related problems.

**Asylum Seekers-** The local authority is contracted with the National Asylum Seekers Service (NASS) to provide 211 units of accommodation that includes a Reception Centre, through Bradford Community Housing Trust, as part of the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium. In addition there are three providers contracted to provide accommodation in the private rented sector.

**Other key advice and support services-** In addition to the above there are a large number of other centres and organisations that provide services that homeless people and people with housing problems can access which cater for the wider community or specialist groups, these include Citizens Advice Bureaux, Bradford Law Centre, Bradford Action For Refugees, Domestic Violence Services (Keighley), Information Shop for Young People, and many locally based community centres which offer signposting, referral and drop-in services

## C Available Resources

In terms of the resources available to fund activities that directly support homelessness prevention and support these total almost £22 Million for 2003/04.

**Table 10: Resources for Tackling Homelessness, £Millions, 2003/04**

	2003/04
Local Authority Contracts to BCHT for homelessness, advice, temporary accommodation, and Homehunter	3.2
Supporting People Grant	17.1
Homelessness Directorate under S93 LGA Act 2000	0.08
Housing Advice LA commissioned projects	0.16
Supported Housing LA commissioned projects	0.45
NHS and Health Sector, inc Homeless Team, Health Plus etc	0.50
Social Services, Care Leavers Accommodation 16-18 year olds	0.13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.62</b>

Other related resources include: work carried out by non-housing advice agencies e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau and other agencies (Local Authority voluntary sector funding for accredited advice excluding housing advice amount to over £1million); Private Sector Housing Services (Housing Investment Programme (HIP) allocation for 2003/04, £8 million); the Housing Corporations Approved Development Programme (2003/04 allocation of £8.5 million - matched by private finance of at least a similar amount); Commuted Sums negotiated for affordable housing with developers under Planning Powers (total available sum to date £1.7 million); the investment plans of Bradford Community Housing Trust (£175 million over the next five years); the DAAT Treatment Plan pooled budget of £4.65M for 2003/04 etc.

**4 Sources:** Housing Act 1996; Homelessness Act 2002; Service Portfolio, Homelessness & Advice Service, CBMDC; Best Value Review of Bradford's Homelessness & Advice Service, Audit Commission, 2002; Bradford Homelessness Directory, 2002-2003; Bradford Council Voluntary Sector Support Unit Commissioning Body recommendations 2002.

## Case Study 1: In the own words of a resident of St Paul's Road Hostel, Horton Housing Association

1<sup>st</sup> January 2001, homeless (something I said probably?). 1-6 January, sleep where I can mostly walk. Safer that way. Soup Run helped so did that deserted 'half finished shop' with cracked window and icy wind cutting through. Better than outside. When you are on the street you become 'invisible' to other people. But, just like a bad smell they can sense you. Just listen to this man: 'Its obvious all homeless people are lazy, incompetent, irresponsible'. Yes, well sir, true, there are exceptions to the rule. But most homeless people often find themselves in this dilemma through no fault of their own. They have slipped through the systems safety net and landed in life's 'soup kitchen'. 10 January- Leeds, St Peters Crypt. Free food; help at last. "A roof, any roof, and warmth and a bed?". 11<sup>th</sup> January- Chapeltown Leeds- well I did say 'any' roof. Never mind. Sign on tomorrow. Rest. Feet killing me! Stinging blistered bloody- not too bad here; at least the cornflakes are free. Now, if I only had some milk? Now, don't get me wrong. Being homeless is not usually as exciting and interesting as this. No, being homeless is mostly boredom and despair, cold and hunger. No base equals no basis for hope. St Paul's Road though 'One of the best kept secrets in Bradford'. Apart from providing accommodation and support through key workers actually encourages client involvement. A resident can make a difference both for themselves and others. Decisions can be taken at house meetings, which can and do result in changes at 'ground level'. But if you want a say, you have to be there, and get involved!

## Case Study 2: Crisis/Reachout Project

The Crisis/Reachout project aims to deliver an outreach and floating support service to homeless people with mental health and other multiple needs, specifically tailored to individual needs and circumstances, and designed to assist people in establishing a secure and stable lifestyle within the community. The project dealt with a 39 year old female client of Pakistani origin, from a particularly strict background who faced multiple complex issues of undiagnosed mental health, domestic violence and family difficulties. The issues presented included: long standing depressive illness, violent and sexual abuse from estranged husband, physical assaults from eldest son, one child with overly aggressive behavioural problems and difficulties in placing within formal educational establishment, shared mortgage on ex-local authority property, reluctance of statutory services to be involved due to opinion that domestic violence was due to cultural conditioning and that they were powerless to change this. The project made contacts and referrals to emergency non-statutory housing provision but rejected by client as only able to house her and children under 14 years, 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest son being 16. A specialist family solicitor was engaged, door locks changed via the Domestic Violence Unit, secured the involvement of non-statutory and statutory agencies. The projects RO worker now involved in statutory services development of support plan. A court order was secured against contact by the husband. GP changed to try and get referral to statutory mental health team; 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest son given support and referral to non-statutory housing agency after requesting help from ReachOut worker. Although regular weekly support sessions offered by ReachOut Worker, there are still a number of issues to tackle: securing adequate English/Urdu interpretation in accessing services; reluctance of client to prosecute due to loss of courage when faced with prospect of police investigation; multi-agency support for family to be addressed following recent appointment of new social worker; housing applications ongoing and support is continuing.

It is difficult to predict future levels of homelessness in the district given the wide range of activities that will have direct and indirect effects. This includes the work being carried out by Bradford Vision, the local strategic partnership, on Neighbourhood Renewal, Community Cohesion and on ensuring that the districts 2020 Vision is achieved. It also includes the introduction of a major player in the provision of suitable quality accommodation, Bradford Community Housing Trust which is a new body set up to manage the council's recently transferred stock. BCHT will be investing £175 million into the stock in order to bring all stock to the Decent Homes Standard within five years from 2003. The activity also includes the successful establishment of Homehunter, Bradford's choice based lettings system, which provides a single point of access to social housing within the District and the co-ordination of letting policies and processes between a range of different landlords. There is also work carried out by the local authority and its key partners in ensuring a safer more cohesive district through the Safer Communities Strategy, and the Domestic Violence Partnership. Other activities include work with young people particularly focused on preventing a recurrence of rioting as experienced in recent years and the part that the Districts Youth Parliament can play in ensuring that young people in the district feel valued.

More directly, housing measures outlined in the Housing Strategy, the *"Way Forward for Housing in Bradford"*, attempts to achieve for every household in the district *"a suitable home in a thriving neighbourhood with excellent services"*. It sets out policies, which directly addresses government priorities and aims to contribute to the government's policy aspiration of *"offering everyone the opportunity of a decent home and so promote social cohesion, well-being and self dependence"*. Protecting vulnerable people and tackling social exclusion are key priorities within the housing strategy and will ensure that the measures will have significant impact on the homelessness situation in the district. Supporting People will too play its part in ensuring that vulnerable people are helped in a way which will see them live decent quality lives and have better life chances than they have had before.

The trend over previous years has been downwards and is expected to remain so given the increased focus on prevention through this strategy and measures that have been brought in over recent years. However, we remain vigilant on the effects that external factors will have such as the proposals within *"Building Choice and Responsibility: A Radical Agenda for Housing Benefit"* with proposals to pay flat rate housing allowances and to eliminate direct payments to private landlords; the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill which proposes to serve closure notices on premises that house drug users and the requirement for social landlords to introduce procedures to deal with tenants exhibiting anti-social behaviour; the proposals in the Housing Bill to introduce mandatory licensing of HMO's and the introduction of the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS); the implementation of new standards within B&B establishments and in temporary accommodation; the direct and indirect effects arising from the Criminal Justice Bill; and the rent restructuring framework seeking convergence in rents across the social housing sector. The effects of the Homelessness Act 2002 which extends Priority Needs categories has also yet to be fully realised being early days for local authorities to judge any direct increase in numbers in client groups afforded priority need status.

**5 Sources:** The Way Forward for Housing in Bradford, CBMDC, 2002; Delivering the Vision, 2002-2007, Bradford Vision; Homelessness Statistic Annual Reports 93/94- 02/03, CBMDC; Housing Bill, March 2003; Anti Social Behaviour Bill, March 2003; Criminal Justice Bill, March 2003; Homelessness Act 2002; Building Choice & Responsibility: A radical agenda for housing benefit, Department for Work & Pensions, 2002

## Section 7 Links to Other Strategies and Programmes<sup>6</sup>

### A Bradford Vision & the District Community Strategy

Bradford Vision is the accredited Local Strategic Partnership for the district. During its first two years in existence the LSP has worked hard to promote strong partnership links and to ensure that the Districts Vision encapsulated in '2020 Vision', launched in 2000, and which sets out the aspirations of the district by the year 2020, is successfully implemented.

The districts vision is to make the district '*a place where people are justifiably proud of where they live, learn, work and play*'. Housing is therefore seen as a key player in ensuring that people are provided with opportunities to live in a decent home within a decent environment.

The Community Strategy is much more specific in terms of offering measures to take the district to where it wants to go by 2020 and the housing strategy is recognised within the Community Strategy for the key role it can play in delivering on the LSP objectives. The Community Strategy outlines the following effects of housing on key outcomes:

- *Good quality housing attracts companies and workers to the district, leading to an economically prosperous district*
- *Children and young people are better able to benefit from education if they are well housed, leading to a district of excellence in learning*
- *Good quality housing promotes community safety, leading to a safer place in which to live, work, and play*
- *High quality affordable warm homes promote health and well being, leading to a healthy district*
- *High quality inner urban housing encourages people to live in the centre and support the local economy, leading to a living environment which incorporates high quality design and is well maintained*

These effects lend themselves fairly well in terms of the new wider approach to tackling homelessness advocated by government and will figure prominently in addressing the causes that lead to homelessness.

Housing's working links are strong within Community Strategy planning and there is also representation from the Board of the Housing Partnership on the Board of Bradford Vision. (See Diagram 2 on page 49).

Bradford Vision also has district wide responsibility to lead on neighbourhood renewal and in achieving community cohesion.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy focuses on reducing the gap between the most deprived in the District with those that are better off. Homeless people figure as a key deprived group within the district and the homelessness strategy aims to tackle homelessness, as part of the District's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy ("*Involving People*", Bradford Vision, 2002) by ensuring homeless people and those that are at risk are part of the culture of participation that the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy aims to encourage. As part of the District's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, a series of conferences and workshops are being run annually at constituency levels and also separate sessions with 'Communities of Interest'. Housing and the Environment is a key theme within the sessions and the findings from the exercise are expected to influence service planning and delivery of services of relevant agencies.

## **B Bradford Housing Partnership & the Housing Strategy**

The Bradford Housing Partnership has been operating as a multi-agency partnership body for the past 18 years influencing housing policy within the district.

The structure of the Partnership is well developed and a number of working groups report to the Board on a regular basis. See Diagram 3 on page 50.

The vision adopted by the Partnership is: *'to achieve for all, a suitable home in a thriving neighbourhood with excellent services'*, reflecting the joined up ethos expected by government.

One of the key tasks of the Bradford Housing Partnership is to review and develop the housing strategy. In doing so the Partnership relies on the work of its many working groups that focus on the themes for which the groups were set up to look at. The local authority leads the housing strategy formulation process and the final strategy is presented to the Board of the Partnership for endorsement.

The 2000/2010 Joint Housing Strategy is expected to undergo major review in 2004 following significant changes in the local housing environment since the last review in 2000. Since 2000 the local authority has updated the strategy on an annual basis producing supplements that focus on responding to new government guidance and ensuring that any local changes are reflected. The current 2002/03 supplement focuses on the government's agenda contained within the *"Way Forward for Housing"* policy statement and has five key priorities for the coming years:

1. Raising the Quality of Social Housing
2. Raising the Quality of Private Homes
3. Providing Affordable Homes
4. Promoting Choice Based Lettings through 'Homehunter'
5. Protecting the Vulnerable and Tackling Social Exclusion

All of these priorities have direct and indirect effects on the homelessness situation and provides us with an opportunity to firmly integrate the homelessness agenda within the ambit of the housing strategy. The last priority above is where homelessness is situated and the homelessness section within the housing strategy promises to produce a homelessness strategy, which uses the report *More than a Roof*, and the Secretary of State's response to the report as a basis for a strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness.

There is within the Housing Strategy a Strategic Objective for Homelessness which is, *Provide a comprehensive service to those at risk of homelessness ensuring that no one needs to sleep rough or endure domestic harassment or violence, (The Way Forward for Housing in Bradford, 2002)*. This objective is backed up by three separate action plans: Homelessness Action Plan; Housing Advice Services Action Plan; and Domestic Violence Action Plan. The strategic objective as well as the three action plans are all undergoing review as a direct result of this review and the requirement to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

In addition, the Council's Service Review sets out clear objectives in relation to the Council's Homelessness and Advice Service:

- To provide an accessible and comprehensive housing advice service to prevent homelessness and to assist people to maximise their housing choices
- To carry out a sensitive and efficient homelessness assessment service under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002

- To provide good quality and appropriate temporary accommodation for the homeless
- To work jointly with other agencies to meet support needs in order to create sustainable tenancies and to reduce repeat incidences of homelessness

## **C Stock Transfer**

Bradford Council transferred all its stock under the governments Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) programme in February 2003 after a thorough process of consultation with tenants culminating in a majority vote in favour of transfer to a Group structure. The Bradford Community Housing Trust (BCHT) was established by the local authority and consists of a Group Board and six local Area Boards. There is also a separate subsidiary to carry out repairs.

The transfer allows the local authority to ensure that all former council stock is brought up to Decent Homes Standard, which BCHT is expected to do within five years of being established. BCHT is also expected to play a major role in community regeneration activity and a major role in the work of the Bradford Housing Partnership and Bradford Vision, the Local Strategic Partnership. A positive impact on the homelessness strategy is expected not least because BCHT is contracted to deliver on the statutory duty to house the homeless. The contract to BCHT will ensure that the seamless and integrated service between the homelessness teams and the major landlord within the district is maintained.

With the separation of the landlord and strategic functions, Bradford Council is now in a better position to strengthen its role of an enabling housing authority and to focus on building partnerships with providers and stakeholders, which has as its basis the development and delivery of the housing strategy. The Council is currently carrying out a fundamental review of its retained housing functions and is using the Local Government Association definition of a strategic housing function as a basis for re-organisation.

The LGA in its report, *Vision into Reality: the future strategic housing role of local authorities, 2003*, defines the strategic role as:

- Providing leadership and vision;
- Engaging residents in all tenures and other partners identifying local needs;
- Promoting local solutions, based on a sound understanding of the housing market and links with other social economic and environmental issues;
- Championing the rights of all housing consumers; and
- Working with local partners to ensure that all local people have access to a decent home.

## **D Homehunter**

Bradford was chosen as one of the 27 Choice Based Lettings Pilot authorities and developed a choice based lettings system, known as Homehunter, which has resulted in transforming the culture within the social housing sector. The system, funded jointly by the local authority and BCHT with contributions from participating RSL's, led to the Homehunter Team securing the 2003 Local Government Chronicle best housing team award. It is designed to improve access to social rented housing for all but at the same time to ensure that homeless and vulnerable people are protected and assisted into suitable appropriate accommodation with support services where appropriate.

Homehunter customers are encouraged to view all available properties on the Homehunter website either from their home or through a number of kiosks at a range of public access points. Help from staff is available at appropriate locations. Homehunter also operates a telephone helpline for clients. All RSL's operating within the district are encouraged to take part in the system.

Combined with an effective marketing campaign, Homehunter has substantially increased the numbers interested in being housed particularly members from the Asian communities who have been significantly under represented in the social housing sector. Asian households are being encouraged to join the scheme linked to targeted marketing and the provision of tenancy support for new and existing tenants.

Homehunter operates a self-assessment scheme for vulnerable people and provides access to a comprehensive range of support services including, supported tenancies and intensive housing management and tenancy and after care during settling in periods. Previously excluded groups such as young people are being actively encouraged to accept support packages linked to Supporting People. The [St@y](#) Scheme, which is a partnership between Bradford Community Housing Trust and Horton Housing Association, has been set up to provide floating support to vulnerable tenants linked to Homehunter. A priority card operates for the homeless and others in urgent housing need and the Disabled Persons Housing Service has been set up for people with serious medical problems or who need adapted accommodation. During 2002/03 Homehunter has resulted in housing 700+ homeless people into former council accommodation.

An evaluation of the pilot project is currently under way, which will include customer feedback including from homeless users. Cambridge and Bristol Universities have been monitoring the pilots and will be reporting to the ODPM later this year.

## **E Private Sector Housing**

Private Sector Housing is expected to play an increasingly significant role in improving quality of life for a large section of the District's population who live in sub standard accommodation (The Way Forward for Housing in Bradford, Joint Housing Strategy Supplement, 2002). The relevance of this sector to homelessness cannot be under estimated as many homeless people tend to originate from private sector housing, either owner occupied properties or privately rented. The private sector also plays a key role in the supply equation.

The new policy approach to private sector renewal within the district began with the new directions signalled by the government in its consultation paper in 2001 followed with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002.

The private sector renewal strategy seeks to:

- Focus on prevention
- Increase house values in inner city areas
- Promote a healthy private rented sector
- Bring empty properties back into use
- Deliver sustainable improvements to private stock

Along the lines of the private sector renewal strategy, the local authority recently completed its *Comprehensive Housing Renewal Policy* which aims to develop a variety of mechanisms to

facilitate and deliver advice, support and assistance and provide opportunities for people to obtain decent housing, particularly the vulnerable.

Key areas expected to impact on the homelessness strategy are: the targeting of resources to the most vulnerable; measures to tackle empty homes; provision of advice and support to homeowners to maintain their properties; to work closely with landlords to improve standards through accreditation and related measures; and enforcement action particularly with regard to landlord harassment.

## **F Homelessness and Health**

Studies suggest that health inequalities experienced by people who are homeless are real and stark. Research into the health of rough sleepers and the homeless show that:

- 30-50% of homeless people experience mental health problems
- About 70 % of homeless people misuse drugs
- About 50% of homeless people are dependent on alcohol
- Rough sleepers are 35 times more likely to kill themselves than the general population and have an average life expectancy of 42 years.
- Physical health is poor, e.g. high rates of TB, respiratory problems and skin diseases.
- Homeless children are twice as likely to be admitted to hospital with high admission rates for accidents and infectious diseases
- Behavioural problems such as aggression, bed wetting, and over activity have been found to be higher among homeless children
- Mental health problems are significantly higher among homeless mothers and children

In spite of this level of poor health single homeless people are 40 times more likely than the general population not to be registered with a GP.

The homelessness strategy provides an opportunity to raise homelessness on the health agenda and to improve access to health care and improve health outcomes for homeless people. Bradford council's working links with health are historically strong not just in general terms but also in terms of tackling homelessness. The Bradford Homeless Team, which is a partnership between the local authority, Bradford City Primary Care Trust and Horton Housing Association is a good example of practical joint working between health, local authority and non-statutory homelessness services. There are also protocols in place for patients being discharged from hospital that are currently being reviewed. At the strategic level the Bradford Housing Partnership has formal links with the planning and implementation of the broader preventative health agenda through its Housing, Health & Social Care Working Party which attempts to ensure that joint working is developed and that housing is firmly on the health agenda and conversely that health is also a key priority in the planning and delivery of housing services. There is however acknowledgement by partners that more can be done jointly to prevent and tackle homelessness and the strategy seeks to ensure that the focus on homelessness is improved.

## **G Supporting People**

Supporting People is a government led initiative, which integrates the fragmented way in which housing with support was delivered for vulnerable people in the past. In Bradford this has resulted in a vibrant sector, providing services for a range of needs groups, both in the field of homelessness and within specialist settings. Funding was drawn from the Housing Corporation, Housing Benefit, Probation, charities, the National Lottery, Health, the Council

and Central Government for more than 11,000 supported housing units. The Government has replaced many of these sources of funding with a new financial regime, the Supporting People Grant (SPG). This has been formed by the pooling of specific public sector budgets and will be administered by the Local Authority.

Supporting People will fund a range of services for vulnerable people and will form a major part of the delivery of the prevention and support agenda of the homelessness strategy. It will also underpin some of the local authority responsibilities for the new priority need groups under the Homelessness Act. The service will include all sheltered housing services and extra care schemes for older people, but not nursing homes and registered care establishments. It will include independent living schemes, adult placement services and group homes for people with learning difficulties, those with physical and sensory problems and people with mental health problems, including long-term accommodation where there is no 'care' element.

In addition all the temporary accommodation provided for homeless client groups will be part of the programme as well as longer term supported accommodation for homeless women, women fleeing violence, teenage pregnant women, lone parents, single homeless people, young vulnerable people, ex-offenders, Care leavers & looked after children who are no longer the responsibility of Social Services. In addition SPG will fund supported housing for refugees, specific provision for black and ethnic minority (BME) groups, individuals with drug and/or alcohol problems, people with HIV/Aids, working women and highly specialist needs groups such as those with Aspergers Syndrome.

## **H Cross Authority Working**

There is recognition within the Supporting People programme of the movement of people across boundaries. This means that clear working arrangements must be developed to enable this movement and to provide effective services for those outside the area. This framework is necessary to support service users who may be at risk or pose a risk in their home area or for users who may need to access specialist service provision.

Bradford is in a Cross Authority grouping with the other West Yorkshire Authorities i.e. Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. There is a strong tradition of these Authorities working together and in partnership with West Yorkshire Probation the group will develop innovative ways of planning and commissioning cross authority access to services. North Yorkshire borders on three of the five West Yorkshire Authorities and a permanent invitation has been extended to officers from that County to join the Cross Authority Grouping in West Yorkshire to better serve individual's movements. The main needs groups affected by the cross authority arrangements are women fleeing domestic violence, offenders, young people at risk and some specialist service provision for particular black and minority ethnic groups or those with rare or complex needs. The strength of the West Yorkshire group will mean that this area of planning is developed and carried forward firmly within the SP framework.

There is also a cross authority homelessness group where West Yorkshire authorities are working closely in developing homelessness strategies which takes account of cross boundary issues. The group is currently in the process of identifying the main cross boundary issues one of which is identified as homeless refugees. Recently working links have been established between the Supporting People Cross Authority Group and the Homelessness Cross Authority Group recognising that there are obvious overlaps between the work of the two groups.

## J Domestic Violence Strategy

It is important to highlight the significance of the wider partnership work across the district being carried out which will and should impact on homelessness either in creating the conditions to prevent homelessness arising out of domestic violence or in the work being done and developed to support the victims of this crime.

The Domestic Violence Strategy 2003-2005, launched in March 2003, outlines that the number of domestic incidents per 1,000 people in the Bradford District is 9.4, the West Yorkshire average being only 8.8. The percentage of victims of domestic violence who were repeat victims is lower in the Bradford District than other areas in West Yorkshire. Since 1998 the number of domestic violence incidents reported in the district has risen by 22.7%. This increase is a result of successful partnership working, leading to increased public awareness and confidence in the way incidents are handled, and improved police recording of incidents.

West Yorkshire Police, the Domestic Violence Partnership and Bradford Inter-Agency Domestic Violence Forum have a wider definition of domestic violence referring to “family relationships”, in recognition that many people in the area live in extended families, where the abuser may be a member of the family other than the partner.

Within the Bradford District there are a number of existing services offering a wide range of support options for the many women and children who experience domestic violence. These services include refuge provision, community-based support, counselling services, outreach and aftercare services, group work, legal support, and pro-active measures to reduce the risk of the same women being repeatedly abused. They also include work with perpetrators and support from health services. These services work with all sectors of the community with a number offering specialist support to minority ethnic groups.

The Bradford District was successful in its bid to the Home Office Crime Reduction Initiative on Domestic Violence. The bid has funded a pilot project “Staying Put”. It offers an innovative response to the problems of domestic violence because it aims to support women who do not wish to leave, or cannot leave, their homes. There is also a 24-hour helpline for anyone in the District to use.

The services provided within the Bradford District work with all sectors of the community with a number offering specialist support to minority groups, including European, Asian, Bangladeshi, African-Caribbean and those with dual heritage. This emphasises the district’s commitment to meeting the needs of the people who make up our community as a whole.

The key aims of the Domestic Violence Strategy are:

- To raise the profile of domestic violence in the District, in key agencies and in the community
- To implement government guidance on multi-agency work to tackle domestic violence (*Living without Fear* agenda)
- To improve services for women and children in the District
- To highlight the hidden financial and social costs of domestic violence
- To get the backing of key agencies and pull in resources
- To identify strategic links
- Provide focus for mapping and monitoring of domestic violence work
- Reduce repeat victimisation

Many of the organisations within the district have domestic violence identified within their strategies/plans. This is not exclusive to those who only offer services directly linked to domestic violence e.g. NHS Trusts, Local Anti-crime Partnerships, Education Services, Victim Support and the Witness Service all aim to incorporate links to domestic violence. The homelessness strategy, too, will establish links with the domestic violence strategy and ensure that the Domestic Violence Strategy recognises and acknowledges the needs of homeless people fleeing violence or the threat of violence.

## **K Children and Young People's Strategy**

The draft Children & Young Person's Strategy is currently in preparation and should be completed by October 2003 following a three-month period of consultations. There are direct working links between the Homelessness Core Group and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and consultation has already begun to ensure that both strategies are integrally linked.

The themes of the strategy will be Health, Home, Education, Employment and Play. The overall objective for the Home theme has still to be agreed but it is expected that it will emphasise opportunities for all children and young people to live in a safe, comfortable and loving home. The scope of the strategy will include all children but it will seek to identify groups of children and young people who will need extra help to achieve the objectives. The groups of children that will be looked at will be broad ranging and from the homelessness angle will include children who have to leave their family or community and all the groups that are at risk of facing homelessness in the future e.g. children using drugs, those with mental ill health, those committing crimes or at risk of doing so etc.

## **L Safer Communities Strategy**

Bradford enjoys the status of being a Beacon Council on Community Safety and this is in large part related to the strength of partnership working within the district. Housing plays a key role in ensuring a safer district for all and the housing strategy has strategic links to the principles within the Safer Communities Strategy not least because of overlaps such as tackling house burglaries and dealing with domestic violence. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and achieving community cohesion is a major priority within the Housing Strategy and the key elements within the Safer Communities Strategy form an integral part of that drive to make the district a safer and more conducive place in which to live.

The key priorities of the Safer Communities Strategy given below are priorities that can have direct consequences and effects on homelessness:

- Reassuring the public
- Victims- to create an environment that supports and recognises the needs of all victims of crime while continuing to develop approaches that meet the needs of specific groups
- Offenders- to reduce the number of offenders and to ensure that those who do offend make amends for their actions
- Locations- to work with local people and communities to put into place appropriate measures to reduce the opportunities for criminality and disorder
- Tackling domestic burglary
- Tackling commercial crime
- Tackling vehicle crime
- Tackling drugs, alcohol and related crime

## **M Community Cohesion Plan**

The Community Cohesion Plan, in outline form, was produced after serious public disturbances in Bradford and other northern towns with sizeable Asian communities. The Plan followed the publication of Lord Ouseley's report *Community Pride, Not Prejudice*, which looked at the race relations issue prior to the disturbances.

The Outline Community Cohesion Plan attempts to encourage a concerted effort by partners to mainstream community cohesion within their agendas. The Outline Plan is currently being developed into a detailed delivery plan following widespread consultation.

The creation of a prosperous future for young people and the development of ways for young people to exert real influence in the affairs of the district are key objectives, which run through all aspects of the Plan. The setting up of the Youth Parliament is one aspect of the Plan, which has already been achieved.

Arising out of the Lord Ouseley's report, *Community Pride, Not Prejudice*, the Outline Plan incorporates the following areas for focusing on:

- *Developing the local economy*
- *Work within schools and communities*
- *The Involvement of young people*
- *Sports and cultural development*
- *Tackling the drug culture*
- *Improving the image of the district*
- *Consultation and governance*

### **Cohesion and BME Communities**

The Community Cohesion Plan acknowledges the specific work carried out within housing to achieve community cohesion, particularly the report by Professor Anne Power (London School of Economic) and Peter Ratcliffe (Warwick University), which looked at issues of access of Asian communities to social housing.

The report, *Breaking Down the Barriers, 2001, Ratcliffe and Power*, followed an earlier report by Ratcliffe, *Race and Housing in Bradford, Ratcliffe, 1996*, which found substantial under representation of the Asian communities in social housing. Ratcliffe, in his 1996 report also found high levels of overcrowding, disrepair and problems with damp amongst the Asian communities exacerbated by inability to rectify defects due to unemployment and low incomes. The prevalence of 'concealed' families were also found to be high within Asian communities and this may constitute a significant source of potential housing demand in Bradford with some of it manifesting into homelessness.

*Breaking Down the Barriers* attempts to analyse and identify the obstacles preventing access and offers an Action Plan to deal with those obstacles. The Action Plan drafted by Professor Power was adopted by a major conference event in 2001. A multi-agency group was set up to ensure implementation of the targets. The measures outlined are not exclusively housing measures but it is argued that housing measures need to be part of a broader effort to achieve wider cohesion and integration.

There are eight key objectives backed up with 88 targets to be achieved by a collection of partners and agencies:

1. Improve direct communication, between social landlords and minority communities, between different services, between the local authority and RSL's, with other LA's
2. Radically improve the condition and image of council estates
3. Radical reform of the lettings system
4. Strengthen neighbourhood communities
5. Regenerate inner city areas
6. Regenerate the City Centre
7. Combat violence, disorder and harassment
8. Encourage cross cultural awareness

Much of this action plan is already being implemented, particularly objective 3 as outlined above, through the district's Homehunter system.

The cohesion agenda for the district is clearly an ambitious one and one that will require a determined commitment from all partners to make it happen. There is already wide acknowledgement of the importance of achieving a cohesive district, one that safeguards the future for all of its citizens and for generations to come. The Housing Strategy and housing partners are already firmly rooted into this agenda and homelessness is one key aspect of that agenda which will need to play its part in shaping a district where everyone is justifiably proud of where they live, learn, work, and play.

*“A District where everyone is justifiably proud of where they live, learn, work, and play”*

(2020 Vision, Bradford Vision, 2000)

**6 Sources:** 2020 Vision, Bradford Vision, 2000; Delivering the Vision, 2002-2005, Bradford Vision; Involving People, Bradford Vision, 2002; CBMDC Best Value Performance Plan, 2002/03; Council's Corporate Plan, 2002/03; Stock Transfer Offer Documentation; The Way Forward for Housing in Bradford, Joint Housing Strategy, 2002; Comprehensive Housing Renewal Policy, 2003; A Public Health Odyssey, 2001, Bradford NHS; Safer Communities Strategy, 2002-2005; The Way Forward for Housing Policy Statement, ODPM; Quality & Choice, A Decent Home for All, Housing Green Paper; Outline Community Cohesion Plan for Bradford, 2002; Community Pride, Not Prejudice, Lord Herman Ouseley, 2001; Race & Housing in Bradford, P Ratcliffe, 1996; Breaking Down the Barriers, improving Asian access to social rented housing, Ratcliffe & Power, 2001; Draft Domestic Violence and Strategy, CBMDC, 2003; Supporting People Shadow Strategy, 2002-2003; Assessing the Health Needs of rough sleepers, Professor S Griffiths, ODPM, Homelessness Directorate, 2002; Still Dying for a Home, 2002, Crisis; Critical Condition, Vulnerable single homeless people and access to GP's, 2002, Crisis; The impact of homelessness on the mental health of children and families, 1996, Department of Psychiatry, University of Birmingham; Homehunter Monitoring Statistics

## Section 8

## Consultation, Surveys and Reviews<sup>7</sup>

This section aims to outline the findings of consultation and surveys carried out in relation to the homelessness review and strategy, and includes details of the Audit Commission Best Value inspection carried out in 2002. The aim is to draw conclusions from the findings with a view to incorporating appropriate elements into the homelessness strategy.

### A Speakout Conferences

Speakout conferences are events that aim to capture the voices of local people who are and have been directly affected by homelessness and allows homeless and ex-homeless people to communicate with people and organisations that make decisions that affect their lives. Bradford has held two of these events, in September 2001 and September 2002. These were organised by the Speakout Group, which consists of service users of supported housing projects, staff from these projects, and Council officers. Speakout has been influenced by the work of the National Homeless Alliances Groundswell Project. Speakout supports and promotes Groundswell values which are:

- *Homeless people are not the problem, they are part of the solution*
- *Homeless people have a right to access information to make informed choices about their lives*
- *Homeless people must be involved in creating practical solutions to tackle homelessness*

The first Speakout event recommended:

- *Participation opportunities for homeless people in the Bradford District Community Network*
- *The creation of a Standing Forum of homeless people to give voice not only to housing authorities but to all partner agencies of regeneration and renewal*
- *Hostel and Supported Accommodation for couples*
- *Separate or specialist housing support services for substance use with range of different approaches e.g. harm reduction, abstinence etc*
- *More direct access provision and also greater variety in that provision along similar lines as Newcastle Warehouse Project*
- *Flexible, accredited, open ended training courses for the homeless*
- *Provision of support for registration with GP*
- *Multiple understandings and support systems for people in distress rather than just medication for sadness and distress e.g. the building on good practice examples of floating support schemes*
- *Information that is accessible to people in distress building on services such as information shop formats etc*

The second event was based around the theme of self-determination and co-operation. Apart from the conventional conference day, several other events were organised by Artworks, which enabled people to tell their stories using a variety of creative methods.

A video was produced capturing the experiences of users. This video is being shown widely in relevant circles e.g. to Inclusive Supporting People Forums, etc with a view to influencing decision makers.

An immediate positive benefit to come out of the second event is the decision to secure funding to employ a person with experience of homelessness whose role will be to assist the Speakout Group to:

- *Develop a friends scheme (mentoring project) across the district*
- *Develop self-help groups around specific issues e.g. skills development and learning, managing selfharm*
- *Help build a future for people who have been homeless*
- *Develop participation in planning forums from people who are homeless*
- *Organise further consultation events working with specific issues e.g. hostels management, drugs and alcohol, district wide events including women only events*

The group is attempting to secure funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to carry out this work.

Key messages from users, which came out of the events, are:

- *Homeless people to be treated with dignity*
- *Homeless people should be encouraged to participate in decisions that affect their future*
- *A better understanding of their problems is required by all agencies*
- *Greater provision of information and advice*
- *More emergency direct access accommodation*
- *Rules within hostels to be more flexible*

The emerging themes and recommendations included the need to further develop the frameworks for participation of homeless people in the opportunities within the district in relation to housing training and health and to create a Homelessness Standing Forum.

## **B Frontline Workers/Practitioners**

Practitioners within the homelessness/supported housing sector were consulted through various mechanisms:

1. A survey was carried out aimed at providers. Frontline workers and managers were asked about their views and ideas on homelessness.
2. Focus Groups involving frontline local authority staff and voluntary agencies were also carried out in preparation for the Best Value Review of homelessness
3. A number of workshops were held of Homelessness Core Group members to identify need and consider measures to prevent and tackle homelessness

These exercises produced a useful insight into the views of those who come across homelessness in their daily work including any perceived gaps in services.

Some key messages include:

- Provide longer term ongoing support to vulnerable people
- Provide a greater level of information and advice that is easily accessible to homeless people and those at risk
- Prevent homelessness by tackling the causes e.g. drugs, domestic violence etc
- Greater levels of partnership working especially of frontline workers

- Common access to information by agencies along similar lines to Hostels Online
- Greater awareness raising of homelessness and its effects
- Issue of young homeless needs tackling in a wider context of services to young people
- More provision of emergency Direct Access accommodation
- More provision for couples and pets
- More provision for people with complex needs
- More Community Legal Services Partnership accredited advice
- Introduce Mediation Service for young homeless
- Improved Housing Benefits Assessments
- Improve hospital discharge procedures
- Review and improve joint protocols

## **C Audit Commission CPA Gap Inspection of Homelessness and Advice**

The Audit Commission completed the CPA Gap Inspection of Bradford's Homelessness and Advice Service in October 2002. The authority was awarded a 'good' two star rating with promising prospects for improvement.

**Table 11: CPA Gap Inspection Strengths**

<b>Strengths Identified by the CPA Gap Inspection of CBMDC Homelessness &amp; Advice Services, 2002</b>
Strong partnerships and a spirit of trust between the service and stakeholder organisations
Worked with others to develop a wide range of good quality temporary accommodation and supported provision
Made good use of Transitional Housing Benefit under the Supporting People initiative
Makes good use of strategic management information to inform service improvement and development
There are good links between the Council and providers of temporary accommodation
There are positive examples of customer involvement in service design and delivery
Council has recognised and prioritised the need for support for key groups
Makes little use of Bed & Breakfast and performs well in speed of homelessness decisions

**Table 12: CPA Gap Inspection Weaknesses**

<b>Weaknesses Identified by the CPA Gap Inspection of CBMDC Homelessness &amp; Advice Services, 2002</b>
Reception and interview facilities for customers
Standard of homelessness casework is variable and better quality control is needed
There is no clear vision of what quality of housing advice should be provided in terms of how pro-active it should be
Better co-ordination of advice services needed across all current providers
Scope for improvement within the organisation particularly at an operational level in terms of joint working

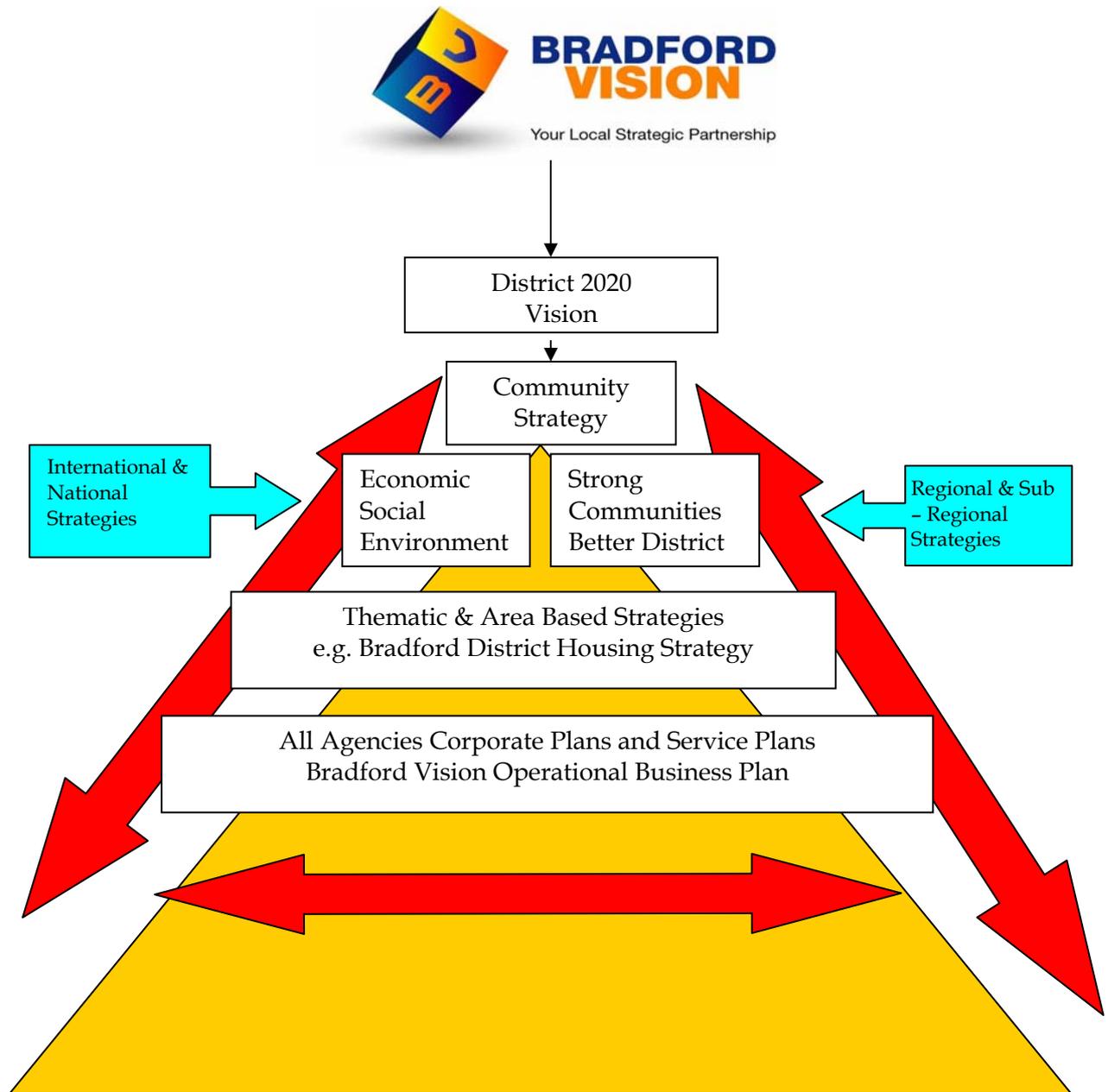
**Table 13: CPA Gap Inspection Recommendations**

<b>Recommendations made by the Audit Commission from the CPA Gap Inspection of Homelessness and Advice Services, 2002</b>
Implement the improvement plan for the service
Carry out further work to facilitate better joint working at an operational level between Housing and Social Services
Review homelessness casework to ensure that a consistently high standard of customer care is provided by all advisers
Put in place measures to ensure that homeless applicants who may be less able to exercise housing choice without support are enabled to do so
Develop a vision of what level of housing advice it wishes to provide or have provided on its behalf and ensure full co-ordination of housing advice services through the variety of outlets available
Carry out additional work to promote the service and establish the extent of hidden homelessness
Routinely seek feedback from customers about the quality of service they receive
Involve customers and stakeholders in the development of the service specifications if the service is to be transferred

As a result of the recommendations an Action Plan was adopted to take forward the issues highlighted as areas for development. To date significant progress has already been made to address the areas highlighted through the Inspection.

Also, since the Inspection the Council decided to contract responsibility for the delivery of homelessness and advice to Bradford Community Housing Trust. The Trust is keen to ensure that through continuous service reviews, improvements are progressively introduced in order to develop the service to exemplary standards.

**7 Sources:** Speakout Conference report 2001; Speakout Conference report 2002; Survey results and analysis of frontline workers/practitioners, 2002; Focus Group reports of council staff and agencies; Shaping the Strategy Workshop reports of the Homelessness Core Group; Best Value Review of Bradford Homelessness & Advice Services, 2002, Audit Commission



### Family of Strategies

(Source: Bradford Vision Operational Business Plan & Communications Strategy 2002/03)

**Diagram 3**

**Housing Strategy Policy Planning Structure**

