



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
All Wards

**DECISION TIMETABLE:**  
Cabinet

**16<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

---

**Best Value Review of Supporting People Programme**

---

**Report of the Director of Social Care and Health and the Director of Housing**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. To present the Audit Commissions "Star Rating" for the Supporting People Programme which was published on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004

**2. Summary**

2.1. In May 2004 Leicester City volunteered to take part in a `Pathfinder` Best Value Review of the Supporting People Programme. The purpose of this process was to trial the inspection methodology and to examine how Leicester had set up and implemented the programme.

2.2. In June this year the final report was published. The Audit Commission has assessed the council as providing a `good`, two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1. Members are asked to: -

- (i) Note the Audit Commissions `good`, two-star rating for the Supporting People Programme
- (ii) Note the areas of good practice highlighted in the report
- (iii) Note that the actions being taken in respect of recommended improvements
- (iv) Commend staff and partners for their efforts in achieving this rating

**4. Headline Financial and legal Implication**

4.1. There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report (Finance: Paul Clarke – Supporting People Business & Finance Manager, Legal: Joanna Bunting – Corporate Legal Services)

**5. Report Author/Officer to contact:**

Denise Steadman: Supporting People Manager (35) 5147

**DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Reason</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	<b>Executive (Cabinet)</b>



**WARDS AFFECTED**  
All Wards

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**  
Cabinet

**16<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

---

**Best Value Review of Supporting People**

---

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Report**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Supporting People (SP) Programme went live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. The programme seeks to improve the delivery of housing related support services (HRSS) to vulnerable people. The council is now managing a £17m grant on behalf of a partnership body made up Probation, Primary Care Trusts and the council itself. The partnership body now has the responsibility to plan, review and commission services in line with need. The Supporting People Team manages the programme on a day-to-day basis. The Team is located in the Housing Department

#### **2. The Best Value Review of Supporting People**

- 2.1. In May 2004 Leicester volunteered to take part in a `Pathfinder` Best Value Review of the Supporting People Programme. The purpose of the pathfinder inspections was to trial the inspection methodology for SP Best Value Reviews and to examine how the authority had set up and implemented the SP programme. In February 2004, the inspection team finalised the review and the report was published on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004

#### **3. Scoring the Service**

- 3.1. The audit commission found that the council is providing a `good`, two star service that has promising prospects for improvement

#### **4. What works well**

- 4.1. The Inspection found a number of positive features in the way that the Supporting People programme has been implemented in Leicester to date. These included:-

- A considerable growth in housing related support services backed up with evidence of need among most of the identified vulnerable groups covered by SP funding
- A clear role for service users in the review of services and to date approximately 200 service users have been interviewed and contributed to this process
- Supporting People partners are well briefed and there has been effective support provided by the SP team to service providers
- There are clear and ambitious aims for housing related support services. This is consistent with the council's allied strategies and plans

## **5. Best Practice**

5.1. Two areas of Best Practice were identified. These were: -

- The comprehensive toolkit which has been developed for the service reviews
- The Supporting People website, which includes a directory of services

5.2. ODPM and the Audit Commission have asked that Leicester disseminate this to other councils

## **6. Areas for Improvement**

6.1. To help the service improve, the inspectors made a number of recommendations to the council. ( Please see Appendix B) These included: -

- The quality of information about some vulnerable groups is poor
- Service users do not influence the development of the SP strategy
- The Commissioning Body needs to develop a clear vision of the shape of future services, complete work on a more transparent decision making process for funding decisions and an agreed conflict resolution process
- The high level commitment of partners to Supporting People has yet to be translated into some others partners plans and strategies. Further, the council was urged to seek agreement to practical arrangements to ensure all partners are fully engaged with the programme

6.2. Action is being taken to address all of these areas by the SP Team, The SP Core Strategy Development Group and the SP Commissioning Body

## 7. Headline and Financial and Legal Implications

7.1. There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report (Finance: Paul Clarke – Supporting People Business & Finance Manager).

## 8. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph 9. Within information	References Supporting
Equal Opportunities		All SP services are provided to comply with City Council Policies	
Policy	Yes	The SP programme drives forward the preventative and social inclusion agenda and will enable the authority to achieve delivery of other strategic objectives	
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	The SP programme enables a more structured approach to addressing support needs, which will help vulnerable people sustain themselves in communities	
Crime and Disorder	Yes	The SP Programme facilitates development of services that address the support needs of people who offend or are likely to offend	
Human Rights Act	Yes	The SP provisions and arrangements will be required to conform to Article 8 (right of privacy and family life) and Article 14 (freedom from discrimination)	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	SP services provide specific assistance for these group of users	

## 10. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

10.1. Supporting People Shadow Strategy: report to Cabinet November 2002

10.2. Supporting People Pathfinder Inspection report – Audit Commission June 2004

available on [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/) or [www.leicester.gov.uk/supportingpeople](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/supportingpeople)

## **11. Aims and Objectives**

- 11.1. The Aim of the Housing Services is a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester
- 11.2. This report contributes to that aim through objectives No 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (as listed in key objectives – see attached Appendix A) as the SP Programme will offer people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by enabling them to live more independently in the community. This includes sheltered housing support offered to older tenants and some support services offered to highly vulnerable adults as alternatives to hospital and residential care. The key focus of SP is to ensure that support is offered to a wide range of vulnerable client groups.
- 11.3. Key themes of SP are the prevention of homelessness, crime and social exclusion amongst those households and the development of the community links they need to build successful lives, including access to better health care and advice, education and employment. The programme also places a particular emphasis on ensuring that there is a diversity of support, which is responsive to the needs of hard to reach groups and Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. This is particularly welcomed in Leicester given the city's diverse population.

## **12. Consultations**

- 12.1. Finance and Legal Officers as noted in para 4.1

## **13. Report Author**

Denise Steadman  
Supporting People Manager (35) 5147

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES (HOUSING)

**AIM:** A decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester.

#### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 1. To improve the condition of Leicester's housing stock and resolve unfitness in all sectors.**
  - 1.1 Systematically and continuously assess the condition and fitness levels of Leicester's entire housing stock.
  - 1.2 Improve the condition of private sector housing in the City by enabling owners to take action.
  - 1.3 Encourage and enable owners to continue to maintain the private sector housing stock.
  - 1.4 Use available resources to improve and maintain Council housing stock on a worst first basis.
  - 1.5 Provide-a-service for responding to tenants' requests for housing repairs.
- 2. To encourage provision of new housing to meet the needs of Leicester's citizens.**
  - 2.1 Systematically and continuously assess the housing needs of the citizens of Leicester.
  - 2.2 Direct provision of new housing by specifying the type, amount, size location and standards which developers and housing associations should aim to produce.
  - 2.3 Identify opportunities for development to meet the needs for social housing within the city.
  - 2.4 Ensure implementation of development schemes to meet needs.
- 3. To reduce the number of empty and under-occupied homes in Leicester.**
  - 3.1 Assess the number of empty and under-occupied homes and, in the private sector, identify the owners.
  - 3.2 Encourage and enable owners to bring private sector empty and under-occupied homes back into full use, through a variety of schemes.

- 3.3 Reduce, to a minimum, Council owned empty and under-occupied homes through efficient management and repair of the stock.



**4. To enable all the citizens of Leicester to find and retain a home, which suits their needs.**

- 4.1 Prevent increases in and re-occurring homelessness.
- 4.2 Provide a multi-disciplinary approach to assist and act on the needs of single homeless or vulnerable people who have been re-housed.
- 4.3 Develop supported housing, tenancy support and resettlement to complement hostel provision.
- 4.4 Allocate Council housing and nominate to housing association lettings on the basis of housing need, matching the applicant to the most suitable available home.
- 4.5 Encourage and enable expansion of the private rented sector or meet housing needs.
- 4.6 Provide temporary accommodation to meet the needs of statutory and non-statutory homeless people.

**5. To offer citizens housing choices and full mobility between tenures, locations and types of home.**

- 5.1 Operate a transfer system for council housing and nominations to housing association lettings, as well as operation the National Mobility Scheme with other councils around the country. Match the applicant to the most suitable available home, on the basis of housing need.
- 5.2 Offer advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.
- 5.3 Offer housing advice to all citizens outlining the full range of options available to meet their housing needs.
- 5.4 To those with care and support needs, offer the choice of independent supported living or sheltered accommodation.

**6. To enable citizens of Leicester to stay in their homes as long as these homes continue to meet their needs.**

- 6.1 Offer advice on rent payment, maximise the uptake of Housing Benefits and advise on other Benefits, to ensure the poorest in our City can afford to stay in their homes.
- 6.2 Maximise home security in both the public and private sectors, through advice and direct provision of locks, alarms etc.

- 6.3 Improve the social climate of residential neighbourhood (both Council estates and private sector areas) to make them pleasant and peaceful areas, which generate community spirit.
- 6.4 Improve the physical environment of residential neighbourhoods (both Council estates and private sector areas) to make them safe and clean with facilities, which meet the needs of the community.
- 6.5 Deal severely with Council tenants who harass others, cause a nuisance or behave in an anti-social manner.
- 6.6 Provide an emergency alarm service to vulnerable elderly or disabled citizens and victims of racial harassment or domestic violence.
- 6.7 Provide for care and support needs in the home in partnership with Social Services.
- 6.8 Provide necessary facilities and adaptations in the home of disabled citizens.
- 6.9 Provide responsive housing services for older people based on an assessment of need, changing needs and aspirations of older people.

**7. To enable all citizens to have access to affordable warmth and a healthy living environment.**

- 7.1 Ensure that all citizens can access energy efficiency advice and information that is relevant to their needs.
- 7.2 Measure and monitor the energy efficiency of all homes and use this information to reduce fuel poverty and the emission of noxious gases.
- 7.3 Enable citizens to benefit from the installation of energy efficient heating, lighting and ventilation.
- 7.4 Target scarce resources at those suffering fuel poverty and unhealthy living environments.

**8. To develop community capacity and tenants participation across the city.**

- 8.1 To promote, support and develop tenants groups in the city in the context of Best Value and Tenants Compacts.
- 8.2 To support and development residents groups in declared areas.

# Pathfinder Inspection

## Recommendations

15 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, councils need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. In this context, the inspection team makes the following recommendations.

16 Our recommendations for the service are that it should:

- ensure users are involved in setting service standards and targets for improvements, clearly identifying outcomes for service users;
- establish high priority and monitored goals to more strongly influence primary care trust (PCT) involvement in the programme and aid the understanding of the contribution it can make to the health agenda,
- seek agreement to practical arrangements that will ensure all partners are able to attend meetings;
- work with health to ensure that the benefits and outcomes of the Supporting People programme feature in the relevant partner strategies and plans and identify relevant user outcomes as a result of the shared vision;
- identify, agree and develop shared performance indicators (PIs) and targets with PCT's, probation and cross-authority organisations as well as with providers in public, private and voluntary sectors;
- establish an agreed conflict resolution process to enable the commissioning body to develop a clearer shared vision of future services and a more transparent decision making process for funding decisions; and
- carry out further work to capture information that will determine the need for cross authority working to develop specialist services and meet the needs of people who may need to access services across administering authority areas.

17 We would like to thank the users and the providers of Supporting People services and the staff of Leicester City Council, the probation and health services, who gave up their time and met our requests efficiently and courteously.

### Inspection Team:

**Andy Crowe - Housing Inspector (pathfinder lead inspector)**

**Frances Childs - Housing Inspector (refresh lead inspector)**

**Paula Walker - Tenant Inspection Adviser**

**Eileen O'Sullivan - Inspection Officer – HM Inspectorate of Probation**

**Adrian Rushworth - Social Services Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate**

### Dates:

**Pathfinder inspection: 12 - 16 May 2003**

**Refresh inspection: 2 – 3 February 2004**

### E-mail:

**[a-crowe@audit-commission.gov.uk](mailto:a-crowe@audit-commission.gov.uk)**

**[f-childs@audit-commission.gov.uk](mailto:f-childs@audit-commission.gov.uk)**

# Pathfinder Inspection

For more information please contact

**Audit Commission**

**Central Region**

**First Floor, Bridge Business Park**

**Bridge Park Road**

**Thurmaston**

**Leicester**

**LE4 8BL**

**[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)**

**Telephone: 0116 250 4100**

**Fax: 0116 250 4101**

© Audit Commission

The official version of this report is also available on the Audit Commission's web site at [auditcommission.gov.uk](http://auditcommission.gov.uk)

Copies of this report are also available from the above address. The Audit Commission cannot verify the accuracy of and is not responsible for material contained in this report which has been reproduced by another organisation or individual.