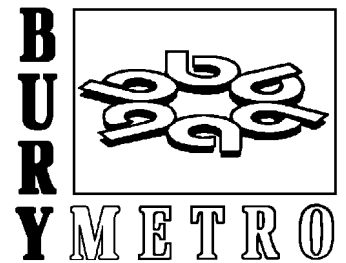


METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF BURY



## **Area Initiative**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2003/2004**

# FOREWORD

Bury MBC's Area Initiative encompasses the work of the six Area Boards of Ramsbottom & Tottington, Bury West, Bury East, Radcliffe, Whitefield & Unsworth and Prestwich which held their first meeting in September 1999.

The Area Initiative is a key element in the Council's developing role as a community leader by providing a link between local people, council services and strategies as well as the services and strategies of our partners such as the Police, Health Authority, Education providers and Business.

The Area Initiative is now well established and has had many notable achievements over the years. I am looking forward to future achievements as we move into Phase 2 of the development of the Area Initiative.

I would like to thank all the Area Board Chairs, Members, Co-opted Members the Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Communication & Partnerships, Area Coordinators and support staff for their hard work over the past twelve months and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

**Councillor Siobhan Costello**  
**Executive Member – Community Services**  
**June 2004**

# **AREA INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT WORK OF THE AREA INITIATIVE TEAM DURING 2003/2004**

## **1.0 Introduction**

This is the first Annual Report of the Area Initiative and sets out details of the developments to the Area Initiative and process during 2003/2004 and of the work undertaken by the Area Initiative during that year.

## **2.0 Issues dealt with**

There have been a wide-ranging number of issues dealt with during the Municipal Year, and details of the work undertaken by the Area Initiative team are set out below.

- ***Local Community Plans 2001 – 2004***

In order to connect the Community Strategy 2001–2021 more closely to people and the communities that make up the borough, action plans have been developed at a local level. 6 Local Community Plans (LCPs) were launched in October 2001 each with a 3-year life span.

The LCPs have been developed through the Area Boards with our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership and each consist of an area profile and action plans. Since this time the action plans have been monitored by the Area Boards where regular progress reports have been presented. They have clearly resulted in the improved delivery of services in line with agreed local priorities and have been used to illustrate the effectiveness of partnership working in terms of local action.

The present six LCPs will reach completion at the end of October 2004 and I have requested that a report on the target outcomes in the plans be presented at each Area Board. However, I can report that the challenging targets that were set at the launch of the plans will be achieved and exceeded.

- ***Development of the Area Initiative – Phase 2***

The Area Boards have been in operation since September 1999 and are considered to be a success, with favourable comments being made during various external inspections and by other Authorities who have adopted a similar model of working with their communities. Phase 1 dealt with issues such as widening participation, improving current operation and improving communications, whilst Phase 2 will deal with future development of Area Boards.

It is considered that after nearly four years a review of the role of the Area Boards should be carried out. This resulted in recommendations that the next stage of development should focus on the following four main areas, whilst continuing the delivery of local priorities:-

- Regeneration/Neighbourhood Renewal
- Community Cohesion
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Local delivery of Corporate Policies

- ***Local Community Plans 2005 – 2008***

The challenge at the start of this new municipal year for the Area Initiative team will be developing Phase 2. One of the key tasks is to ensure the delivery and implementation of the second phase of the LCPs across the 6 Areas of the Borough. The project will entail gathering the active support of a range of internal and external organisations and bodies across the Borough. It will also link into a number of existing council and partner strategies and require a high public profile.

#### **Project Deliverables and/or Desired Outcomes**

- The delivery of 6 LCPs consisting of area based profiles and 6 area action plans based on agreed local priorities involving a range of partner agencies and groups.
- The implementation of the Action Plan and ongoing monitoring through the Area Boards.
- Benefits should include the initiation of improvements along the lines of locally identified needs and aspirations and the delivery of the sustainable communities agenda.

- ***Area Initiative Delivery Plan***

The Area Initiative Delivery Plan identifies 4 key objectives:

- (1) Develop Membership and Partnership Working of Area Boards
- (2) Improve Effectiveness of the Area Initiative
- (3) Improving the influence on local decision making and service delivery through Area Boards
- (4) Improving participation, understanding and communication in respect of the Area Initiative.

The development plan runs from 2003 – 2005 and some of the key achievements in 2003 – 2004 were:

- Overall there has been an increase in the number of wider co-opted members onto the Area Board.
- Area Boards have piloted alternative approaches to holding Area Board meetings including the time, format and location. Bury East piloted a 6.00pm start at their February 2004 meeting and Whitefield & Unsworth piloted a 2.00pm start at their February meeting where an increased attendance was achieved.

- To ensure youth issues are recognised as a priority a standard youth issues item has been established for each Area Board.
- To get the work of the Area Initiative on the school citizenship curriculum Ramsbottom and Tottington Area Board have piloted presentations to children at Woodhey High School and an invitation has been received to duplicate this at Tottington High School.
- Listening Days were held in each of the six areas and the priorities fed into the Warwick 2003 event.
- Further development of joint working between Highways and Area Boards has been increased with the representation of Highways Engineers on each Area Board.
- An Area Initiative web page has been developed which now takes up a prominent place on the Council's web site.

These initiatives will be assessed and a report will be submitted to the Area Board Chairs to evaluate their effectiveness and consideration given to rolling out to other Area Boards.

- **Devolvement of key decisions and resources.**

Area Boards have developed their 'Community Leadership' role by identifying issues of concern to the local community and, where appropriate, organised special Area Board meetings bringing together the community, key stakeholders and partners. This has involved major planning proposals such as the Buckley Wells Park and Ride scheme, The Rock Triangle, Westfield's Town Centre development and the former Sainsbury development in Prestwich. These are some clear examples, which have resulted in the withdrawal, refusal, changes to plans or the development of community initiatives.

The Area Initiative has also been tasked with ever increasing responsibility not just for reaching decisions that affects local communities but the approval of resources to tackle issues of local concern. Examples of this are:

- The Area Initiative was given responsibility for a £180,000 budget under the Cleaner, Safer and Greener Public Spaces initiative. Many community groups across the borough have benefited from this funding with projects ranging from improved street lighting and environmental improvements to increasing security at an elderly persons residency.
- Greater choice and direction has been given to the Area Initiative regarding the prioritisation of work to be conducted on the Unclassified Highway Network. Each year Area Boards will be given a list of unclassified highway schemes in their area with approximate costs. This year the 6 Area Boards approved a total allocation of £1,086,000 on schemes.
- Given its very nature the Kick Start budget was not necessarily intended to be a mainstreamed budget; it was intended as pump-priming money to help breathe life into the Area Initiative. However the importance of this funding to Area Boards is well understood. I was therefore pleased that the Leader Councillor John Byrne and Deputy Leader Councillor Wayne Campbell agreed an additional £30,000 for 2004/05.

Area Board funding programmes such as Cleaner, Safer Greener and Kickstart have an enormous benefit/impact on local communities and groups. Combined these funds have supported over 250 local projects and allocated in excess of £400,000 with projects being considered all the time. Many awards contribute to part of a project that on the strength of the award has levered in other funding programmes such as Pilsworth Environment Grants, Local Children's Network, Living Spaces, Awards for All etc.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

This is the first Annual Report on the Area Initiative function within Bury MBC. We were proud in 1999 when the Council was recognised as one of the most progressive Authorities in the country when it set up the Area Initiative.

A lot has been achieved since 1999 and throughout 2003 – 2004 but the Area Initiative is not complacent. The Council understand the need to continually strive for improvements. That is why we are entering into Phase 2 of the Area Initiative development programme by influencing regeneration and renewal policy strengthening links with the Local Strategic Partnership and Overview and Scrutiny to ensure that the local delivery of corporate policies meets the needs and aspirations of people and the communities in which they live, this in turn will ensure sustainable development towards a more cohesive society.