

BRADFORD: *VIP visitor sees how inner-city groups are thriving*

Yes, minister, our area's on the up!



SUCCESS STORY:

Pupils Tracey Marsden and Kiren Duh show Local Government minister Hilary Armstrong some of their work during her fact-finding tour of Bradford's inner-city areas

by **SARAH WALSH**

Social Affairs Reporter

Efforts to regenerate a run-down part of inner-city Bradford won praise from Government minister Hilary Armstrong during a fact-finding mission to the district.

She dropped in at one of the area's success stories, the Impact Project at Hazelbury Apartments, to find out how the charity was helping youngsters with jobs and accommodation.

The Government has approved an outline bid for the New Deal for Communities programme which could see up to £50 million flow into the Park Lane, Marshfields and West Bowling areas.

People in the areas have so far been allocated £200,000 to spend on drawing

up detailed plans about how to use the money.

Ms Armstrong, the minister for local Government, toured the area to see how plans were progressing.

She said she was impressed with existing efforts to support vulnerable young people in what for many of them is their first tenancy. Hazelbury also offers computer training and jobseeking advice, she was told.

Ms Armstrong told Impact workers: "This is exactly the kind of initiative the Government is looking at in terms of supported housing for young people coming out of care."

After her tour, she said: "The New Deal for Communities scheme is to ensure that the very poorest neighbourhoods get the right sort of support. Local people will be at the centre

of the programme to turn these areas around.

"There are incredible challenges here in Little Horton, there is a mixture of housing both council and private, but this project shows what can be done to turn properties that no-one wanted to live in around. I can detect there's the commitment and enthusiasm and what in the North East we call stickability — determination over a long period."

Council leader Ian Greenwood, who showed Ms Armstrong around, said: "We have shown her all the problems in the area but also, I believe, the opportunities here."

Residents are being asked for their views on how best the area can be rejuvenated and Bradford Council will be staging three informal workshops, on June 29, July 2 and July 9.