



*Excellence in
Local Government*

The Beacon Scheme

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Introduction

The Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme is recommending 44 authorities to receive Beacon status in the ninth round of the Beacon Scheme. These 44 authorities are involved in 38 applications for Beacon status.

This report provides a summary of the Panel's assessment of each short-listed application. This information is submitted to Ministers in support of the Panel's recommendations, which are listed in the table Annex A.

This year, the Panel has again received an impressive array of high quality applications from Best Value authorities. The Panel is confident that those authorities that have been awarded Beacon status are the exemplars within their themes.

For information on how you can engage with the Round 9 Beacons, please visit the Beacon website www.beacons.idea.gov.uk. Information on Beacon events and activities can be found on the theme pages. Contact details for the Beacons are on the site and, case studies and learning tools will be added in the coming months.

Panel members would like to express their gratitude to the Specialist Advisers, Government departmental representatives and the IDeA who, together, provided advice and support throughout the assessment process. A list of the Core Panel Members and Specialist Advisers is appended to this report (Annex B).

Contact

If you would like to request further information, please contact the IDeA via e-mail to **beacons@idea.gov.uk**.

If you would like to write to the Chair of the Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme, please either send an e-mail to the above address, marking your correspondence for the attention of the Chair of the Advisory Panel, or address your letters to:

Chair, Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme
C/o Beacons Team
IDeA
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

The Recommendations

The Panel's recommendations, for each of the ten themes, are shown at Annex A. It is recommended that 38 applications involving 44 authorities should be awarded Beacon status. Summary assessments of all the authorities on the Panel's short-list announced in October 2007 are included after **Annex F** and cover each of the themes.

Reaching these judgements was not easy. The Panel was very aware that the circumstances of individual authorities, and the environment within which they work, would lead to different levels of performance or improvement. Also taken into consideration was how the differences in the characteristics and circumstances of authorities might account for differences in practice within service themes. The Panel have taken note of the need for the successful Beacons to reflect the diversity of authorities and for there to be Beacons from which all Best Value authorities have the opportunity to learn. In particular the Panel is mindful of the need to consider the challenges facing small, rural, district councils and the learning opportunities that they can offer to other similar authorities.

The Panel

The Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme is an independent Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). The Panel is chaired by Marianne Hood, with Mark Greenburgh as Vice Chair. A further eight people make up the core membership of the Panel. In addition, 10 Specialist Advisers were appointed for the duration of Round 9. A full list of all Panel members and their backgrounds can be found at **Annex B**.

Declaration of Interests

In line with Cabinet Office guidelines the Panel has adopted a set of principles and procedures to identify any interests of Panel members and Specialist Advisers that should be declared and action to be taken in respect of such declarations. These principles and procedures are set out in **Annex C**. A register of members' interests has been maintained. The interests declared and the actions taken are recorded in **Annex D**.

The Assessment Process

The Advisory Panel, supported by the IDeA and Government Departments relevant to each theme, conducted a rigorous assessment of each application. A list of the themes is set out in **Annex E**.

Applications were received from authorities in June 2007 via an on-line application form. The first stage of the assessment process was for each application to be assessed by the Specialist Adviser and officials from the relevant government department. Following this, a first sift report on each applicant was drawn up. Core Panel members formed scrutiny panels to ensure that applications were assessed to a consistent standard across all themes.

The Panel met in October 2007 to consider all the available evidence and to produce a short-list of applicants. The short-list was published on 9 October 2007.

All authorities on the short-list were visited by the Specialist Adviser, an official from the relevant government department and an IDeA consultant. For some themes a representative

from the regional government office and a representative from CLG also attended. The purpose of the visit was to investigate and clarify any issues arising from the original written application.

Following the visits, the short-listed authorities met members of the Panel (theme sub-groups) in London to deliver a presentation and answer any questions the Panel had. These presentations took place in January. Each authority was invited to make a short presentation outlining the case for it to be awarded Beacon status. This opening statement was followed by a discussion in which Panel members were able to probe aspects of the application. Each theme sub-group made an assessment of the authorities within the theme, which was then presented to the full Panel. The membership of the theme sub-groups is set out at **Annex F**.

The two-day meeting of the full Panel in January 2008 was used to test the assessments made by the theme sub-groups. The Panel considered all the information contained in the original written application, the visit reports and the views of the theme sub-groups. Following discussion on each of the authorities within each theme, the Panel arrived at the unanimous recommendations set out in this report.

Throughout the assessment process, the Panel has operated in accordance with an adopted framework of principles and procedures that govern their conduct and require them to declare any interests and, on specified occasions, to withdraw from discussions of particular applications. A copy of the Panel's principles on declaring interests, or of the Panel's Register of Interests, can be obtained by contacting the IDEA.

Service Theme Performance

The decision framework used to assess applications followed the criteria set out in the Government's Application Brochure 2007. For all themes the criteria broadly adopted the following generic model:

- Clear **leadership: vision and strategy**, for the service or function;
- Full **community and customer engagement and empowerment** about the outcomes desired;
- Successful **actions** in the service area;
- Effective **partnership** working;
- Evidence of corporate commitment to **equality and diversity**
- Clear evidence of successful **outcomes**
- Successful Beacons were expected to demonstrate excellence in each of the key criteria identified. However, it was particularly important that Beacons should demonstrate very strongly and clearly that they had delivered **successful outcomes** and had high or improving levels of **community and customer engagement and empowerment**.

General Performance

Beacons had to demonstrate good overall performance as well as excellence in the theme they applied for. Authorities had to demonstrate they are generally well managed, succeeding in delivering the quality of services that local people expect and were suffering no major weaknesses in any key service areas. Authorities were not expected to be excellent across all services.

Authorities look to Beacons for examples of best practice, excellence and innovation which

means good overall performance is an important element of the Scheme. It is essential that excellence in any particular service area has not been achieved at the expense of other services. Where an authority is clearly well-run across the board, it is more credible the excellence it has achieved, in particular services, will have resulted from conscious and coherent management action. Such excellence could be followed by other authorities.

The Beacon Scheme uses CPA as the main method for determining general performance. Any authority with a CPA rating of "Poor" or "0 star" was ineligible to apply for Beacon status on General Performance grounds. Following the initial sift of applications, the Panel noted areas of particular strengths and weaknesses, which were followed up on visits to, and presentations by, the short-listed authorities.

Feedback

The Panel regards feedback to applicants as a vital element of the Scheme. Feedback serves two important purposes. Firstly, it is important for the applicants to understand how the Panel has arrived at their recommendations. Secondly, it is hoped that constructive feedback will help applicants in their continuing efforts to improve their services. Each applicant receives copies of the assessments made at each stage of the process. Final feedback following the presentation stage is given after the award ceremony.

Sharing of Good Practice

The Panel looked for evidence that authorities had fully thought through their proposals for spreading their best practice to ensure they would, if selected as a Beacon, provide a valuable learning experience for other authorities. The Panel considered carefully the views of the IDEA on the effectiveness of each authority's proposals, particularly looking for an applicant's:

- Focus on key messages and target audiences;
- Ideas on how to share good practice with others;
- Resources or expertise available to spread good practice.

No short-listed authority failed to achieve a recommendation for Beacon status solely because of its proposals for learning and improvement.

Reflecting the Diversity of Best Value Authorities

Ministers indicated throughout this and previous rounds the Beacon Scheme should be open to all English Best Value authorities and the final selection of Beacons should – as far as possible – provide a good spread of authorities' representative of the diversity of Best Value authorities. The Panel is satisfied that its final recommendations reflect this requirement.

Conclusion

This Report sets out the Panel's recommendations to Ministers on which authorities should be awarded Beacon status in Round 9 of the Scheme. The Panel is confident that the authorities it is putting forward are providing – from those that applied – some of the best services to be found in the ten theme areas of Best Value authorities. The Panel is certain that other authorities can benefit by learning from the Round 9 Beacons, and hope they will take the opportunity to do so, leading to better services for local people everywhere.

ANNEX A

Table of Recommendations

Theme	Applicants short listed in October 2007	Recommended for Beacon status in 2008/9
Better Brighter Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry City Council • Cumbria County Council • Nottingham City Council • Sheffield City Council • Wolverhampton City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumbria County Council • Sheffield City Council • Wolverhampton City Council
Better Public Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council • Chelmsford Borough Council • Darlington Borough Council • London Borough of Croydon • London Borough of Sutton • Nottinghamshire County Council • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea • Sheffield City Council • Tynedale District Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darlington Borough Council • London Borough of Sutton • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • Sheffield City Council • Tynedale District Council
Care Matters: Improving the Outcomes for Children in Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough of Telford & Wrekin • Darlington Borough Council • Leicester City Council • South Gloucestershire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leicester City Council • South Gloucestershire Council
Dignity in Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warrington Borough Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warrington Borough Council

Theme	Applicants short listed in October 2007	Recommended for Beacon status in 2008/9
Improving Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire County Council (Lead) • Cheltenham Borough Council • Stroud District Council • Gloucester City Council • Gloucestershire Police Authority • Cotswold District Council • Forest of Dean District Council • Tewkesbury Borough Council • Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (Joint) • Lancashire County Council • London Borough of Greenwich • Merseyside PTA (Lead) • Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council • Liverpool City Council • Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council • St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council • Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council • Halton Borough Council (Joint) • Nottinghamshire County Council • Peterborough City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancashire County Council • London Borough of Greenwich Merseyside PTA (Lead) • Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council • Liverpool City Council • Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council • St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council • Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council • Halton Borough Council (Joint) • Nottinghamshire County Council • Peterborough City Council
Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wakefield • Cornwall County Council (Lead) • Penwith District Council • Kerrier District Council • Carrick District Council • Restormel Borough Council • Caradon District Council • North Cornwall District Council (Joint) • Leeds City Council • London Borough of Croydon • South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeds City Council • London Borough of Croydon • South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

Theme	Applicants short listed in October 2007	Recommended for Beacon status in 2008/9
Reducing Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackpool Borough Council • City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council • Coventry City Council • Derwentside District Council • London Borough of Greenwich • Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority • Nottingham City Council • Sheffield City Council • Sunderland City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry City Council • Derwentside District Council • London Borough of Greenwich • Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority • Sheffield City Council • Sunderland City Council
Reducing Re-offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council • Leicester City Council (Lead) Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (Joint) • London Borough of Tower Hamlets • Salford City Council • Sunderland City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council • Leicester City Council (Lead) Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (Joint) • London Borough of Tower Hamlets • Sunderland City Council
Tackling Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridgeshire County Council • City of London • Eastleigh Borough Council • London Borough of Barking and Dagenham • London Borough of Islington • London Borough of Sutton • Middlesbrough Council • Woking Borough Council • Worcestershire County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of London • Eastleigh Borough Council • London Borough of Barking and Dagenham • Middlesbrough Council • Woking Borough Council • Worcestershire County Council
Transforming Services: Citizen Engagement and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley Borough Council • London Borough of Haringey • Portsmouth City Council • Staffordshire Moorlands District Council • Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley Borough Council • Staffordshire Moorlands District Council • Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

ANNEX B

Biographies of Core Members of the Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme 2007

Marianne Hood (Chair) has been an Independent Advisor and Housing Consultant for the last eight years, this has included working for the Chartered Institute of Housing, for DETR on 'Best Value', for the Countryside Agency and Housing Corporation on regeneration in rural areas. Clients include local authorities, Registered Social Landlords and tenants' groups. For over 25 years she has worked with and for residents, local councillors and local government staff. She has undertaken paid and voluntary work as a Secretary of a Tenants' Federation, a local teacher, an advice worker with Tameside Welfare Rights Unit, a support worker for the Manchester Tenants' Federation, as the National Co-ordinator for Action for Homes and Jobs, and as Director of TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service). She helped set up and was a Board Member of the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service. Voluntary positions include: former vice chair of a housing association, Advisory Panel member of the Chartered Institute of Housing's Good Practice Unit, Advisory Panel member for the CIH/ODPM Innovation Into Action grant programme. She is the current Chair of the National Housing Forum and was recently awarded 'Distinguished Professional' membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Mark Greenburgh (Vice Chair) is a solicitor and Partner in the national law firm Wragge & Co LLP. He heads their Local Government practice and specialises in all aspects of employment law. He is also a governor of a Birmingham secondary school. Mark was a member of Buckinghamshire County Council from 1993-2001, and its Conservative Leader from 1997-2000. He was the Founder Chairman of the Drugs Prevention Education for Adults project and a member of the Aylesbury Value Race Equality Council Executive Committee. Mark has written and spoken for the IDeA and the New Local Government Network. Mark has been a member of the Beacon Scheme Advisory Panel since 2003.

Victoria Ashfield was the Corporate Director of Education at Cumbria County Council. For 20 years she worked in Local Authorities after 15 years in teaching. Her work in Local Authorities included the introduction of the National Curriculum and the management of a large Curriculum and professional development service. She has a successful track record in Education Services and school improvement. Victoria now works as a consultant in the fields of education, children's services and management in the public and private sectors. She is currently contracted to two Local Authorities and a special needs school. In her 'spare time' Victoria is training to be a counsellor to enhance her work with children and young people with special needs.

Dr Mohammed P Aslam is an experienced executive manager in the area of community partnerships, equalities & diversity and public policy. He has a successful track record in the delivery of and working with multi-agency partnerships, notably with the public sector and voluntary agencies. He has worked in local government, the voluntary sector and higher education in the UK and Eastern Europe and recently he has led on developing working partnerships on internationalisation of community cohesion and social engagement in South Asia. He has over 25 years experience working with local voluntary groups and community organisations.

Dr Aslam is the senior partner with Vivitas Resourcing who are a public sector advisory service and management consultancy working in the area of equalities & diversity, social policy and conflict management.

He was a county councillor for nine years, during which time he was Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee and Chair of the Youth Advisory sub committee. He has held various management positions including non-executive director of Rugby Primary Care Trust. Dr Mohammed P Aslam is also a member of the Institute for Economic Development.

Toby Blume is the Chief Executive of Urban Forum, a membership organisation for community and voluntary groups involved in regeneration. Urban Forum works to ensure that communities' experience and perspectives are informing government policy-making. Toby joined Urban Forum in 2004, having previously set up Groundswell, a charity helping homeless people to set up and run community projects throughout the UK. During his time at Groundswell he established a number of grant-making programmes, developed pioneering 'participation training' and published widely on issues of user-involvement. Toby has served on a number of governmental advisory groups concerned with Local Strategic Partnerships, sustainable development and community sector investment.

He is the Chairman of a grant making Foundation supporting Gypsies and Travellers and a Trustee of the Association of Charitable Foundations, a membership organisation for independent charitable grant-makers.

Hobbies include cooking, gardening and spending time with his two young children.

Angela Cornforth has been a councillor in the London Borough of Greenwich for five years. Prior to this, she was a councillor in Lewisham for eight years. She has worked on various committees, including housing, neighbourhood renewal and education. She was a board member of Deptford City Challenge, and is a board member of South East London Heat and Power Plant. From 1998-2003 Angela Cornforth was the Director of European Studies in a large secondary school, and is a school governor and OFSTED inspector. She is also an independent consultant for school improvement and the co-editor of the Quality in Education series.

Elizabeth Forbes is an independent coach and consultant, having many years experience as a senior manager in the public sector. In local government, she moved from educational policy and planning into corporate management, working for four different councils, including three years as Chief Executive of a council in Essex. She then worked for central government as Director of Local Government Practice for the East of England with a broad brief for improvement and capacity building across the local government sector in the region. She remains committed to working with the public sector to improve and develop individuals and organisations to the benefit of citizens and service users.

Rodney Green has been the Chief Executive of Leicester City Council since September 1996. Prior to taking up his post at Leicester he was the Assistant Chief Executive of West Glamorgan County Council, and Assistant County Education Officer of Surrey County Council. He started his career with the Greater London Council after reading Law and Theology at Cambridge University. Leicester (population 300,000) is the largest city in the East Midlands and Britain's most ethnically diverse city. The City Council employs 14,000 staff and spends some £0.75 bn p.a. Rodney was born in Karachi, and has lived in Thailand, Aden and Ethiopia. His Welsh wife Helen and he have two sons. His interests include travel, theatre, biblical studies, music and sport. He has an Honorary Doctorate from De Montfort University for services to the community.

Linda Phipps has a portfolio career structured around a mix of public service appointments and consultancy, with a background in commercial/public sector transport, in health and in local government. For the beacons panel, she chairs the Learning & Improvement Sub-group. She is an independent consultant on local government and public sector improvement, who has worked with the Audit Commission, SOLACE, IDeA, CHI, Healthcare Commission and the Centre for Public Scrutiny - recently as the Regional Advocate in the North for the CfPS's Health Scrutiny Support Programme for Councils. She has been a Non-Executive Director in the NHS for over eight years, four of these as Chair of a Primary Care Trust, and is now a Non-Executive Director of the Leeds Partnerships Foundation NHS Trust. She is also a Non-Executive Director of Highlands and Islands Airports Limited. On a voluntary basis, she is a Governor of Leeds Metropolitan University and an Assessor for the Duke of York's Community Initiative.

Neil Wightman is Housing Advice and Options Service Manager at London Borough Camden. Prior to joining the Panel he had been actively involved in a number of successful Beacon applications at Camden. He has over 20 years experience of advice and housing and started his working life in the Citizens Advice service (CAB) before moving in local government. He is currently Joint Chair of the Association of Housing Advice Services, Chair of the local Community Legal Service Partnership and is a Trustee Director of a local community youth service.

ANNEX C

Declaration of Interests

Introduction

This annex sets out a brief description of interests to be declared by members (including the Chair) of the Advisory Panel and the action to be taken in respect of any such interests. The terms of appointment for members made clear that they should act in accordance with the Nolan principles for Standards in Public Life, avoiding situations in which their Panel duties and private interests conflict or in which there could be a perception of conflict. Compliance with these principles requires that holders of public office should declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflict in a manner which protects the public interest.

Interests to be declared

There is a variety of possible interests. Some may be pecuniary but there will also be other interests such as those which arise from membership of particular organisations. Panel members should declare any personal, public or business interests which members of the public might reasonably consider could influence their judgement or conflict with their responsibilities as Panel members. Panel members should also consider whether the interests of close family members and persons living in the same household as the Panel member should be declared.

Action to be taken

A Panel member who knows or suspects that a conflict of interest will occur should write to the Chair explaining the position and should also declare any such conflict in any relevant

meeting. Should a member become aware of a possible conflict during the course of a Panel meeting it should be declared orally without delay. All declarations of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting. The secretariat will be responsible for the maintenance of a register which will be overlooked by the Chair.

A Panel member should not participate in any discussion or decision specific (i.e. relating to the relevant service theme) to an application by an authority in respect of which they have a pecuniary interest (for example in cases where a member is an employee of a firm which undertakes work for an authority in the particular area for which the authority had made an application for Beacon status). Members should declare the nature of any such interest and withdraw from the room.

When an interest is other than of a pecuniary nature, for example where a Panel member is a member or employee of an authority which has made an application, the member should consider whether participation in the discussion or determination of a matter relating to that application would suggest a real danger of bias. This should be interpreted in the sense that members might unfairly regard with favour, or disfavour, the application made by a particular authority or authorities.

In considering whether a real danger of bias exists in relation to a particular authority, a Panel member should assess whether they, a close family member, a person living in the same household as the Panel member, or a firm, business or organisation with which the Panel member is connected are likely to be affected more than the generality of those affected by the decision in question.

Where a Panel member considers there is a real danger of bias the member should declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from the room.

A Panel member may identify an interest which in their view does not create a real danger of bias. However, they may also consider that a member of the public might reasonably think that the interest would influence their decisions. In such cases the member should declare the interest but may, with the agreement of the Chair, remain in the room and participate in the discussion and the decision on the matter concerned.

Dispensations

The Chair of the Panel (or, in cases when the Chair is not present and has not been consulted in advance, the Panel member who has assumed the chair of any Panel sub-group or other meeting involving Panel members) may grant dispensations allowing Panel members to speak or to participate in discussion where the interest in an authority is not so immediate that it would be wrong for such participation to take place or one of the following criteria is met:

the discussion concerns a considerable number of authorities which happen to include the authority or authorities in respect of which the interest has been declared; or more than half the members present at any meeting would otherwise have to withdraw; or the balance of the Panel would in the view of the Chair, confirmed by those members of the Panel without such an interest, be upset.

The Chair may also grant dispensation allowing Panel members to take part in decisions where their interest in an authority is not so immediate that it would be wrong for such participation to take place or one of the following criteria is met:

- a) the consideration concerns a considerable number of authorities which happen to include the authority or authorities in respect of which the interest has been declared;
or
- b) more than half the members present at any meeting would otherwise have to withdraw;
or
- c) the balance of the Panel would in the view of the Chair, confirmed by those members of the Panel without such an interest, be upset.

The Chair would seek any dispensation to participate in discussion or to take part in decisions from the Vice Chair.

ANNEX D

Interests Declared

<i>Panel Member</i>	<i>Interest Declared</i>	<i>Dispensation / Action</i>
Core Members		
Marianne Hood (Chair)	<p>London Borough of Lambeth - 2002/03 worked for Lambeth Tenants Council. Currently assist them on a voluntary basis</p> <p>London Borough of Brent - worked for Brent Community Network and currently working with Brent Housing Partnership</p> <p>Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council - spouse works for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council</p> <p>Nottingham City Council - undertook consultancy from January – June 2007</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decision for LB of Lambeth</p> <p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decision for LB of Brent</p> <p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decision for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council</p> <p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decision for Nottingham City Council</p> <p>Dispensation in all cases to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance</p>
Victoria Ashfield	<p>Durham County Council - Currently worked as a Consultant to Durham County Council Children's and Young People's Services. Previously worked with their School Improvement Team (2000 – 2003)</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decision for Durham County Council</p>
Dr Mohammed P Aslam	<p>Lincolnshire County Council – Consulting for Lincolnshire County Council in 2005</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions on Lincoln County Council</p>
Toby Blume	<p>Leeds City Council -</p>	
Angela Cornforth	<p>LB Greenwich - currently serving elected member</p> <p>LB Bexley - employed on an occasional basis as a consultant and currently employed as a part-time teacher</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions on Greenwich and Bexley</p> <p>Dispensation in both cases to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance</p>

<i>Panel Member</i>	<i>Interest Declared</i>	<i>Dispensation / Action</i>
Core Members		
Elizabeth Forbes	Peterborough City Council - pro bono consulting	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions on Peterborough City Council
Rodney Green	Leicester City Council - Chief Executive	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions for all cases Dispensation to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance
Mark Greenburgh	Birmingham City Council, Bristol City Council, LB of Croydon, Newark & Sherwood District Council, Portsmouth City Council and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Borough of Telford & Wrekin - A Partner at Wragge & Co, they have provided legal advice to these authorities	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions for all cases Dispensation to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance

<i>Panel Member</i>	<i>Interest Declared</i>	<i>Dispensation / Action</i>
Core Members		
Linda Phipps	<p>Blackpool Borough Council - work completed (01/07 – 03/07)</p> <p>Calderdale (CfPS) - work completed (07/06 – 11/06)</p> <p>Darlington (CfPS) - work completed (04/06)</p> <p>Liverpool (CfPS) - work completed (04/06 and 09/06 – 06/07)</p> <p>Middlesbrough (CfPS) - work completed (04/06 and 11/06)</p> <p>Nuneaton and Bedworth Council - work completed early 2005</p> <p>Sefton (CfPS) - work completed (10/06)</p> <p>Sheffield City Council - work completed (01/07 – 03/07)</p> <p>Stockton (CfPS) - work completed (07/06 – 06/07)</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in all cases</p> <p>Dispensation in all cases to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance</p>
Neil Wightman	<p>LB of Camden - Employed by the authority</p> <p>LB of Barnet, LB of Waltham Forest, Vale Royal Borough Council - Currently undertaking paid training in the Housing Department</p> <p>Norwich City Council, Plymouth City Council - Paid training in the Housing Department (2002 – 2004)</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in all cases</p> <p>Dispensation to be present for general discussions and decisions on themes and general performance</p>

Specialist Panel Advisers	Interest Declared	Dispensation / Action
Melanie Aust	<p>LB Hackney - currently providing consultancy support</p> <p>LB Ealing - consultancy support provided to the Borough in 2006</p> <p>LB Barking and Dagenham - Partner works for this Borough</p>	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in all cases
Abena Dadze-Arthur	No interests to declare	
Tom Franklin	<p>The following local authorities have financially supported Living Streets over the past year, either as local authority members, or for undertaking auditing or walking promotion work, or in the form of a grant:</p> <p>Blyth Valley Borough Council Cambridgeshire County Council City of London City of Wakefield Coventry City Council Darlington Borough Council Gateshead Council Kirklees Metropolitan Council Lancashire County Council Leeds City Council Lincolnshire County Council Liverpool City Council LB Barking and Dagenham LB Haringey LB Lambeth LB Sutton Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Sheffield City Council South Tyneside Borough Council Southampton City Council Westminster City Council</p>	Dispensation to be present for general discussions and recommendations on authorities in this theme

Specialist Panel Advisers	Interest Declared	Dispensation / Action
George Gyte	<p>LB of Greenwich - Director of Education until 2002</p> <p>LBs Lewisham and Lambeth - currently work for the DfES as a London Challenge Adviser with a particular focus to the aforementioned London boroughs</p> <p>Luton - undertaken work for the LSC in respect to poor performance following their area inspection</p>	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in all cases
Jane Held	<p>LB Camden - Employed as DSS 2001-2004</p> <p>Direct work with Lancs CC and Notts City Council as part of DfES placement stability programme</p> <p>Southend on Sea Borough Council - employed as DSS 1997 -2001</p> <p>Suffolk PCT - Lead NED for children 2004-2006. Indirect relationship with County Council as consequence</p> <p>Devon County Council - worked directly with DCC when developing toolkit for IDEa</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in relation to Camden, Lancs CC, Notts City Council and Devon CC</p> <p>Dispensation to be present for discussion and decision on Southend as this was more than 5 years ago</p> <p>Dispensation to be present for discussion and decision on Suffolk County Council as relationship is remote</p>
Liam Hughes	No interests to declare	
Mike Jeanes	No interest to declare	

Specialist Panel Advisers	Interest Declared	Dispensation / Action
Annie Stevenson	<p>Hertfordshire County Council - (as a parent) formal complaint lodged with Children Schools and Families; however has no connection with Adult Services</p> <p>Plymouth City Council - Consulting work undertaken 2002</p> <p>Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea - one day's consulting work undertaken in 2005</p> <p>Westminster City Council - employee 1995 - 1997</p>	<p>To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in relation to Plymouth and Kensington & Chelsea</p> <p>Dispensation to be present for specific discussions and decisions in relation to Westminster as this was over 5 years ago</p>
Dick Weber	No interests to declare	
Laurie Newton	<p>North Hertfordshire - consultancy work approx. two years ago</p> <p>No other pecuniary interests to declare</p>	To withdraw from specific discussions and decisions in relation to North Hertfordshire

ANNEX E

Themes

- Better Brighter Futures
- Better Public Spaces
- Care Matters: Improving the Outcomes for Children in Care
- Dignity in Care
- Improving Accessibility
- Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements
- Reducing Health Inequalities
- Reducing Re-offending
- Tackling Climate Change
- Transforming Services: Citizen Engagement and Empowerment

ANNEX F

Sub-Groups

Better Brighter Futures

Victoria Ashfield
George Gyte

Better Public Places

Rodney Green
Tom Franklin

Care Matters: Improving the Outcomes for Children in Care

Mark Greenburgh
Jane Held

Dignity in Care

Annie Stevenson
Angela Cornforth

Improving Accessibility

Linda Phipps
Mike Jeanes

Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

Rodney Green
Melanie Aust

Reducing Health Inequalities

Linda Phipps
Liam Hughes

Reducing Re-offending

Victoria Ashfield
Dick Weber

Tackling Climate Change

Dr Mohammed P Aslam
Laurie Newton

Transforming Services: Citizen Engagement and Empowerment

Marianne Hood
Abena Dadze-Arthur

Learning and Improvement

Linda Phipps (Chair)
Marianne Hood
Neil Wightman
Victoria Ashfield

Internationalisation

Rodney Green (Chair)
Dr Mohammed P Aslam
Neil Wightman
Victoria Ashfield

Equality and Diversity

Dr Mohammed P Aslam
Victoria Ashfield

Communications

Mark Greenburgh (Chair)
Angela Cornforth

Performance Management

Neil Wightman
Angela Cornforth

Better Brighter Futures

Introduction

Better Brighter Futures – 14-19 reforms are part of the package of reforms, which includes Every Child Matters, Personalisation, Specialisation, and Building Schools for the Future, all aimed at increasing young people’s potential, life chances and educational experiences. Educational attainment is critical to equalising life chances. The vision is to offer 14-19 year olds the opportunity to learn subjects that motivate them in a style that suits them. The 14-19 reforms aim to ensure that all young people will want to stay in learning post-16.

Success depends most of all on local partners, eg schools, colleges, employers, increasing post-16 participation, raising attainment and re-engaging the disaffected.

There were ten applications for this theme, of which five were short-listed (Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Cornwall County Council, Coventry City Council, Cumbria County Council, Nottingham City Council, Plymouth City Council, Sheffield City Council, Sunderland City Council, Wolverhampton City Council). Three authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

This theme relates to policy that requires all authorities to provide 14 Diploma courses by 2013. Beacon authorities showed themselves to be leaders and have solved the problem. They evidenced involvement with businesses and employers, including SMEs; provision of IAG, and is accessible to hard to reach groups and vulnerable young people. Beacon authorities have innovative ideas in teaching and learning. They demonstrated collaborative working and partnerships which are holistic; convincing; with parents; and where young people’s views on implementation are reflected. Finally, clearly evidenced is the delivery of the new programme with actions and outcomes, not plans and processes.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated outcomes from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Cumbria County Council
Sheffield City Council
Wolverhampton City Council

The following paragraphs summarise the Panel’s assessment of each of the short-listed authorities.

Cumbria County Council

Cumbria County Council demonstrated that it is at the forefront in delivering the 14-19 reform agenda in a challenging rural context. The authority thoroughly evidenced the

commitment of all partners and their confidence in delivering services was tangible. Cumbria has an impressive catalogue of ways in which the new Diplomas will be delivered and access provision for all. This includes specific training for professionals supporting the vulnerable and young people at risk. Such delivery has fundamentally re-shaped all services to maximise young people's life chances and prevent young people from dropping out of education. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Sheffield City Council

Throughout the application process Sheffield City Council demonstrated a clear long term vision. This vision is shared with its partners and a powerful, strategic leadership which listens well and works in close co-operation with partners, parents/carers and students. Passion and commitment to equality and diversity was expressed as well as a realisation that getting that right requires high quality and intelligent use of data and tracking systems. The Panel was also impressed with Sheffield's "can do" attitude, focus, high level team working skills and its quiet determination to improve. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Wolverhampton City Council

Wolverhampton City Council is at the cutting edge of delivery and already has an excellent track record of influencing the delivery of the 14-19 agenda. In particular sharing its learning and best practice with other local authorities. Enthusiasm and commitment of all the partners was clearly evident. The impact on the young people in terms of increased attainment from the wider, personalised curriculum choice was also evidenced by young people themselves. This demonstrated the power of the authority's inclusive area-wide curriculum and showed access was being provided to it, and the transformational power of learning. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status
Coventry City Council
Nottingham City Council

Coventry City Council

Coventry City Council demonstrated the commitment of its members to deliver the 14-19 Reform Programme, and to meeting the needs of all young people. The Partnership is longstanding, collegiate in ethos and focussed on putting young people first. However, the authority did not provide sufficient evidence of tangible outcomes and innovation. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Nottingham City Council

Nottingham City Council demonstrated the strength of the partnership in the local authority and also a well-founded strategy for implementing the 14-19 reform programme. However, the authority provided little evidence on innovative ways to address equalities and diversity, in engaging parents and young people to deliver the programme. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Better Public Places

Introduction

Better Public Places aims to identify excellence in overcoming the complexity of fragmented responsibilities and a diverse range of objectives to deliver cleaner, safer, greener public spaces. The cleaner, safer, greener communities' agenda has focused on improving the local environment; making places safer and engaging and empowering communities to adopt sustainable life styles. New funding approaches, legislative powers, and the Local Government White Paper makes clear the intention to empower and engage communities in creating better public places.

The benefits of better public places are recognised across Government and shared with local government.

There were 27 applications for this theme, of which ten were short-listed (Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Chelmsford Borough Council, Colchester Borough Council, Corby Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council, Gateshead Council, Halton Borough Council, High Peak Borough Council, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Lambeth, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, London Borough of Sutton, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Kesteven District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Pendle Borough Council, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Sheffield City Council, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Torbay Council, Tynedale District Council, Vale Royal Borough Council). Five authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Successful Beacon authorities demonstrated active high level political/officer support with a strong strategic framework that went beyond the normal silos. They provided clear explanation of their community's need and proactively sought engagement through established mechanisms. Performance is managed by staff empowerment and enforcement tools. Education is also used to get messages over. Partnerships involved the private and voluntary sectors. Beacon authorities utilised their knowledge and understanding to provide services that went the extra mile to engage and empower different groups and reflected their changing population. Beacon authorities evidenced of shaping their locality through engaging partners and communities across traditional service and organisational boundaries to create a public realm to be proud of.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status

Darlington Borough Council

London Borough of Sutton

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Sheffield City Council

Tynedale District Council

The following paragraphs summarise the Panel's assessment of each of the short-listed authorities.

Darlington Borough Council

The Panel was particularly impressed with the range of actions that are being taken to improve public places in Darlington. These ranged from small pocket-parks, to improvements in the town centre, to new public places. The authority demonstrated coherence of approach, including the link with active travel and access to green space. Throughout the assessment process there was a real sense Darlington was focused on using public places to improve the quality of life of its residents. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Sutton

Throughout the assessment process the London Borough of Sutton evidenced well established structures and strategies are in place to sustain high quality public spaces. Involvement of the demonstrated public, private and voluntary sector was also evidenced. The strength of the authority's ability to deliver a high quality service was through a clear vision for the area articulated through the Chief Executive and all other levels of staff. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Rotherham showed there has been a clear transformation in street services as a result of clear leadership and a determination to change culture. Examples of innovation, cross-cutting strategies to the public realm that engage all sections of the community and expertise in performance management were given. The assessment team was particularly impressed with the authority's knowledge and understanding of demographic changes and it's planning for the future. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Sheffield City Council

The Panel was particularly impressed by Sheffield's use of high quality and bold design in the public realm, the high level of maintenance within the city centre, and the focus on areas of

higher deprivation. It is evident that a clear delivery framework is in place for delivering a high quality public service. Sheffield recognised that a step-change was needed and have adopted a strong emphasis on design and modernisation in the provision of their public spaces, particularly green space. The authority has taken the initiative in creating new and innovative ways to lever additional funding, through Green Estates, which have delivered impressive results. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Tynedale District Council

Some strong examples of community engagement/empowerment were noted throughout Tynedale's application. Positive examples of ensuring services are joined up and responsive to local need, were given at each stage of the process. There was also evidence of good work around equalities. The authority gave a coherent picture of how they are delivering excellence in public space in partnership with a range of stakeholders. Outstanding leadership was demonstrated by both officers and councillors and it is clear that both work closely in partnership to deliver a high quality service. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Chelmsford Borough Council
London Borough of Croydon
Nottinghamshire County Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Bolton showed some signs of innovative approaches to public realm and commitment to customer involvement which has resulted in some strong outcomes. The Panel were particularly impressed by the focus on outcomes, and partnership working - especially around community safety. However, there was limited evidence of successes outside of community safety. The Panel agreed with this narrow focus not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Chelmsford Borough Council

Chelmsford's commitment to creating quality public realm was evident, with a clear strategic framework in place and some positive outcomes, particularly around satisfaction. However, there were significant gaps around actions, partnerships and what the Authority is doing to empower, rather than consult or engage, its communities. The Panel also felt that a greater range of projects or spaces could have been included to 'bring the service to life'. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Croydon

The strength of Croydon's application was in the outcomes, however, a number of other areas did not show significant evidence of excellence. The Panel believes this theme came a year too early for a Beacon award. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Nottinghamshire County Council

The Panel were impressed by the quantity and variety of Nottinghamshire's schemes particularly the BBC programme. However, the current evaluation structures made it difficult to assess outcomes and the narrow focus did not demonstrate how the BBC programme fitted into a wider framework for better public places. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea clearly has a strong commitment to quality throughout the borough both in terms of design and materials, and this is leading to improvements in public space. The authority outlined some important actions but the Panel felt that it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The Panel also would have also liked to have seen more examples of citizens empowered to take and lead actions themselves. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Care Matters: Improving the Outcomes for Children in Care

Introduction

Within the care system, it is essential to improve the quality and stability of children's placements, and to ensure that young people are supported better to make a smooth transition into adult life. Successful delivery of the proposals within the Green Paper, Care Matters, depends upon the dedication and commitment of local government, other partner agencies and the professionals who work with children in care.

These children should benefit from better support to remain in their families, where possible to prevent them needing to enter care in the first place and on returning home in order to prevent the need for a further period in care.

There were eight applications for this theme, of which four were short-listed (Borough of Telford & Wrekin, Darlington Borough Council, Leicester City Council, London Borough of Merton, North East Lincolnshire Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Southampton City Council). Two authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities demonstrated a consistently high level delivery performance with their focus on the children. Their ambitions for looked after children is reflected and integrated in everything they do across the authority. Beacon authorities demonstrated new ways of working. In summary, Beacon authorities behave like parents focusing on, and working with, the children to ensure they achieve their very best. The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Leicester City Council
South Gloucestershire Council

The following paragraphs summarise the Panel's assessment of each of the short-listed authorities.

Leicester City Council

Leicester City Council provided examples of innovative, excellent and effective services for looked-after children. The authority showed that the service is delivered through a thoughtful and reflective approach, coupled with strong leadership politically and corporately. Comprehensive and well organised performance management structures are in place at aggregate and individual level. Clear strategies, high aspirations, commitment and enthusiasm were all communicated throughout the assessment process. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

South Gloucestershire Council

South Gloucestershire Council demonstrated a child centred and well organised service that is managed thoughtfully, with good outcomes for looked after children. Participation of children and young people was clearly integral to the service and valued by staff and managers. A rich wealth of services for looked after children are available and these are well co-ordinated. The authority has high aspirations for its children and has already implemented a range of services in advance of Care Matters. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status
Borough of Telford & Wrekin
Darlington Borough Council

Borough of Telford & Wrekin

The Borough of Telford and Wrekin proved to be a competent authority providing good services to looked-after children. However whilst it was clear how services to looked-after children were coordinated, supported and managed, it was still not clear what the unique aspects of the service, as opposed to the innovative approach to the overall service were. The Panel agreed not to recommend for Beacon status.

Darlington Borough Council

Darlington demonstrated that it takes its responsibilities as a corporate parent seriously and that staff at all levels of the organisation are highly committed to the service. The authority has a lot of good ideas but many are not as yet developed. The Panel agreed not to recommend the authority for Beacon status due to the lack of innovative work on 'Care Matters' services and standards being undertaken by the Borough.

Dignity in Care

Introduction

Dignity consists of many overlapping aspects, involving respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth. Dignity in care means the kind of care, in any setting, which supports and promotes, and does not undermine, a person's self-respect. For many older people, being treated with dignity and respect includes attention being paid to the subjective elements of care – that which demonstrates quality of life. It comprises those things that make the difference between feeling safe, cared for and listened to, as opposed to feeling vulnerable, neglected or ignored, as well as those aspects that contribute to physical safety, security and well-being. While 'dignity' may be difficult to define, what is clear is that people know when they have not been treated with dignity and respect.

When the concept of dignity is applied to a care setting, it covers all care provided by paid workers in any setting (hospital, residential, nursing, day centres and in people's own homes),

including care that is paid for either partially or wholly by the recipient. Lack of attention to an individual's dignity in care can take many forms and the experience may differ from person to person. High quality care services that respect people's dignity should encourage people's right to privacy and support service users to express their needs. They should treat each person as an individual and also engage with their family members when planning care. There should be a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse and ultimately, people must feel able to complain without fear of retribution.

There were four applications for this theme, of which one was short-listed (Birmingham City Council, Elmbridge Borough Council (**Lead**) Surrey County Council (**Joint**), Stoke-on-Trent City Council (**Lead**) Stoke-on-Trent Primary Care Trust (**Joint**), Warrington Borough Council). One authority was recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities are ones that go the extra mile to ensure that: service users are respected; their needs are dealt with in a holistic way; and sensitivity is shown to the individual in tailoring services to suit them. Beacon authorities demonstrate outstanding examples on how to embed principles of 'dignity' throughout its services. They deliver services with the person in mind rather than meeting organisation's needs. Beacon authorities are innovative in their approach to changing services/care and is sensitive to people's overall well-being. They are willing to listen to what service users want and make changes accordingly. The needs of hard to reach communities and BME groups are considered and the care offered is seamless and/or joined up. The authority recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status

Warrington Borough Council

Warrington Borough Council

Over the course of the assessment process, Warrington impressed the assessors with its commitment to raising standards and ensuring dignity for all. The authority demonstrated itself to be self aware and is keen to raise the profile of dignity, share learning with others, and continue its own improvement journey through the process. The authority provided evidence of a number of strong practices and innovative approaches to maintain dignity and empower people to make their own choices. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Improving Accessibility

Introduction

Accessibility planning is about helping people, particularly those most in need, to reach the jobs and services they need. Local transport authorities have subsequently included accessibility strategies within their Local Transport Plans, which were submitted at the end of March 2006. Accessibility is not just about transport, the location of services and the way that they are delivered has as significant an influence on accessibility as transport provision. Improving accessibility can also make a significant contribution to national and local objectives in other sectors.

Innovative schemes for improving accessibility should demonstrate strongly built partnerships with relevant organisations in other sectors and initiatives based on a robust evidence base which is made up of a range of sources. Also evident is an understanding of the barriers that prevent people from accessing services and how to mainstream accessibility planning into the overall decision-making processes, so that accessibility is considered early in the planning process.

There were nine applications for this theme, of which six were short-listed (Gloucestershire County Council **(Lead)** Cheltenham Borough Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, Gloucester City Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust **(Joint)**, Lancashire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, London Borough of Greenwich, Merseyside PTA **(Lead)** Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council **(Joint)**, Nottinghamshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Richmondshire District Council, West Yorkshire PTA). Five authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities demonstrated an understanding of the theme over and above transport. It included lifestyles, mapping and planning, customer engagement and satisfaction, changes as a result of consultation, and partnership working. In particular, those Beacon authorities recognised hard to reach groups, and the need to consult and involve them in service change and delivery.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Lancashire County Council
London Borough of Greenwich
Merseyside PTA (Lead) Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council (Joint)
Nottinghamshire County Council
Peterborough City Council

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire County Council demonstrated how innovative work is being executed, in a county authority which has a large and diverse population and also areas of deep rurality, health and employment deprivation. The authority has a strong and well researched understanding of who and where those in greatest need are, and an ability to map this against various other parameters. Several corporate and service structures are in place to ensure accessibility planning is used for key services and a lead in this work is carried out by a dedicated group within the environment directorate demonstrating the authority's commitment to the service. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Greenwich

The London Borough of Greenwich showed an interesting approach to improving accessibility for residents. Areas and groups with specific needs or accessibility difficulties are well identified by high standard community and customer engagement practices. A well established and extensive network of partnerships exists to ensure inclusion of all, and the LAA is used to deliver joint objectives. The authority excels in promoting equalities and diversity and the service is outcome focussed. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Merseyside PTA (Lead) Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council (Joint)

This partnership has much to commend and there was evidence of some good community engagement work and excellent projects aimed at target groups. The partnership proved to be strong, working across a wide area of Merseyside. Key barriers to accessibility have been targeted and there are good examples of effectiveness and outstanding community engagement. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Nottinghamshire County Council

The Panel was particularly impressed with Nottinghamshire's understanding of the accessibility issues in its area and its real professional enthusiasm aimed at working in partnership to

reduce problems faced by individuals and communities with the greatest needs. The authority demonstrated an outstanding programme of actions targeted at priority groups or areas, as well as accessibility being embedded into the strategic planning process. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Peterborough City Council

Peterborough City Council demonstrated how it has put accessibility at the core of its work. The authority showed awareness of where the main accessibility problems are and how they can be tackled in a prioritised and programmed way. The approach is both city-wide and on identified geographic areas of need. It is also clear that accessibility is part of the continuing expansion and improvement of the City. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status

Gloucestershire County Council (**Lead**) Cheltenham Borough Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (**Joint**)

Gloucestershire County Council (Lead) Cheltenham Borough Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (Joint)

Gloucestershire and all of its partners have developed an excellent computer based tool. This allows various deprivation measures and other activities to be mapped together to identify problems as well as potential solutions. Through this resources can be properly directed. As a result some good projects are being developed, notably the Village Agents Scheme. However, so far there are relatively few examples where accessibility issues have been developed through identification of the problems to clear and successful outcomes. It may be that this Beacon theme came too early for the County and its partners. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

Introduction

‘Good public services are essential to strong and prosperous communities’ is the key message of the Local Government White Paper. However, many areas are facing tough problems such as economic decline, deprivation and historic under-investment, which are not easily addressed by agencies working in isolation. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is seen as the vehicle for developing this shared vision and for tackling the hard and cross cutting social issues for local areas.

For LSPs to be really effective they need to be strong, robust partnerships of equals, working strategically together to deliver the objectives of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in a clear and accountable way. An effective LSP will have in place and within its governance structure the ability to identify trade-offs and take different decisions as well as agree and enforce real change in the partner organisations. For this to take place it is critical that elected members play a key role. A strong LSP will have ensured that there are implementation arrangements for the LAA outcomes that are owned by all partners and be delivered effectively.

There were 16 applications for this theme, of which 5 were short-listed (City of Wakefield, Cornwall County Council (**Lead**) Penwith District Council, Kerrier District Council, Carrick District Council, Restormel Borough Council, Caradon District Council, North Cornwall District Council (**Joint**), Leeds City Council, London Borough of Croydon, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council). Three authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities provided evidence of innovation, outcomes, sustainability, and place shaping. They had development of a shared, robust and current evidence base which enabled priorities to be set. Partnerships demonstrated the use of a variety of techniques to test and evaluate priorities. Elected members showed leadership within the partnerships.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacons status
Leeds City Council
London Borough of Croydon
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

Leeds City Council

Leeds City Council demonstrated a mature and strong partnership that has been able to identify a breadth and depth of engagement of all sectors. It has business people involved - and it was this sector that, with the Council, set up the initial partnership for the City. The Leader of the Council sits on the Chamber of Commerce, which may well be a unique situation. There is strong engagement of the voluntary and community sectors, including the faith sector. There is all party support for the partnership - and 30 local councillors are involved in the work of the partnership at all levels. Good examples of outcomes were given that are leading to real change on the ground. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Croydon

The London Borough of Croydon were able to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their partnership and its strength. They showed themselves to be progressive and forward thinking, but still ready to learn from their actions and change if necessary. The authority was able to show itself to be improving and innovative, with a clear focus on delivering outcomes based on local communities needs. They were also able to demonstrate a high degree of commitment at the highest level, but also show that this was replicated down through the partnership. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

South Tyneside was able to show the seamless integration of its LSP and the LAA, based on priorities that have been developed through good analysis of the statistics, but also by talking and listening to local people. There is a robust LSP structure, where all partners are committed to change and to delivering the vision. The voluntary and community sector is an equal partner in the partnership, but is still able to be the 'critical friend' and to challenge. The involvement of the private sector has been effectively cracked and a strong membership of business within the partnership was identified. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacons status

City of Wakefield

Cornwall County Council (**Lead**) Penwith District Council, Kerrier District Council, Carrick District Council, Restormel Borough Council, Caradon District Council, North Cornwall District Council (**Joint**)

City of Wakefield

City of Wakefield evidenced innovation in terms of developing relationships with its communities. There was not, however, the clarity of purpose of the partnership or of the focus required. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Cornwall County Council (Lead) Penwith District Council, Kerrier District Council, Carrick District Council, Restormel Borough Council, Caradon District Council, North Cornwall District Council (Joint)

Cornwall County Council and its partners has maintained its partnership working despite a period of transition to a unitary authority, and sees the partnership as one of the key mechanisms that has helped partners move on following the decision to adopt a unitary structure. However the Panel concluded that the partnership has not yet reached the level of maturity required to achieve Beacon status. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Reducing Health Inequalities

Introduction

The shared priority for healthy communities and reducing health inequalities agreed between central and local government made tackling health inequalities a priority for local authorities. Despite increased national prosperity, wider opportunity and increasing life expectancy for all, the gap in life expectancy between and within local authority areas, and infant mortality between different social groups, remains a major challenge.

Traditional local authority services are all crucial determinants of health. Improving health and reducing inequalities are paramount to an authority's business. Use of local area agreements should bring health inequalities to the forefront of community planning and engage local partners in delivering health strategies.

There were 16 applications for this theme, of which nine were short-listed (Blackpool Borough Council, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Coventry City Council, Derwentside District Council, London Borough of Greenwich, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, Nottingham City Council, Sheffield City Council, Sunderland City Council). Six authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities demonstrated a clear "story" on health inequalities leadership and ownership. They have recognised their crucial role in supporting delivery of the 2010 health inequalities that will see inequalities continuing to reduce in the longer term. They are able to demonstrate visible, strategic and systematic engagement of their most disadvantaged communities and are able to support people to make healthy choices.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Coventry City Council
Derwentside District Council
London Borough of Greenwich
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
Sheffield City Council
Sunderland City Council

Coventry City Council

Coventry City Council demonstrated exceptional strong leadership in tackling Health Inequalities, and has created a mature culture of partnership working and a dedicated Health Development Unit. This work has delivered some impressive practice and outcomes, particularly against infant mortality. Strategy based on understanding of the drivers of health inequalities and recognition of the pace of change required and need for focus on the identified priority areas was commended by the Panel. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Derwentside District Council

The presentation showed that Derwentside had a clear sense of how it could act, influence and incubate work to tackle health inequalities. The authority has constructive partnerships and a broad range of innovative activity to help it punch above its weight in terms of delivering outcomes. Derwentside's work is underpinned by rigorous data analysis and performance monitoring, and delivered through impressive organisation-wide commitment. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Greenwich

The assessment process confirmed that the London Borough of Greenwich is an exceptionally innovative authority with a clear and mature vision for tackling health inequalities as part of its wider approach to regeneration. The Authority and its partners have maximised the opportunities of neighbourhood renewal and SRB funds to develop and pilot a range of exciting approaches to health inequalities, whilst ensuring that successful work is sustainable and mainstreamed. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority clearly demonstrated a mature and ambitious vision for tackling health inequalities. This was backed by strategic leadership at the highest level, innovative approaches and systems, the commitment of an enthusiastic and flexible workforce. The Panel recommended this authority for Beacon status in respect to its strong leadership combined with the scale of activity and the authority's innovative approaches. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council combines strong and mature leadership for tackling health inequalities with excellent neighbourhood based approaches to service design and delivery. The authority's outstanding outcomes compellingly demonstrate the success of their approach, whilst innovative detailed approaches to data capture and analysis inform a comprehensive short and long term strategy to address health inequalities. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Sunderland City Council

Sunderland demonstrated that it has an innovative and excellent approach to reducing health inequalities that is underpinned by passion and commitment. There is a clear link between the analysis of local health needs, joint strategic planning across the partnership, and frontline projects and schemes. The authority also made evident its successful integrated "bottom up" approach. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status
Blackpool Borough Council
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Nottingham City Council

Blackpool Borough Council

Blackpool demonstrated commitment and passion to reducing health inequalities and the authority boasts a number of original and innovative initiatives for tackling Blackpool's considerable regeneration challenges. However, the Panel had some reservations regarding the extent to which Blackpool's actions were appropriate, in scale and nature, to address inequalities the 2010 target. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Throughout the application process Bradford has demonstrated enthusiastic and committed leadership for improving health and tackling inequality. There was good evidence of partnership working, strong community engagement and an effective framework for commissioning from the VCS. There was a lack of strategic focus to drive action to reduce health inequalities, based on the understanding of the drivers of health inequalities across Bradford. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Nottingham City Council

Nottingham City Council presented a strong case for gaining Beacon status. Effective leadership for health inequalities was demonstrated. Evidenced were comprehensive arrangements for embedding health inequalities and improvement work at service and neighbourhood level. However, reservations as to whether the scale and extent of action to target health inequalities was sufficient to close the gap to meet the 2010 target, were expressed by the Panel. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend the authority for Beacon status.

Reducing Re-offending

Introduction

In July 2002 the Social Exclusion Unit report into 'Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners' recognised how the inequalities which offenders often suffer in local mainstream services such as inequalities in education, housing and health can contribute significantly to their re-offending. The cost to society for re-offending is over £11 billion per year. Around 50% of crime committed is by offenders who have already been through the criminal justice system. The Government is committed to reducing adult and youth re-offending by 10% by the end of the decade.

There were 12 applications for this theme, of which 5 were short-listed (Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Leicester City Council (**Lead**) Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (**Joint**), London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Salford City Council, Sunderland City Council). Four authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities demonstrated how they are rising to the challenge of reducing re-offending in their community by improving the access of offenders to local mainstream services e.g. accommodation, training, employment. In the development of their policies and processes, the particular needs of offenders had been identified and addressed. Working collaboratively with prisons, probation and partners, reducing re-offending is embedded into the work of local partnerships and that innovative ways of improving effective local partnership working are identified. Beacon authorities also demonstrated that women offenders and some ethnic minority offenders have specific needs that will need to be addressed by local services.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated outcomes from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Leicester City Council (Lead) Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (Joint)
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Sunderland City Council

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council has a well-developed and successful reducing re-offending strategy. This is based particularly on a strong strategic approach, excellent

community involvement and well-founded partnerships. It also has a clear view of how it needs to take forward its reducing re-offending strategy in the future. The Panel highlighted Bolton's highly empirical approach to strategic development and review which ensures that operational policies remain relevant and effective. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Leicester City Council (Lead) Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (Joint)

Leicester City Council and its partners executed an excellent application. Demonstrated throughout was a wide and effective range of partnership working and commitment. This included high level political and official commitment from all partners proving cross-boundary co-operation and an equality of access to services. Initiatives relating to health, mental health and mentoring were provided. The mentoring initiative had proven reductions in re-offending. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

London Borough of Tower Hamlets demonstrated the effectiveness of their reducing re-offending strategy consistently across all three stages of the assessment process. Evidenced was strong support at the highest political and official levels. Underpinning the authority's operational agenda and partnership approach is good strategic analysis. The authority has good customer engagement inclusive of the wider community and is progressively improving the engagement of the private sector. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Sunderland City Council

Sunderland City Council's bid was particularly impressive in relation to outcomes. They have turned their vision and strategy into highly positive outcomes for offenders and the wider community. The authority has a real sense of achievement across the breadth of the theme with senior political and official commitment to the reducing re-offending agenda. Sunderland has developed integrated strategies that encompass both youth and adult offending. The authority is also strong on community engagement. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status

Salford City Council

Salford City Council

Salford City Council was recommended for short-list for its holistic approach and provision of tailored services to offenders, as well as raising awareness and targeting offenders. Activities to raising awareness, publicity campaigns and target hardening all contribute to the success of Salford's approach to reducing re-offending. Strong partnership working was also demonstrated throughout the assessment process. However the authority did not demonstrate sufficient depth of evidence across the full expanse of the criteria. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Tackling Climate Change

Introduction

The publication of the Government's new Climate Change Programme and the Energy Review during 2006 highlighted the increasing challenge of tackling climate change. Best value authorities share Government's determination to tackle Climate Change. Authorities are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership to local communities, raise awareness and help change behaviours. In addition, through their own powers and responsibilities they can have a significant influence over emissions in their local areas, and establish a leadership role in adapting to the impacts of unavoidable climate change.

The Climate Change Programme also highlighted the importance of adapting to the impacts of unavoidable climate change. Without taking action, authorities risk severe financial, social and environmental damage in their region, which could far exceed the cost of acting early.

There were 26 applications for this theme, of which eight were short-listed (Cambridgeshire County Council, City of London, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, London Borough of Islington, London Borough of Sutton, Middlesbrough Council, Woking Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council). Six authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities will have taken a strategic overview of the opportunities for reducing carbon emissions and have put in place a strategy for dealing with the inevitable impacts of climate change in their area. This included evidence that climate change is being considered in the development and implementation of all relevant strategies, plans and policies within the authority. Successful Beacon authorities clearly showed the balance between mitigation and adaptation. They also demonstrated innovation and had a high level of achievement across the criteria rather than isolated examples

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacons status
City of London
Eastleigh Borough Council
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Middlesbrough Council
Woking Borough Council
Worcestershire County Council

City of London

The City of London showed an excellent strategic approach to climate change, mitigation and adaptation. Particular strengths include a long track record of energy management. The authority's climate change adaptation strategy - Rising to the Challenge - was the first of its kind by a UK local authority. The authority demonstrated consistent engagement with the business sector and leadership towards a range of businesses, not just focused on big business. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Eastleigh Borough Council

Eastleigh Borough Council demonstrated strong vision, commitment, leadership and partnership working. The authority had number of innovative approaches to tackling climate change, as well as concrete achievements. They had a proven track record of engaging with their community including hard to reach groups. Eastleigh Borough Council was also strong on actions and outcomes; some extending beyond the normal scope for an authority of this nature (small, semi-rural district authority). The Panel felt assured the authority's approach to tackling climate change will be valuable to other smaller district authorities. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham demonstrated clear vision and commitment, coupled with excellent implementation strategies and innovative approaches to community involvement. The authority is making effective use of a wide range of partnership arrangements and was also able to demonstrate a good range of actions. The strategic drivers for climate change within the authority were comprehensive and concise. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Middlesbrough Council

Middlesbrough Council demonstrated good leadership and vision from members and senior management. This has resulted in a coherent strategic approach covering both mitigation and adaptation within the authority and the broader community. The authority is active in relevant local, sub-regional and regional partnerships. Also demonstrated was a consistent record of activity in addressing both the causes and effects of climate change. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Woking Borough Council

Woking Borough Council has a long track record on tackling climate change with considerable evidence of success, particularly in cutting its own emissions. The assessment process demonstrated that Woking Borough Council's work on climate change (mitigation) is well advanced. The authority demonstrated clear commitment from senior leadership including the Chief Executive and a cross-party working group on climate change. They also demonstrated an excellent ability to develop and work in partnership. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire County Council presented a strong case for Beacon status that shows leadership, vision and a good strategic approach with a reasonable balance between consideration of mitigation and adaptation. The authority showed enthusiasm and commitment of both members and officers to tackling climate change. In particular they demonstrated excellent cross-party working and dialogue between the county and their district councils. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacons status
Cambridgeshire County Council
London Borough of Islington
London Borough of Sutton

Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire County Council demonstrated strong commitment to tackling climate change. There was a noted lack of strategic priorities evidenced in respect to energy management. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon Status.

London Borough of Islington

The London Borough of Islington outlined a detailed climate change strategy covering both mitigation and adaptation which is progressing well. However, the impact is in its infancy. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

London Borough of Sutton

The London Borough of Sutton demonstrated clear leadership, vision and a coherent strategic approach. This authority has only, very recently, begun to consider adaptation and have no substantive work to date to be judged against. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon Status.

Transforming Services: Citizen Engagement and Empowerment

Introduction

Transforming service delivery around the citizen is an aspiration shared by the best public services. There is a growing recognition that, by working with users, organisations can create services that are more effective and have higher levels of customer satisfaction.

This is an evolving area, with scope for innovation and the opportunity to develop ground-breaking approaches to service delivery and engagement. Beacons of excellence will lead the way in transforming services and engaging and empowering citizens and (non)users; they will have a hugely important role in shaping the agenda for the future.

There are some strong examples of transformation around the citizen within individual services. The approach taken to transform the service, to engage and empower citizens and (non)users may vary.

There were 15 applications for this theme, of which five were short-listed (Chorley Borough Council, London Borough of Haringey, Portsmouth City Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council). Three authorities were recommended for Beacon status.

Decision Framework

Beacon authorities demonstrated a commitment to citizen engagement, empowerment and customer insights to transform their services. They did so by using a variety of different mechanisms for engagement, for delivery and for evidencing impact. Beacon authorities understood their communities and used this knowledge and understanding to ensure their services were accessible to all. They had effective partnerships as an element of their transformational change.

The authorities recommended for Beacon status demonstrated real outcomes in these areas from which others could learn.

Recommended for Beacon status
Chorley Borough Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Chorley Borough Council

The Panel was impressed by Chorley Borough Council which demonstrated examples of transforming services through engagement and empowerment, the use of customer insight and the systematic application of learning. Chorley not only demonstrated excellence, but real innovation in the way the authority reaches out to citizens, tries to understand their needs and has transformed services. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council demonstrated a commitment to citizens engagement and empowerment. The authority cited various examples specific to their local context. The key areas that make Staffordshire Moorlands stand out are their approach within a rural context where segmentation of citizens is less well-tested than in urban areas as well as their emphasis on building capacity within their communities. The authority is exemplary on community consultation where the information gathered is fed back into the delivery plan for ongoing development and training for elected members. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council demonstrated outstanding excellence across all the criteria. The authority's approach was fully embedded within strategy and policy, with strong and distributive leadership and a culture of putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and design. The use of a broad and complementary set of techniques supported a multi-dimensional approach, drawing together information in a holistic and coherent way in order to shape improvement plans. The culture of the authority was clearly supportive of citizen-focused services, with an exciting and deep-rooted ethos of continuous improvement and high expectations. The Panel agreed to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Not recommended for Beacon status
London Borough of Haringey
Portsmouth City Council

London Borough of Haringey

The London Borough of Haringey demonstrated some excellent examples of engaging with citizens. Enthusiasm for the service was portrayed by all levels of staff. Although Haringey has some excellent examples of engaging with citizens it was not sufficiently articulated how this is completely integrated. The Panel therefore agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Portsmouth City Council

The Panel appreciated the citizen-facing, diverse programme that Portsmouth outlined. This highlighted the authority's particular strengths in engaging with groups such as young people and tenants as well as showcasing some excellent partnership work. There remained substantial gaps in evidence against the criteria, specifically the use of customer insight, to merit a beacon award. The Panel agreed not to recommend this authority for Beacon status.

Strong and Prosperous Communities

Introduction

In a dynamic society with a rapidly changing external environment, examples of innovation and excellence in delivering customer-focused services inspire and encourage everyone.

Beacon authorities and their partners not only help to raise standards and performance amongst others who may be struggling, they also raise performance and morale amongst their own staff as local achievements gain national recognition. Increasingly government departments are eager to work closely with Beacons to promote sustainable service improvement and to develop and test government policy.

To this end, themes selected for Round 9 contributed to priorities set out in the White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'. The white paper and the Lyons review raised a new challenge.

The Beacon Scheme is rising to this challenge and for Round 9 the Advisory Panel has considered an additional recognition to applicants demonstrating a holistic approach, excellence and innovation across a range of services.

The following four authorities have been granted special commendations for demonstrating the above.

- Sheffield City Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council has a good improvement and innovative track record. The authority's leadership, strategy and vision are strong as is the engagement of partnerships. Excellence was shown by the intelligent use of data and the provision of a wide range of evidence. This authority has been at the forefront of leadership and vision. Its ambition has regenerated, reinvigorated and repositioned the City after a period of industrial decline. It's now a top ten city in the UK and an urban renaissance successful story in Europe. The authority has galvanised its diverse communities around neighbourhood and civic renewal, quality design and health improvements to create a better quality of life for its citizens. Sheffield City Council and its partners are now reaping the rewards of investing in a vision for a strong and prosperous community.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council demonstrated a high level of commitment at every stage of the assessment process. The authority has created an environment that is customer focused and open to learning. This is acknowledged from the grass roots upwards and

demonstrated across all services. The authority has a strong stable political leadership that works in close partnership with its officers and citizens in a visionary and innovative way. Tameside uses a wide range of community consultation styles and works proactively on cross borough initiatives in collaboration with authorities around it. It has for some time been leading the way on challenging issues such as procurement and intelligent commissioning, community cohesion and service transformation. This authority has long been an outstanding performer and continues to improve.

Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority (PTA)

Merseyside PTA's transport plan is well established and continuing to deliver customer service excellence and innovation. The authority is using their transport plan to help break the poverty cycle and to enhance community cohesion by opening up access to social, economic and environmental services across the sub-region. The authority has demonstrated an imaginative approach to community engagement and has used its consultation and performance data to re-design systems and services. Working with its partners such as the Primary Care trust, it has co-designed innovative services such as its calorie counter walking maps which open up the area to people and give them confidence to travel in a way that they would not have had before. The Panel felt this authority to have the best practice in both technical expertise and common sense know-how.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is no ordinary Best Value authority. Time and again, this authority has demonstrated impressive results and outcomes to improve the well-being of its communities. This is also the case with reducing health inequalities. The authority translated the criteria for this theme to fit its core fire and rescue role and responsibilities, enthusiastically taking up the baton of community leadership. The authority prioritises the most socially excluded groups, engaging them to co-design and co-produce service improvements and innovations. This is confident authority that embarked on improvement and has continued on an upward trajectory, where strategic leadership and ownership are meshed with front-line delivery.