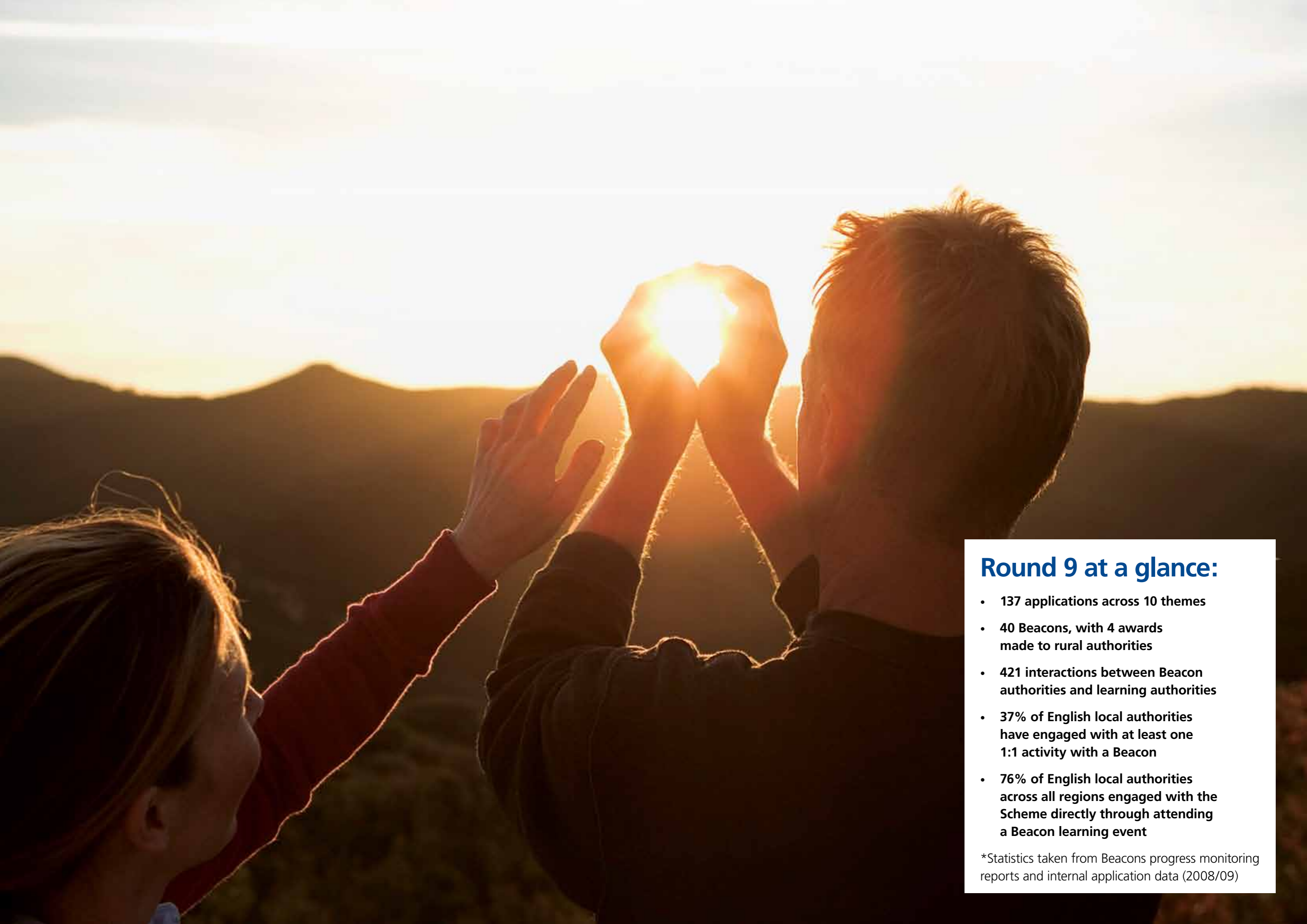




*Excellence in  
Local Government*

# Round 9 Annual Report of the Beacon Scheme 2008/2009



## Round 9 at a glance:

- 137 applications across 10 themes
- 40 Beacons, with 4 awards made to rural authorities
- 421 interactions between Beacon authorities and learning authorities
- 37% of English local authorities have engaged with at least one 1:1 activity with a Beacon
- 76% of English local authorities across all regions engaged with the Scheme directly through attending a Beacon learning event

\*Statistics taken from Beacons progress monitoring reports and internal application data (2008/09)

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# Introduction

**This report covers the period in which the Round 9 Beacons were sharing their learning and practice with others, from March 2008 until June 2009. They were supported by the IDeA and funded by CLG to pass on their knowledge and experience to others through peer to peer learning, and a varied programme of events and activities. Round 9 Beacons ceased their formal role in dissemination at the end of June 2009, although many continue to provide advice and support in an informal capacity. The Beacon Scheme has a unique place in central and local government as the only award scheme with a dissemination element. This report looks back at Round 9, and the Beacon Scheme remains an important source of information and ideas for the new Local Innovation and Awards scheme.**

What key messages do Round 9 Beacon authorities offer us, as we move into the Local Innovation Award Scheme? Firstly, they harnessed the enormous power of bringing peers together to exchange information and to find solutions to problems. Independent research from Warwick Business School (Learning, Improvement and Innovation – Final Report of the Beacon Scheme Evaluation, 2008) has shown that the Beacon Scheme is effective in transferring learning, and 50% of survey respondents stated that engagement with a Beacon authority accelerated change in strategy/policy. Peer to peer learning already happens in local government, but Beacons add a new dimension through the validation of good practice and through the commitment of Beacons themselves to reach others and champion their local projects. This annual report is packed with examples of such intensive learning as well as examples of innovation from Beacons themselves.

Also, it is worth noting the extensive reach of the Beacon Scheme. It would not be possible to centrally fund a national learning programme that covered relevant issues from climate change to reducing re-offending, yet by using peer learning, free advice and support from Beacons, the scheme has reached a large number of authorities up and down the country.

Given the significant challenges brought about by the recession, local authorities need to do even better in taking responsibility for their own improvement, working with their partners and being open to learning about what's working in other areas of the public and private sectors. This means sharing ideas and innovation, being open to challenge and accepting support from others when it is needed – these are the core principles of the Beacon Scheme.

Beacons in Round 9 have exploited new technology in their learning activities, with online communities of practice and web based material becoming increasingly popular for sharing information. During Round 9 we saw a wider range and variety of learning methods used by Beacons, with a move away from large events and conferences towards smaller and more tailored local and regional events.

Through continuous improvement, redesign and transition into the Local Innovation Awards Scheme we can expect to build on and extend the considerable impact that the Beacon Scheme has already had.

This report, which showcases the ongoing achievements of 2008/09 Beacons, demonstrates just how wide scale and far-reaching that impact already is in practical terms, and how ambitious we need to be to improve on this baseline for the future as the focus shifts from documenting best practice to identifying new ideas and innovation in local government.

# Spotlight on Impact

## Case Study

**Councillor Mellon, Lead Member for Children's services in Nottingham City Council, visited Leicester City Council – a Care Matters Beacon.**

Having recently been elected, Councillor Mellon felt that his corporate care committee was not working effectively and so researched the approach neighbouring authorities were using.

He discovered that Leicester City Council was awarded Beacon Status for the Care Matters theme. Councillor Mellon arranged to visit Leicester City Council, to learn about how this Beacon provided a child-centred service. He spent a day with the Chief Executive, lead officers and the leader of the council and was also given the opportunity to sit in on Leicester's corporate parenting board's committee meeting.



Councillor Mellon cited several benefits of his experience of working with this Beacon and can attribute a great deal of what has happened back in Nottingham to his contact with and learning from Leicester City's strategy.

Nottingham now has a fully functional and effective parenting board. A project very similar to Leicester's Flying Fish project (an initiative that supports young people aged 16 - 21 who are leaving care into employment, training or education) is also well underway in Nottingham.

In the last round of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), inspectors rated children's services in Nottingham as 'performing well', highlighting the authority's commitment to improvement, excellent leadership and its ability to build capacity.



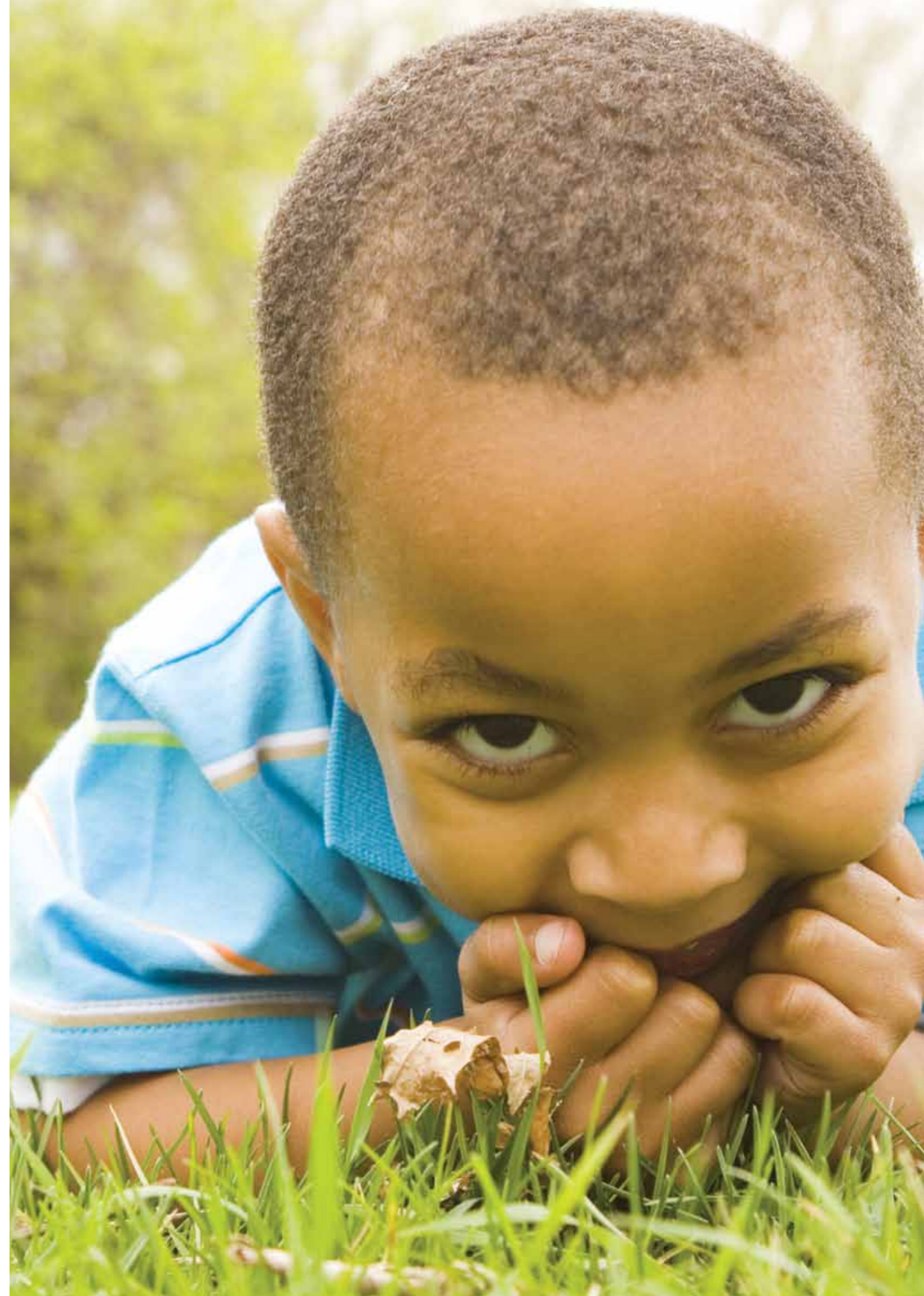
# Equalities and Diversity

## Embedding equality and diversity in the Beacon Scheme

Many of the themes in Round 9 have equalities and diversity at the core. Over the past three years the IDeA and the Beacon Panel have made a concerted effort to ensure that principles of equality and diversity are also fully embedded throughout the operation of the scheme.

In 2009/10 the IDeA conducted two Equality Impact Assessments of the Beacon Scheme including the latest stage 3 impact assessment in April 2009. The main purpose was to measure how well round 9 and 10 Beacons were performing on equalities and diversity (E&D) and whether mainstreaming of the E&D criteria was working. This report highlighted the following best practice in rounds 9 and 10:

- The Beacon Scheme was good at evidencing progress as part of the IDeA's 2008 and 2009 Equality Action Plan, and the Beacon team contributing to the Agency's aspiration to achieve 'Excellent' as part of the new Equality Framework for Local Government
- There was targeted support for assessors, Government theme leads and IDeA theme consultants working with the Beacons (e.g. a list of E&D questions to take with them on assessment specifically for their theme). This demonstrates an understanding that all those working on behalf of the Beacons need to be equipped with the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills to push for good equality outcomes amongst Beacon authorities
- There are examples of successful applicants being inclusive in their approach by working with local equality groups to jointly plan their Beacon tenure and in setting challenging equality monitoring targets. One Round 9 South East authority worked with equality groups to impact assess their approach
- The quality of evidence about the intentions of the applicants and their focus on equality (compared with the findings from the Phase 1 and 2 reviews) was significantly improved. Applicants in Round 9 have significantly improved their equality and diversity focus – both in terms of the content of the application form and in what they actually achieved or are intending to achieve.



# Equalities and Diversity

We have also been encouraging the Beacons to actively address equalities issues through their Beacon year. Here are some examples of successful practices in addressing disadvantage and equality:

## Transforming Services

Learning activities that focused specifically on equality and diversity included a series of dedicated case studies. One case study focused on Staffordshire Moorlands work to promote rural access and on improving the equality of access to council services across rural and remote areas. To see the case study visit the Beacons website ([www.beacons.idea.gov.uk](http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk)) and access the Transforming Services theme.

## Reducing Health Inequalities

The Beacons have engaged with a diverse range of groups in their localities including young white women in Coventry; South Asian taxi drivers in Sheffield; elderly residents in Merseyside; young people in Durham; economically disadvantaged estate residents in Greenwich and those with accessibility needs in Sunderland.

In the early part of the year, the Beacons produced a joint article highlighting equalities good practice and innovative local initiatives. This included how Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has made clear links between fire risk and health inequalities and how the authority works imaginatively with partners to assist those who are most vulnerable and improve the health of the local population. The article was published online and received a good response from website and Communities of Practice visitors. To see the article visit the Beacons website ([www.beacons.idea.gov.uk](http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk)) and access the Reducing Health inequalities theme.

Theme Reports

# Better Brighter Futures

## The Beacons

- Cumbria County Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Wolverhampton City Council

## Theme summary

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. The 14-19 reforms aim to ensure that all young people will want to stay in learning post-16.

The authorities awarded beacon status in this theme demonstrated strong collaborative working with a range of partners and stakeholders as well as innovative ideas in teaching and learning.

## Theme at a glance:

- 34% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 17 peer-peer projects initiated

*"The Beacon learning visit provided some thoughtful solutions that can be applied back in my area"* - Partnership Co-ordinator in North West Leicestershire

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Sheffield City Council** has led a programme of 'Quality Network' and 'Engineering Network' events. A large number of local authorities have attended Sheffield's events and many of them report that Sheffield's work has been helpful in influencing future developments. For example **Leeds City Council** is considering a different approach to employer engagement and **Rotherham Metropolitan City Council** has adopted a 'pooled pot' funding and school charging approach as a result of what they have heard from Sheffield City Council.

**Cumbria County Council** worked with a large number of authorities on a one-to-one basis over the beacon year. This has included working to support **Tameside Borough Council** with their quality assurance manual.

**Sheffield City Council** worked closely with a network of over one hundred 14-19 coordinators across the country to offer peer support. The relationship started off with people going to Sheffield for advice but the relationships have developed into partnerships that are mutually beneficial. Close working exists with **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Borough Council, Coventry City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.**



## Event highlights

### Joint Beacons Learning Exchange – Better Brighter Futures and Care Matters, September 2009, Birmingham

- 114 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 39 local authorities represented
- 90% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 90% of delegates agreed that the event provided a basis for further improvement

### National Union for Teachers Conference, November 2008

**Wolverhampton Council** had a key note slot at the event and used the conference to launch its NUT/UCU 14-19 Policy Statement

## Engaging with government departments

All the Beacons worked with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), and the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) on policy development. Wolverhampton specifically worked with DCSF on timetabling, area prospectus, information, advice and guidance and a foundation learning tier. Wolverhampton also worked with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on the National Assessment Agency and the foundation learning tier.

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

Cumbria County Council is an exemplar of delivery in a sparse rural environment. As well as a strong strategic partnership, there are five 'travel to learn' area 14-19 partnerships. These recognise the need to work collaboratively to develop local solutions across such a sizeable area. To address issues raised by its rural characteristics, Cumbria has used ICT innovatively to provide information, advice and guidance via 'Plan-It' an electronic individual learning plan. It allows young people to be better prepared for transition at the end of Key Stage 4.

Sheffield's 14-19 partnership, known as Learn for Life (L4L) is closely linked to the target sectors identified in the city's economic strategy. The partnership has established local diploma entitlement partnerships that bring employers and the educational community together to plan for curriculum and qualification reform. This includes high quality vocational facilities in partnership with employers, a retail training facility at the Meadowhall retail complex and a construction design centre sponsored by national building firms.

## Publications

The Beacons published a high-level report which identified the key elements and ways of working towards the government's 14-19 reforms in education and training. The report looks at the three Beacon authorities and three other authorities where good practice has been identified. It looks at how success in implementing the reforms depends most of all on local partners and provided information on how the six partnerships are working on the key areas of curriculum and learner offer, access and learning infrastructure, management and strategic vision. The report had nationwide distribution.



# Better Public Places

## The Beacons

- Darlington Borough Council
- London Borough of Sutton
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Tyndale District Council (now part of Northumberland County Council)

## Theme summary

Well designed, managed and maintained public spaces make an important contribution to the quality of life and community well-being. This theme covers a wide range of services and functions that affect the quality of public spaces.

The Better Public Places beacon year took place against the background of the credit crunch, failing banks and the financial restrictions for building and development. Despite this, the Beacons were able to share their processes 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 Council prides itself on being a guardian of the district’s very high-quality environment and in promoting quality public places in the district”*** – Leader of the Council, Tyndale District Council now Northumberland Council

## Theme at a glance

- 20% of all local authorities that have attended a learning activity
- 6 peer-peer projects initiated

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Darlington Borough Council** worked through the summer of 2008 to raise the profile of parks and open spaces through a campaign called **‘Perfectly Placed’** which targeted residents, other local authorities and central government. As a result of this promotion **Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council** was impressed with the annual levy arrangements for maintenance at Darlington’s West Park and is considering the introduction of a similar programme in the Rochdale area.

Several peer support activities took place in the course of the Beacon year. For example Chesterfield Borough Council discussed with Rotherham its approach to dealing with juvenile litterers. Cardiff Council is using Sheffield’s management plans for public spaces as the base for their own management planning.

***“Undoubtedly we will be using many of the features you have successfully developed”***. Delegate, LB Hillingdon – Rotherham Open Day



## Event highlights

### Learning Exchange Event, September 2008, London

- 74 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 23 local authorities represented

### Beacon innovation in service delivery

***“The benefits of Beacon work are evident on a daily basis. Children and parents are always telling us about the good experiences they have had at the Phoenix Centre”*** – Key Worker, The Phoenix Centre, LB Sutton

Tyndale District Council was incorporated into Northumberland Council but despite the challenges faced by the change, and time constraints, the authority successfully developed special projects identified by the Parish Councils as a celebration of their beacon status.

Sheffield continues to develop its City Centre Ambassador Scheme and a great deal of

interest was generated, bringing local authority national and international visitors to the City Centre. The scheme started as a 12 month project that gave six unemployed people clearly defined full time roles within the newly formed City Centre Management Team. The authority hosted two visits by delegates from Malta who were so impressed with the city centre and the Ambassadors Scheme that they are now working in conjunction with Sheffield who are advising on setting up a similar scheme in Malta.

## Regional activity

A member of Darlington’s beacon team spoke at the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) conference in December 2008. The focus was on ‘Working with Partners’ and the key note speaker used Darlington’s West Park project as an example of strong and successful partnership working. Darlington is also involved in the Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Process, engaging with One North East, the Environment Agency, Natural England, CABE Space and others.



# Care matters: improving the outcomes for children in care

## The Beacons

- Leicester City Council
- South Gloucestershire Council

## Theme summary

Despite some improvement in recent years, there are still significant gaps between the outcomes achieved by children in care and those achieved by all children. There is a clear need to accelerate the pace of change towards the vision outlined in the Care Matters agenda and ultimately to ensure that all children in care have a better childhood and better future.

The Beacons in this theme have demonstrated and shared their best practice in arrangements to ensure children are involved in the decision-making process, effective corporate parenting and joint planning and delivery processes with a range of key partners.



## Theme at a glance

- 12% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 18 peer-peer projects initiated

***“New innovations...new ideas to take back...very informative/practical”***

- Delegate from national learning exchange conference (September 2008)

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Nottingham City Council** attended **Leicester City Council’s** Corporate Parenting Forum meeting, to learn from actual practice and to incorporate this into emerging arrangements locally.

An IDeA induction event for new **Lead Members**, held in York (July 2008) included a session on corporate parenting led by Leicester City.

***“The open dialogue and professional response from all those colleagues that we met made the day of great use.”*** – Elected Member, Delegate - IDeA induction event

**South Gloucestershire Council** logged a wide range of requests for support from the sector. This included requests from **Gloucestershire, Poole, Bournemouth** and Cornwall Council’s for specific information about the ‘What Next’ programme – an initiative designed to raise the aspirations and skills base of children in care to realize the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda. This was followed by a visit from Gloucestershire County Council with interest in rewards and payments for young people.

## Event highlights

### **Joint Beacons Learning Exchange – Better Brighter Futures and Care Matters, September 2009, Birmingham**

- 114 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 39 local authorities represented
- 90% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 90% of delegates agreed that the event provided a basis for further improvement

### **Improving the life chances of children in care, May 2008**

The Beacons led a popular workshop focusing on ‘successful corporate parenting through youth engagement’.

Online activity was also a feature of dissemination. **Paul Barber**, the actor famed for his roles in the ‘Full Monty’ and ‘Only Fools and Horses’, participated in the Beacon Scheme’s **Community of Practice hot seat**. This live session was an online opportunity for people to ask Paul questions relating to his experiences in care, and his thoughts on current care issues. Over 20 local government officers participated in the hour-long session: <http://www.Beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=9225611>

## Regional activity

Leicester City Council spoke at the Government Office East Midlands (GOEM) and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services Care Matters implementation plan seminar in Nottingham (June 2008). In association with the Regional Learning Project, Leicester City also led a workshop session on participation and children’s rights for the Every Child Matters Conference held at the Riverside Centre in Derby (July 2008).

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

South Gloucestershire’s ‘in house’ approach to work experience for looked after young people was distinctly different from Leicester City’s ‘external’ model. This has informed and inspired Leicester City to develop its own ‘in house’ arrangements further. These arrangements are currently being considered for implementation, where the whole council will have a chance to support young people in its care with work experience, work shadowing and apprenticeship opportunities.

Leicester City Council developed a ‘short course’ centre where children attend short six week GCSE courses. South Gloucestershire sent two members of staff from their education unit for children in care to visit the centre. They returned very enthused and worked with the council to use the short course concept to develop their own service to meet local needs back in South Gloucestershire.

Building on the ‘participation by children and young people’ aspect of Leicester City’s service, the council’s substantive legacy product is the introduction of a new user ambassador role. This innovative idea is a unique opportunity for an adult who has formerly been in the care of the city council to be employed as a full time consultant. Their insight and life experience will inform the council’s practice and will provide a useful point of support for children and young people in care. It is a full time post that comes with on the job training and educational support. The post holder will be replaced every 2 years, offering new care leavers the opportunity to benefit from this opportunity. It is hoped that this role will become Leicester City’s own lasting beacon legacy.

# Dignity in care

## The Beacons

- Warrington Borough Council

## Theme summary

Dignity in care relates to the kind of care which supports and promotes, and does not undermine a person's self respect. It includes providing an environment, and the necessary actions, to assist people to maintain autonomy, control and a quality of life that can reasonably be expected by anyone within society regardless of any difference.

Warrington Borough Council set a very high standard and was the sole award winner in this theme. The authority demonstrated commitment, and dignity in care is an approach that has been mainstreamed in adult services. This has also been built into the authority's commissioning model. The authority's approach to dissemination allowed for an extremely successful beacon year.

## Theme at a glance

- 5% of local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 17 peer-peer projects initiated

***"We were inspired by their passion for the area they serve"*** – Delegate, Warrington Open Day – November 2008

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Warrington** developed an on-going relationship with care specialists at the **London Borough of Greenwich**, who were particularly interested in Warrington's care audit tool. Warrington, over a series of meetings and visits, advised on how to use the tool, how to engage service users for the purpose of the audit and how to roll out the audit locally.

Despite being the only Beacon in this theme, and never before having been a Beacon, Warrington worked tirelessly with a wide range of authorities providing advice and guidance on all aspects of care. This included work with the London Borough of Haringey around how the dignity champion role has been applied in Warrington and support to the London Borough of Newham in relation to the development of a web-based support directory for carers and service users.



## Event highlights

### **Joint Learning Exchange Event with Round 10 Supporting Independent living for disabled adults Beacons, September 2009, Manchester**

- 74 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 42 local authorities represented
- 75% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 87% said the event provided a basis for further improvement

### **Care Services Improvement Partnership conference "Dignity behind closed doors", March 2008**

**Warrington Borough Council National Open Day, November 2008** – 47 delegates attended, 100% thought the event was useful or very useful

***"I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and had gained a lot of highly useful information as well as inspiration to develop practices in my own locality"***  
– Delegate, Warrington Open Day

**National Dignity Champions Conference** – Warrington delivered a presentation on health and social care in BME communities and also led a workshop focusing on care commissioning.

**Warrington** hosted a **Czech** delegation, who visited Warrington in September 2008 to learn about Warrington's approach and how they might adopt some of the ideas back in the Czech Republic.

Warrington's Director of Adult Care, had several meetings with a delegation of officials from Inner Mongolia on issues relating to Social Care.

In March 2008 Warrington hosted a ministerial visit by **Kevin Brennan MP**. The visit raised the profile of Warrington's care team and put the authority on the map for having the best care services in the country.

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

A toolkit on Warrington's "checking out" process was developed. The toolkit focuses on training adults with learning disabilities to go out and talk to other adults with learning disabilities about the care they receive. Reports are given back to service providers to help them improve. The authority is now looking to develop the toolkit for older people, using a similar process called 'your life your say'. Warrington responded to interest shown in this scheme and developed a training package so that other authorities can train their own service users.

## Legacy

A resource for **elected members** and **chairs of scrutiny**, to support them on conducting effective scrutinising of dignity in care, has been developed. The Centre for Public Scrutiny was commissioned to write the package, which has been piloted in Warrington and further pilots are to be run in Bradford.



# Improving Accessibility

## The Beacons

- Lancashire County Council
- London Borough of Greenwich
- Merseyside PTA (**Lead**) with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council (**Lead**) with Nottingham City Council
- Peterborough City Council

## Theme Summary

Accessibility planning is about helping people, particularly those most in need, to reach the jobs and services they require. Beacon authorities demonstrated that they are successfully addressing the barriers that prevent people from accessing services, such as long journeys, the physical accessibility of transport, fear of crime and lack of information on existing services.

## Theme at a glance

- 13% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 14 peer-peer projects initiated

***“This session was extremely useful as we are considering expanding our smartcards and would like to introduce a Works Perks type scheme”***

Delegate, Derbyshire County Council

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Peterborough City Council** coached **Milton Keynes Council** on customizing its individualised travel marketing project. The council conducted a similar project for new residential areas – residents now receive a range of transport information with the ability to request further information.

***“The visit was inspiring and provided a good stimulus for us to develop and improve our service”*** - visitor to the London Borough of Greenwich

The Beacons in this theme demonstrated how cost effective and tangible schemes to improve accessibility can be developed in local areas. North East Lincolnshire Council requested guidance from Peterborough with regards to route branding installations on key walking and cycling routes. Peterborough also hosted a visit by Surrey County Council who was in the process of setting up an accessibility working group. Post the visit, Surrey made a number of recommendations based on the adoption of several of Peterborough’s initiatives.

Merseytravel hosted a visit from a delegation from Centro, Solihull and Walsall who were all particularly interested in setting up a scooter scheme similar to Merseytravel’s Scooter Commuter initiative.



## Event highlights

### Learning Exchange Event, May 2008, London

- 75 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 32 local authorities represented
- 100% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 100% of delegates said the event provided them with a basis for further improvement

**Nottinghamshire partnership accessibility workshops** - The events introduced around 100 delegates from the public and voluntary sectors to the successful strategies employed by the councils to tackle complex aspects of accessibility planning.

**Peterborough Open Day** - highlighted the Travel Choice initiative, which helps people to select sustainable travel alternatives that create a healthier, safer and more vibrant city, and the authority’s other award winning accessible services.

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

**The Nottinghamshire Partnership** used some of its beacon grant to pilot a Wheel’s to Work-based programme to improve access to employment and training opportunities for people in urban and suburban areas, by providing them with a bicycle for a minimal fee, along with free cycle training.

# Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

## The Beacons

- London Borough of Croydon
- Leeds City Council
- South Tyneside Council

## Theme summary

Through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Local Area Agreements (LAAs) councils, working with their partners locally, have the opportunity to develop a shared vision and to tackle the most important, cross cutting issues facing their local communities.

The Beacons have demonstrated that their LSPs bring together organizations from the public, private and voluntary sectors to effectively define and respond to local priorities and use their LAAs as the key mechanism through which those priorities can be addressed.

## Theme at a glance

- 40% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 23 peer-peer projects initiated

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Leeds City Council** visited a newly formed **East Cheshire Council** and ran a workshop to help them set up a new LSP framework.

The Chief Executive of the **London Borough of Croydon** led a discussion on improving business involvement with the **London Borough of Bexley's** Local Strategic Partnership in October 2008.



## Event highlights

### Learning Exchange Event, June 2008

- 78 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 38 local authorities represented
- 97% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 96% said the event provided a basis for further improvement

**Leeds Borough Council Open Day** – 120 delegates attended from 39 local authorities

## Engaging with government departments

CLG is using beacon examples with Ministers in discussions about policy development and delivery mechanisms. The Audit Commission commissioned research into LSPs and has produced a report. The three Beacon authorities were part of a select audience in February 2009, to feed back on the draft report before it was published.

## Regional work

The Chief Executive of South Tyneside is sponsoring the “partnerships” project, one of a set of key work programmes set out by the North East Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The three year project will support local partnerships and LAA delivery. Improving third sector engagement is an important aspect of the project, and this is an area where South Tyneside developed a model of engagement and involvement.

## Legacy

Leeds and South Tyneside Councils have collaborated to develop a mentoring package for LAA delivery aimed at newly formed unitaries. The package has been shared with CLG and the department is now seeking funding to enable the roll out of the offering and is discussing with RIEPS, how it can be supported.



# Reducing Health Inequalities

## The Beacons

- Coventry City Council
- Derwentside District Council – now Durham County Council
- London Borough of Greenwich
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Sheffield City Council
- Sunderland City Council

## Theme summary

Despite increased national prosperity, wider opportunity and increasing life expectancy for all, the gap in life expectancy and infant mortality between different social groups remains a major challenge.

Beacon authorities have recognized their crucial role in supporting delivery of the government's 2010 target to reduce health inequalities, and are taking action to tackle the wider determinants of inequalities, to close the gap over the longer term.

## Theme at a glance:

- 20% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 18 peer-peer projects initiated

***“Thank you so much – I have gone back to my authority energised. I will particularly continue the debate in my PCT regarding integration, co-location and partnership working to deliver better services – you are doing such fantastic, inspiring work.”*** - Delegate, Sunderland City Council's Beacon conference

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Sheffield City Council** provided support to **Newcastle City Council** in reconfiguring their health and wellbeing partnership. Sheffield's Health and Wellbeing Manager spent a day in Newcastle providing feedback on Sheffield's approach and documentation such as manager job descriptions.

A representative from the **Northamptonshire PCT** visited **Coventry** to find out more about the work on men's health in Sikh temples (Gurdwaras). Northamptonshire PCT found the visit very useful, and as a result had engaged with the services in their hospital to look into supporting this type of initiative.

## Event highlights

**UK Public Health Association (UKPHA) Annual Conference, April 2008** – the Beacons showcased best practice in political and organizational leadership, how to expand workforce of health professionals and partnership and co-production.

**Pfizer Foundation Symposium, June 2008**  
The Pfizer Foundation was gold sponsor for this theme and proved to be a strong support in delivering activities. The Beacon authorities hosted three joint workshops at the annual Pfizer Foundation Symposium in June 2008 on innovative ways of working with partners, developing targeted programmes and ensuring impact on the health of local communities. The event was well attended by a range of local authorities, primary care trusts, third sector organisations and central government departments.

**National Stakeholder Forum (NSF), July 2008** - the Beacons combined to share their work and experience in reducing health inequalities with the NSF members and with the Secretary of State. The NSF commented that the Beacons' contribution provided an excellent opportunity to listen to localities from around the country speak about how to make a difference.

## Regional activity

The Beacons in this theme have worked with authorities and organisations in Yorkshire and Humber, London, the Midlands, the North East and the North West. Their impact has been far-reaching. A good example can be found with London Borough of Greenwich's work with the North East Healthy Communities Learning Network (which encompasses 25 local authorities). The London Borough of Greenwich ran a one day taster of the Health: Everyone's Business course.

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

Since Derwentside became part of Durham County Council as part of the local government re-organisation, the authority has been sharing their examples of good practice, some of which are now being implemented across County Durham. For example, Durham County Council are working jointly with the Primary Care Trust to produce a Health Inequalities Monitoring Strategy, to determine where initiatives to reduce health inequalities should be focused across the County, based on the original model from Derwentside.

## Publications

Coventry and Durham produced DVDs highlighting particular areas of local concern. Coventry used celebrity figures to promote breastfeeding amongst young white women whilst Durham produced "Butt Out" and "Wasted" to raise awareness of smoking and drinking and the impact on the health and wellbeing of young people.

## Policy Development

The Beacons established links with the Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010 (Marmot Review) team. The review will be proposing an evidence based strategy for reducing health inequalities after 2010, particularly looking into strategies to deal with the social determinants of health – this will form the lasting legacy from the reducing health inequalities Beacons.

## Legacy

The exemplar award holders collaborated with the IDeA Healthy Communities team and the Department of Health to produce the publication 'Reducing health inequalities: Beacon and Beyond'. The publication focuses on the strategic levers used by the beacon authorities to help reduce health inequalities locally. This was launched on the 24th November 2009, at the Reducing Health Inequalities Beacon Legacy Conference, in London. The event was well attended with over 100 delegates by key officers and elected members from over 25 local authorities and primary care trusts. The publication can be accessed from the IDeA's website: [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk).



# Reducing Re-offending

## The Beacons

- Sunderland City Council
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Leicester County Council (**Lead**) with Melton Borough Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (**Joint**)

## Theme summary

Society pays a high cost for re-offending and the Social Inclusion Unit estimates the total cost of re-offending at £11 billion per year. The government's reducing reoffending plan sets out seven pathways that will help to end the cycle of offending behaviour.

The Beacons have demonstrated how LSPs and LAAs can have a positive effect in joining up plans to tackle re-offending at a strategic level and how effective access to services is essential for ex-offenders to start rebuilding their lives.

## Theme at a glance

- 16 of all local authorities that have attended a learning activity
- 15 peer-peer projects initiated

***"An excellent, thought provoking conference with some good ideas that I can use in the future"*** –

Delegate, Sunderland Reducing Re-offending Conference – January 2009

## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

The **London Boroughs of Lambeth and Haringey** have become interested in creating resettlement development officer posts, having found out how well this approach has worked in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and progress in achieving this is underway.

The **London Borough of Tower Hamlets** has supported the **London Borough of Islington** to conduct a scrutiny review into supporting offenders and ex-offenders.

## Event highlights

### Learning Exchange Event, September 2008

- 118 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 45 local authorities represented
- 100% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 86% said the event provided them with a basis for further improvement

**Bolton MBC and Sunderland City Council National Conference, Stadium of Light, Sunderland** - 60 delegates attended including elected members; 93% of delegates stated that the conference was productive/constructive; more than 2 thirds agreed that the conference had given them new ways to reduce re-offending.

The **London Borough of Tower Hamlets** delivered a key note presentation to the Police Liaison Committee on resettlement work. This was referred to the Cabinet Office, resulting in the Minister for the Third Sector, Kevin Brennan, subsequently referencing Tower Hamlets' resettlement work in his speech to the Association of Directors of Adult and Social Services (ADASS) National Conference.

**Bolton's** work on youth justice featured on the **BBC's Panorama** programme, and a news article on **Sunderland's** work was aired on **Radio Four's Today** programme.



## Regional activity

Bolton Metropolitan Council has been active in engaging regional bodies. The authority has worked with the North West Regional Offender Management Office to discuss the challenges within crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRP) as part of a research project into reducing re-offending.

## Beacon innovation in service delivery

During the course of the beacon year Bolton launched FUSE – an integrated offender management project. Particular areas of focus included: burglary, domestic violence, vehicle crime and serious violent crime. The authority is also one of a number of authorities piloting community panels for unpaid work.

A learning tool, that maps the life of an offender from the age of 3 and identifies routes out of offending, has been developed by the Leicestershire Partnership. The tool includes costs relating to criminal justice and fostering. It is aimed at managers and designed so that a local authority will be able to understand its role in this agenda.

**Sunderland City Council's** resettlement and aftercare programme has an 86% success rate in moving adults to independence without further offending. Young offenders with satisfactory accommodation improved from 92% to 99% while young offenders in suitable education, training and employment, has improved from 76% to 90%.

## Engaging with government departments

The Beacons have been actively engaged in influencing the national agenda for reducing re-offending.

The Sunderland Youth Offending Service has been consulted on issues such as data segmentation by the Youth Justice Board and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets continues to work with the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service on Muslim ex-offenders and community chaplaincy. A delegation from the Social Exclusion Taskforce also visited Tower Hamlets to explore the authority's approach to working with women offenders.

The Leicestershire partnership prepared a report for the Justice Committee and the United Kingdom Parliament as part of an investigation into the costs of the criminal justice system. The report was submitted in March 2009.

## Legacy

The Beacons have worked with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Home Office to create a best practice guide to reducing reoffending, framed around the Home Office Hallmarks for effective partnerships.

This guide was launched at the LGA Conference 2009, and is available on-line and via NOMS. The product was specifically aimed at supporting CDRP's (and specifically the Probation Service) to undertake the new duties relating to reducing re-offending that will come into force in 2010.

# Tackling Climate Change

## The Beacons

- City of London
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Woking Borough Council
- Worcestershire County Council

## Theme summary

With tackling climate change being a key priority on the national agenda, the Beacons in this theme had a highly active beacon year. Learning activities enabled the Beacons to demonstrate how the use of existing powers and responsibilities can have a significant influence over emissions in local areas, and how local authorities can help establish a leadership role in adapting to the impact of unavoidable climate change.

## Theme at a glance

- 54% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 38 peer-peer projects initiated

***“Your presentation provided not only the background to the concept, but also such enthusiasm and passion for tackling climate change. It was totally inspiring”.***

Delegate, Tackling Change Learning Exchange Event, September 2008



## Spotlight on peer-peer exchange

**Bassetlaw District Council** spent time with **Woking Borough Council's**, learning about its travel planning and car rental scheme with the view to adopting a similar scheme locally.

**The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham** has provided on-going support to **Bradford City Council** in relation to adaption to climate change and has also supported work in relation to local climate impact profiles (LCLIPs) and planning conditions in the **London Borough of Redbridge**.

**The London Borough of Haringey** was specifically interested in **Middlesbrough's** approach to CO2 measuring and in particular how similar the methods of monitoring were to the Energy Saving Trusts TrACE (tracking, action on carbon emissions) tool.

## Event highlights

### Tackling Climate Change Learning Exchange Event, September 2009

- 145 delegates in attendance including elected members
- 64 local authorities represented
- 94% of delegates agreed that the overall quality of the event was either very good or excellent
- 94% said the event provided a basis for further improvement

### International Symposium, October 2009

- 83 delegates in attendance including 13 lead and senior elected members
- 33 local authorities represented

## Engaging with government departments

In the early part of the year, the Beacons were asked to participate in a consultation exercise with the specialist advisor to the Secretary of State, in relation to facilitating the growth of green infrastructure. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham also got involved in the consultation for the Thames Gateway Eco-Region initiative.

## International sharing

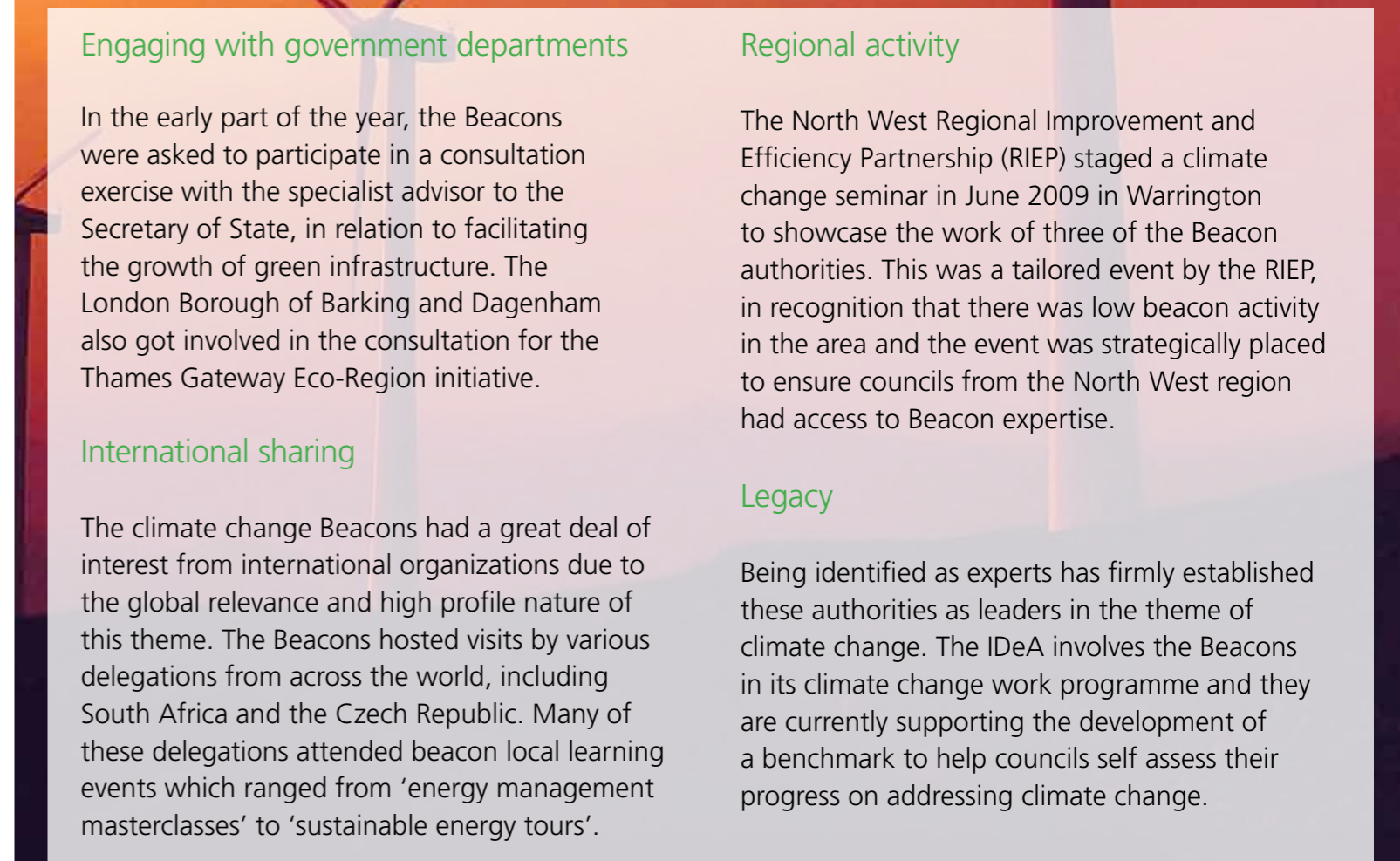
The climate change Beacons had a great deal of interest from international organizations due to the global relevance and high profile nature of this theme. The Beacons hosted visits by various delegations from across the world, including South Africa and the Czech Republic. Many of these delegations attended beacon local learning events which ranged from 'energy management masterclasses' to 'sustainable energy tours'.

## Regional activity

The North West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) staged a climate change seminar in June 2009 in Warrington to showcase the work of three of the Beacon authorities. This was a tailored event by the RIEP, in recognition that there was low beacon activity in the area and the event was strategically placed to ensure councils from the North West region had access to Beacon expertise.

## Legacy

Being identified as experts has firmly established these authorities as leaders in the theme of climate change. The IDeA involves the Beacons in its climate change work programme and they are currently supporting the development of a benchmark to help councils self assess their progress on addressing climate change.



# Transforming services: citizen engagement and empowerment

## The Beacons

- Chorley Borough Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

## Theme summary

There is recognition that by engaging and empowering citizens, organizations can create services that are more effective, responsive and have higher levels of customer satisfaction.

The Beacons in this theme have demonstrated innovation and ground breaking approaches to citizen empowerment and service transformation, placing the customer experience and service journey at the heart of their work.

## Theme at a glance

- 42% of all local authorities have attended a learning activity
- 39 peer-peer projects initiated

**“[the event] Inspired me to do things differently”** Delegate at National Learning Exchange (April 2009)



## Peer support activity

**Staffordshire Moorlands** hosted a visit from **Tamworth District Council** on the council's approach to developing a one stop shop and call centre. A delegation from **Aylesbury Vale District Council** and **Chiltern District Council** also explored Staffordshire Moorlands' one stop shops and customer service arrangements.

**Chorley** hosted separate visits from **Pendle Council** and **South Lakeland District Council** to discuss and how Chorley restructured to become more customer focused. Chorley also visited **London Borough of Hackney** to deliver a Circle of Need 'master class', a half day training session to representatives from Hackney Council and their partners. **Sheffield City Council** conducted a benchmarking visit to Chorley on customer insight and the wider transformational agenda.

## Event highlights

### IDEA, Front Office Shared Services Conference, February 2009

### Transforming Services Learning Exchange Event, June 2009, London/York

- 158 delegates, including elected members, in attendance across two events
- 94% said the event provided a basis for further improvements
- 100% said that they would recommend beacon services to other councils.

The theme established and supported a dedicated Transforming Services theme Community of Practice (CoP). Membership of the CoP grew steadily to 89 members, where a range of information and support was provided.

## Regional activity

There has been a strong presence in the North West for the Transforming Services theme. This has included participation in a number of North West e-Government Group (NWeGG) events, for example the Spring Conference, Information Sharing Event, Summer Conference and Annual Conference 2008. Team Lancashire linked up with Chorley Borough Council with the remit of sharing good practice and joint working. Whilst the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and North West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership both engaged with Beacons on engagement and the circle of need project.

## Improvement in service delivery

The Beacons fed back a number of areas of service improvement. For example, Staffordshire Moorlands highlighted a greater understanding of issues related to channel migration available through customer insight and opportunities that exist for the use of the web as a knowledge management tool. Further insight into customer journey mapping was provided by the London Borough of Lewisham.

## International Sharing

Staffordshire Moorlands arranged a two day study tour by representatives from 23 local authorities from Albania. This focused on citizen engagement and the development of one stop shops. In activity, organised via the Cabinet Office, the council presented a workshop at the fifth Quality Conference for public administration in the EU, on 'improving service access through public consultation and stakeholder involvement'.

## Policy Development

Beacons have contributed to government thinking in a range of ways throughout their tenure.

In the Communities and Local Government white paper *Communities in control: real people, real power* (July 2008) a case study on Staffordshire Moorlands' community pride compact and initiative was featured as good practice. The Cabinet office visited Chorley to discuss change implementation and to be shown various operational departments to support future thinking around 'failure demand'.

The transforming services Beacons continue to be involved in policy development. Facilitated by the IDEA, they work alongside the Round 10 Beacons on Digital Inclusion and are part of an expert group informing leadership development work for Digital Britain.





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