



*Excellence in
Local Government*

Raising Economic Prosperity through Partnership

About the Theme

The benefits of moving from unemployment or economic inactivity and into work accrue to the individual, their family and to the Government's finances. Research has shown that being in work has a positive influence on health and wellbeing. Benefits accrue to the individual's family and reduce the likelihood of poor children becoming poor adults. But sustainable employment needs to be supported by the necessary infrastructure – housing, transport, leisure, environment and schooling – to retain people in strong communities where they want to work, live and play.

In the current economic circumstances, local authorities play a critical role in building partnerships which can respond effectively to the recession, bringing local business, local communities and community organisations, schools and colleges together with statutory

partners such as, Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Councils and the Regional Development Agency.

The beacons have demonstrated how effective collaboration between these partners achieves results locally and are also driving forward the closely related issues of housing, transport and economic prosperity at the sub-regional level, for example through Multi-Area Agreements.

In addition to tackling deep rooted worklessness, the local response now needs to support increasing numbers of recently unemployed people back into work and to help them deal with new threats of debt and homelessness. Tackling this successfully requires a focus at the neighbourhood level to provide unemployed people with appropriate skills to enable them to access opportunities and acquire new skills.

Each beacon in this theme has excellent engagement with local business and social enterprise, and providing effective support to them, at the heart of their activity. They are in the best position to demonstrate how the challenge of the recession can be tackled through the partnerships they have created.

Beacons are here to help

The Raising Economic Prosperity through Partnership beacons are well placed to offer support to other local authorities in building the strong partnerships needed to tackle the recession through re-skilling local people and sustaining and creating local businesses.

Find out more at the national launch for the theme on 15th July 2009 by booking your place at www.beacons.idea.gov.uk. Don't miss out on the beacon Open Days which will be held in the autumn of 2009. These offer an excellent opportunity to understand how their experience can be adapted to solve the problems you face locally. You can use the contact details in this guide to book your place at the beacon open days.

In addition to Open Days, beacons will be offering a wide range of events and support up to the end of the beacon year in June 2010.

Highlights of the best practice from each beacon are set out in the rest of this guide. We will be broadening and deepening this throughout the beacon year by publishing a series of case studies to illustrate what has been achieved.

For more information

For more details and the latest information on the support available from the Raising Economic Prosperity through Partnership beacons, please visit www.beacons.idea.gov.uk or contact:

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London Borough of Croydon

Authority overview

Croydon is London's largest borough, situated in outer London and has a large employment district in the town centre.

Croydon has the largest number of people living and working in the same London borough. In many ways, Croydon as well as being part of London is also an 'edge city'.

It is a multi-racial borough with some 40% of people from black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities.

Croydon's economy grew at below the average level over the last 15 years and has been too reliant on public sector employment, with Croydon having one of the lowest self-employment levels in London. The challenge has been to create a more entrepreneurial culture and attract new businesses to the borough.

Obviously the current recession provides a further challenge.

What has been achieved

Croydon has for many years developed a good reputation for formal partnership working. Its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has been highly commended and Croydon has always had excellent involvement from the private sector in its partnership working.

Croydon has a strong Economic Development Partnership as part of its LSP that has overseen the development of an economic strategy for the borough.

Croydon has initiated an enterprise programme to encourage the creation of new businesses and the development of its existing small businesses.

A significant achievement was the agreement by the town centre businesses to the creation of one of the largest Business Improvement Districts (BID) in the country. Croydon is also looking to create some of the smallest BIDs in its District Centres.

Croydon Business was set up as a business support agency to work between the public and private sectors. A new Economic Development Company was formed in May 2009 to bring together various economic delivery vehicles including Croydon Business to promote Croydon's economy for the future.

Croydon has been the first Council in the country to create an Urban Regeneration Vehicle to take forward development of a number of its land holdings.

ENVIBE is an award winning business environmental partnership, encouraging businesses to behave in environmentally sustainable ways.

Croydon has been one of the national pilots for the Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) and has been able to test the implications of the BSSP on its existing business support functions.

Croydon reacted quickly to the recession, producing an economic recovery plan to help businesses and residents affected by the economic downturn and to lead Croydon to a more prosperous future when the upturn arrives.



London Borough of Croydon



Service Delivery Tips

The development of strong, well-resourced, formal strategic partnerships has provided Croydon with a clear sense of shared direction by all the key partners. Partnerships do not run themselves and one key element of Croydon's success has been investing in partnership management to ensure their effectiveness.

The involvement of private sector partners has proved very beneficial in a number of ways, such as winning the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative funding and securing a positive ballot to create a Business Improvement District (BID), both of which have increased the funding available to enable Croydon to make economic improvements.

Croydon has found it helpful to set up a number of delivery vehicles for specific purposes. These include the BID, Croydon Enterprise, Croydon Business, an Urban Regeneration Vehicle (URV), a Business Environmental Partnership, etc. These vehicles have allowed key stakeholders to invest in the topic they are particularly concerned with and for the agency to be focused on achievement of its objectives.

To provide a greater sense of co-ordination, Croydon has created an Economic Development Company to bring these separate programmes and delivery vehicles together.

Open Day

Thursday 15th October 2009 at Croydon Town Hall

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Lancashire County Council



Authority overview

Lancashire County Council embraces the principles of effective partnership working to raise economic prosperity in a large and diverse County. We understand that a rich range of approaches are required to achieve outcomes across many geographical footprints, political authorities and organisational boundaries. Lancashire County is a two-tier local authority area with a county council and twelve district councils. It serves a population of 1.16 million with 34,643 VAT registered businesses.

Lancashire’s approach has resulted in many examples of effective partnership programmes, projects and collaborative working which deliver relevant outcomes across the county in response to locally identified needs for:

- local businesses, (Business Starts, floor-space, and finance)
- local people and communities
- improving their skills (Apprenticeships and Future Horizons)
- returning to work (WorkStart)

More recently Lancashire County Council has created three Multi-Area Agreements with the Pennine Lancashire MAA already signed, and The Fylde and Mid-Lancashire MAAs at an advanced stage.

What has been achieved

Seizing our role as Lancashire’s community leader, we brought together public sector partners to forge truly joined-up partnerships and deliver clear, objective results and outcomes.

Lancashire County Council has developed four unique sustainable flagship programmes with national significance as vehicles for local government tackling worklessness and skills gaps. All programmes contribute to the recruitment of a reflective workforce. Achievements include:

- Delivery of over 30 local events, inviting 14,000 longer term incapacity and lone parent claimants, and placing 520 into sustainable employment, within a unit cost of an additional £28 per person. The council placed the emphasis on the individual with a community focussed partnership approach, concentrating on outreach and accessible provision.
- As a major employer and service provider Lancashire recognises how public sector procurement can shape economic activity.

After listening to customers, the council led the way, with Jobcentre Plus seconding staff to the programme. The first work-trial in the public sector, called “WorkStart” was developed together. Sixty people have been on placement, and forty-three have gained employment.

- Partners have more than doubled the number of public sector apprentices in Lancashire through the apprenticeship programme, with the County Council recruiting 253, a massive 900% increase over previous years.
- The council initiated a ground breaking pre-apprenticeship programme “Future Horizons” dedicated to “NEET” and “looked after children” that has delivered outstanding outcomes and is currently being rolled out across Lancashire.

Through listening to business clients and partners, programmes have been developed to address sectoral gaps in the Lancashire economy. Three new “Rosebud” products have been introduced in Tourism, Creative Industries and Green sectors, their offer embedded with partner organisations.

In response to the credit crunch a micro credit start-up service has been launched to enable new micro businesses to access finance up to £5,000. Thirty two businesses were started in around six weeks and the programme has been extended to meet demand.



Lancashire County Council

Service Delivery Tips

Lancashire's pioneering approach to reducing worklessness highlights how the public sector can transform individual lives, achieve sustainable organisational change, and stimulate economic growth.

The council spearheaded a new strategy with Jobcentre Plus and other partners to target long-term benefit recipients. Multi-agency co-operation meant we could spot gaps in the system and spread good practice more easily across the sector.

Lancashire mailed job information to lone parents at the start of the new school year and held job fairs, promoting the public sector to black and minority ethnic job seekers. These micro-targeting tactics sparked a remarkable response. We helped residents from some of Lancashire's most deprived communities find sustainable employment.

As a major employer and service provider Lancashire embedded WorkStart (the public sector

work-trial) and Apprenticeship recruitment into its Corporate Human Resources Directorate, cost efficiently. Its approach is based on sustainable best business practice, and is being adopted by other local authorities in Lancashire. It has attracted interest from partners across the whole of the public sector.

Lancashire created new grant programmes to boost the Third Sector's capacity to help the long-term unemployed move into work. Our joined-up approach not only spotted this gap but led to a trial of journey-planning programmes for jobseekers.

Open day

Tuesday 19th January 2010

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St.Helens Council

Authority overview

Partnership has been inherent within the regeneration activity of St.Helens for 20 years. Its ethos and structure have evolved involving the business sector, St.Helens Chamber, public, voluntary and community sectors.

The 1980s represented a period of 'economic meltdown' with the decline in the borough's traditional employment industries (coal, glass and chemicals) resulting in the borough's highest experienced unemployment rate of 25%. The partnership's focus on economic prosperity has evolved as a response to this dramatic change in the profile and structure of the St.Helens economy.

There is demonstrable partner input into local policy formulation. The partnership has been successful in a bid for City Growth Status in 2002, the creation of the St.Helens Local Area Agreement and was one of only ten bidders to secure LEGI resources in April 2006.



Our robust partnership model, which recognises that partners, through empowerment, are often best placed to inform and deliver, has resulted in St.Helens currently having the second lowest unemployment rate on Merseyside. After three years the LEGI Programme has seen the creation of 2,122 new jobs, over £38 million of business secured

through the 'Business Winning Business' Initiative, 1,053 new business start ups and 393 women assisted with business start ups.



St.Helens Council

What has been achieved

Selected as a pilot area for the City Growth Strategy (CGS) in 2002 St.Helens was able to develop a radical approach to local economic development that was based on maximising competitive strengths as well as putting the private sector firmly in the strategic driving seat. Following substantial consultation, and on this basis wide buy-in by the private sector and other key stakeholders, the original CGS was launched in 2003 (subsequently revised in 2008).

The CGS contains a clear vision of delivering innovative regeneration initiatives linked with our distinctive and genuine commitment to public-private partnership working through four themes. These are:

- Transforming the business base
- Transforming ambition
- Achieving a physical transformation
- Transforming Perceptions

The CGS has acted as a strategic driver in delivering local socio-economic development

activity and a key tool in guiding the appropriate investment of targeted funds, including the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).

As a result of this innovative approach and the empowerment of our partners there have been many positive signs of progress within the St.Helens Economy. Key successes include;

- A growing business base, with more firms being created and surviving
- A strong record of job creation can be demonstrated since early 2004
- Wage rates and average earners have grown rapidly;
- The increased vitality of the Town Centre
- Educational attainment of school children is improving;
- Significant growth in house prices, whilst retaining affordability
- Wider access to St.Helens as a business location of choice;
- The establishment of St.Helens as a genuine, regional (day) visitor destination.

To further evidence the recent successes the following information has been achieved in St.Helens;

- During 2000 – 2006 overall employment rose by 7%
- 4,500 new jobs have been created
- The annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2002 – 2007 showed that annual earning levels, for both measures, have risen by a fifth over this period
- VAT registrations have increased by 3,300 (over 9%) since 2002
- New business survival rates have improved, 81% of those established in 2006 were still operational after 12 months and 70% after 24 months.



St.Helens Council

Service Delivery Tips

Partnership Ethic and Leadership Model

St.Helens council holds a unique relationship with its partners. The Council recognises partners are often best placed to advise on needs, input into target setting and lead service delivery. Partners have responded to this empowerment model and have delivered the partnership expectations.

Performance Management System

This is a monitoring system to which all partners have access and that allows for demonstrable performance to be seen. This serves as an ideal tool during the action plan / policy review period and allows partners to evaluate programme performance.

Programme Delivery

A number of programmes have and continue to be successfully delivered through the St.Helens partnership. This involved needs mapping, creating action plans and identifying suitable resources and effectively monitoring the programmes implementation. Programmes such as NRF, DAF, LEGI, and the creation of the LAA – guided by the LSP – have significantly improved the socio economic position of St.Helens, especially over the period 2004 – 2007.

Neighbourhood Management

After piloting this approach to specific areas of need, its subsequent success in engaging community groups and delivering significant levels of change, the approach has been rolled out to 3 further priority areas.

CGS & LEGI

After successfully bidding for both CGS and LEGI programmes our partnership has embraced the opportunity to bolster our economic prosperity drive. Using our partnership arrangements and empowerment exemplar we have successfully implemented the LEGI Programme. Using the CGS intelligence collection findings we have overachieved on initial targets and are impacting on the borough's socio economic regeneration.

Open Day

Tuesday 10th November 2009 at the World of Glass and the St.Helens Enterprise Centre.



For further information contact

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Stafford Borough Council

Authority overview

Stafford Borough, set in the heart of England, has a 10 year history of developing and maintaining effective partnerships. One of the main challenges for us has been capacity and resource. As a small Shire District that is not targeted for Government support, we have had to continually 'punch above our weight' in order to achieve our objectives. The strongest indicator of our success has been through a highly successful SRB6 programme, and more recently by the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme, being awarded £453,000 in round one (12th district nationally), £1.9 million in round 2 (1st district nationally), and £1.4 million in round 3 (5th district nationally). We have also been identified as a round 2 housing Growth Area, so the future is looking good for Stafford Borough.

What has been achieved

In partnership, we have achieved considerable success in recent years. In 1998, due to structural change in the local employment market, the borough was shedding jobs at a higher rate than anywhere else in the country. Today our unemployment rate remains below County, regional and national averages

In the past five years, successful partnership working has resulted in a total investment of £16 million, created 538 jobs and 123 business start-ups through the Stafford Single Regeneration Budget programme and partnership (SRB6). Training activities have enabled over 8,000 people to achieve qualifications and 250 to obtain jobs. Momentum has continued and expanded out to rural areas through the Stafford Biomass and Renewable Energy Business Support Project. This project established working relationships with businesses normally on opposite sides of the spectrum to deliver and use renewable energy. The project saw local farmers awarded 42 grants valued at £3.5 million and



an investment of £5.5 million by the private sector into further Biomass development.

The greater challenge for partnership working has been extending opportunities to disadvantaged groups to ensure inclusivity. Needs analysis identified pockets of deprivation with people outside the labour market. With SRB funding, we were able to set up training projects on a local estate that increased employment prospects.

Successful outcomes under the Local Area Agreement include the development of the Signpost Centre on the Highfields Estate (multi-agency provision for community-based services). This is a best practice example of how, by conducting effective needs analysis and working with our partners, we have overcome many barriers to meet the needs of our most disadvantaged communities. This project was recently recognised through the 'Best Achievement in Children's Services' award at the Municipal Journal, Local Government Awards 2008.



Stafford Borough Council

Service Delivery Tips

Leadership:
Strong leadership by three successive administrations of the Borough Council declaring economic regeneration as a Borough priority, and developing a strategy with partners such as the PCT, University, JobCentre Plus, which has been jointly implemented.

Engagement
For each major initiative undertaken, the Borough Council and its partners have engaged local business leaders and community representatives, ensuring that they are an intrinsic element of all working groups and decision-making bodies. This has ensured ownership of schemes by key stakeholders in the Borough.

Project management
Good project and financial management have ensured that our schemes are implemented on time to budget and meet or exceed the agreed outputs.

We value the synergy in working with partners where “added value” can be demonstrated, for example through the support of partners we gained an SRB programme despite not meeting the initial criteria for such.

Build strong partnerships

- Openness, trust and honesty between partners
- Shared goals and values
- Regular communication between partner agencies
- Recognise and utilise the strengths and areas of expertise of all the partner agencies involved in what you are doing;

Make the most of what you have
Make the best use of available resources by managing the needs of communities in a co-ordinated and cost effective way - including pooling resources and developing a wider skill base for staff to effectively meet the needs of communities.

In terms of partnership working:

- openness, trust and honesty between partners
- shared goals and values
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Recognise and utilise the strengths and areas of expertise of all the partner agencies involved in what you are doing;

Make the best use of available resources by managing the needs of communities in a co-ordinated and cost effective way - including pooling resources and developing a wider skill base for staff to effectively meet the needs of communities.



Open Day

Tuesday 24th November 2009

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**The Raising Economic Prosperity through Partnership
beacon theme is sponsored by Interserve.**

Interserve is committed to supporting local communities, helping create an efficient and dynamic environment, where people want to work and live and where businesses want to be. We support local authorities to achieve economic and social wellbeing, to develop sustainable neighbourhoods and communities for the future through the services we provide.

Interserve's support services focus on the buildings and infrastructure people use throughout their lives. We provide workplace management, construction, maintenance and technical consultancy.

By sponsoring this theme, we hope to help these Beacons share their knowledge in tackling issues such as unemployment, providing people with skills and opportunities and creating and sustaining enterprise.



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