



21 March 2006

Dear Colleague,

LAUNCH OF ROUND 8 BEACON SCHEME APPLICATION BROCHURE

The Local Government Minister Phil Woolas yesterday launched the application brochure for the latest round of the Beacon Scheme. You will recall that I wrote to you on 6 September 2005 giving you notice of the inclusion of emergency planning as one of the Round 8 themes. This note provides a brief outline of the application procedure and encourages you to familiarise yourself with the assessment criteria for the emergency planning theme and consider applying for Beacon status.

You can make an application for Beacon status by completing an on-line form which will be used to inform the short-listing process. The application brochure, application form and detailed on-line supporting guidance are accessible on the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) website at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/beacons>. The deadline for submitting forms is 5pm on Friday, 23 June 2006.

The application form is made up of four sections.

- Intention to Apply – seeks general information such as the name of the authority (or authorities, if the application is a joint one), the theme under which an application is to be registered, and authority lead contact details;
- Theme Criteria – requiring a full description of the excellent practice being submitted for award and how this meets assessment criteria;
- Case Study – requiring a specific example of an action (and its impact) that demonstrates the key areas of vision, leadership, customer engagement, partnership working, and effective outcomes; and
- Sharing Best Practice – requiring the authority to set out how it would use Beacon status to disseminate learning and encourage service improvement among its partners within the sector.



Once the short-list has been announced, the selection process and timescales will be as follows:

- Assessment visits: between 1st November and 15th December 2006;
- Presentations in London by short-listed authorities between 8th and 26th January 2007; and
- Announcement of the new Beacon authorities in early March 2007.

The inclusion of emergency planning in the Beacon Scheme is an indication of the Government's continued commitment to raising standards in this area of public service. The Civil Contingencies Act has given fresh momentum and direction to local civil protection work and the Beacon Scheme will help authorities meet the challenges in the legislation by spreading best practice. It is in all of our interests to ensure that the very best performing authorities become Beacons, and for that reason I would encourage you to consider applying.

For general enquiries contact the Beacons Enquiry Line on 020 7944 4759 / 4104 or email beaconsinfo@odpm.gsi.gov.uk Enquiries related to the assessment process should be made to the Beacon Team at IDeA. Telephone 020 7296 6587; email beacons@idea.gov.uk.

I wish you well with your applications.

DAN GREAVES

Head of Civil Contingencies Act Team

