

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Policy and Performance)	Executive Cabinet	08/01/2009

## BEACON STATUS 2009

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update Executive Cabinet on the progress made in the Council's application for Beacon Status for 2009 under the theme of 'Better outcomes for people and Places' and present the feedback from the I&DeA.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the feedback report be noted.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report is an update on the positive progress in the Council's application for Beacon Status on the theme of 'Better outcomes for People and Places' in the 2009 round. This overarching theme is recognised as a 'gold standard to which all Councils should aspire'.
- The Council has been successful in making the final shortlist for the award and the report summarises the feedback from the initial application and the progress made following the Beacon Team's onsite inspection in November. A full copy of the feedback from the I&DeA Beacon Assessment Team is attached and the next steps in the application process are outlined.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organisation	✓

### BACKGROUND

- The Beacon scheme is a government operated programme designed to share best practice in local government. The Council has applied for Beacon Status in the theme of 'Better

Outcomes for People and Places' in the 2009 round. This overarching theme is recognised as a 'gold standard to which all Councils should aspire'. An initial bid document was produced by the Council in July 2008.

8. The Council have been successful in making a final shortlist of five authorities from sixteen applicants nationally. The shortlist includes:
  - Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
  - London Borough of Lambeth
  - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
  - Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
9. The Council is one of only two district Councils to be shortlisted nationally.
10. The Council was visited on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November by an assessment team to assess the way the Council has improved outcomes in Chorley. The visit involved numerous site visits and opportunities to meet with partners, officers and members. A copy of the full findings of the report is attached (Appendix A).

### **ASSESSMENT TEAM FEEDBACK**

11. The site visit was very successful with the Council's overall rating at this stage standing at 5.5 out of 6 and the Council receiving a rating of '**Excellent plus**'.
12. The inspecting Beacon team noted that: "This was an excellent visit highlighting the strategic management role of the Council and good work being undertaken on customer engagement."
13. The Council was commended for showing "a real focus on achieving better outcomes for people in the area and good understanding of what this meant in reality" and "willingness to take tough decisions in terms of budgeting to ensure priorities received required funds."
14. The assessment team praised the Council's leadership and support for the LSP pump-primed projects tackling issues such as teenage pregnancy as well as the way the Council works with partners to tackle crime and co-ordinate Weeks of Action and Advanced Number Plate Recognition activities. The Chorley Smile initiative was regarded as something that other authorities could learn from, as was role the Council has played in the development of Buckshaw Village and the Strategic Regional Site.
15. The inspectors also praised the Council's strong leadership and strategy, productive partnerships and effective communications and were particularly impressed by the fact that the Council's ambitions are not limited by its capacity, or traditional perceptions of a district role. Noting that Chorley 'punch above their weight at a County level, and have an impressive story to tell about achieving priorities whilst maintaining a static Council tax rate.'

### **FINAL ASSESMENT STAGES**

16. The next stage of the Beacon scheme will involve a presentation to a specialist panel in London in the New Year. At the presentation representatives of the Council will be expected to answer questions from a panel and address several areas for investigation. These include providing more information about community engagement, how residents feel that the Council has been successful in achieving positive change in Chorley and investigating how politicians and Councilors are engaged in the local partnerships. The panel will also assess how Chorley will share best practice with other authorities.
17. The final Beacon Awards will be announced in March 2009.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	✓

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE)

There are no background papers to this report.

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