Sustainable Communities Awards
Souvenir supplement / February 2008
Welcome to the Sustainable Communities Awards 2008

I am delighted that Defra has again been able to sponsor the LGC and HSJ Sustainable Communities Awards. Once again they have proved to be a success — attracting entries from local partnerships across the country. These unique awards highlight the critical importance of working in partnership locally if we are to create strong, healthy and environmentally sustainable communities. By breaking out of service silos we can make the right connections between social, economic and environmental priorities. For example, moving to low-carbon communities can save money for businesses and households alike.

These awards have helped raise the profile of the Joint Environmental Prospectus launched by Defra and the Local Government Association in July 2007. This set out our shared priorities — tackling climate change, protecting our natural resources and creating cleaner and greener communities. Many local partnerships will be thinking about how they can demonstrate leadership on these challenges in their new local area agreements and sustainable community strategies — taking forward the new set of local government performance indicators which now reflect these shared priorities.

May I congratulate all the winners of this year’s awards. I hope that they inspire partnerships across the country to translate these success stories to their own communities. I also would like to thank all those who entered this year’s awards and who are equally committed to what these awards stand for.

Inspiring local leadership can bring about environmental improvement

The shortlist for the Sustainable Communities Awards is packed with inspiring examples of how local people can improve their economic and social wellbeing while protecting the environment.

This supplement is an invaluable guide to many of the best innovations in the country. Even within a single category you will find many different approaches to tackling the same issue.

It shows how councils, local health services, the voluntary sector and local people are collaborating to tackle some of the most challenging issues our communities face, from climate change to improving public health to community cohesion. Partnership working and localism are central to the ethos of these awards; while government can do much, it is local action and local leadership which bring about real, long-term change.

HSJ and LGC are, as always, indebted to the support of the sponsors and judges who have made the awards possible, and in particular the backing of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

So congratulations to everyone who won or was shortlisted this year. We hope that if you did not make the shortlist, the entries that did will inspire you to enter the Sustainable Communities Awards in 2009.
This is a strong local strategic partnership with an excellent track record and a comprehensive range of activities covering health, regeneration, community cohesion and the environment. There is effective engagement with the private sector through local media, with city-wide debates on a range of issues, including the benefits from the 2012 Olympic Games and the issue of climate change.
This entry shows close working with customers/users and an organisation responding to their ideas and feedback. There have been good actions to develop community leadership and some interesting approaches to encouraging local children.
Tackling and Adapting to Climate Change

Highly commended

Essex CC
Since its launch in June last year the CRed Essex web-based community carbon reduction initiative has received 15,000 pledges of action, representing a saving of more than 5,300 tonnes of CO₂. The scheme, a partnership with the University of East Anglia, has been promoted at everything from schools to county shows.

Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
A switch to electricity generated from renewable sources has helped Aberdeen cut its CO₂ emissions by 31% over two years, smashing its target to cut its emissions by 10% over six years. Its Cults primary school was the first in mainland Scotland to use a wind turbine to generate power.

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children Trust
The 155-year-old London children's hospital is in the second of a four-phase redevelopment of the site and is using the work to underpin a target 15% reduction in carbon emissions by 2009. The target for the new development is to cut carbon emissions by 10% by 2015, with a 60% renewable contribution. Site-wide this will deliver over 70% carbon reduction and a 25% renewable contribution.

Southampton City Council
As the first city to have local government, the NHS and higher education all signing up to the relevant Carbon Trust carbon management programmes, Southampton can rightly lay claim to taking a joined-up view to action on climate change. The council has created a pilot stretch target in its local area agreement, generated funding for an energy efficiency programme in council offices and allocated funding to a schools renewables programme.

North York Moors National Park Authority

Among the highlights of North York Moors National Park Authority’s external work is the high success rate for planning applications on renewable energy installations — 98% of renewable generating capacity proposed has been approved — and influencing the sub-regional tourism partnership and the local area agreement to include carbon emission targets.

The authority also runs a recreational bus service, which saves 1.3 million car miles a year, equivalent to 400 tonnes of CO₂. Internally, it is working on energy improvement to cut the 158 tonnes of CO₂ emitted annually from electricity and heating. It has cut energy use per head in its offices by 10% in two years. A refurbishment to its rangers and field staff centre improved insulation and use of natural light and included the findings of an energy audit.

One visitor centre has been refitted to include wool insulation, solar panels and underfloor heating. Switching to 100% renewable energy is saving 14.6 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

Other measures range from extra leave for staff who cycle or car share to a purchasing policy that allows for eco-friendly alternatives to cost 10% more.

“The authority demonstrates innovative activity across the board, including strong working with partners and the community. Action to adapt to the impacts of climate change was particularly impressive and comprehensive.”

Award judges

Tyrone Homes
Lead, local and regional government, Defra

Jo Milling
Policy officer, Mendip DC

Ray Morgan
Chief executive, Woking BC

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defra
Building Sustainable Communities

Highly commended

Reading BC
The regeneration of Dee Park estate — an area with high indicators of social deprivation — will provide 650 new homes, a 60-bed extra-care sheltered housing scheme and a community hub along with health care, education, training and support.

Finalists

DSDHA Architects
Paradise Park Children’s Centre provides community facilities including a nursery, a base for Islington Play Association and a park café. The vertical hydroponic planting system on the face of the building uses recycled rainwater to irrigate 7,000 plants.

Gareth Hoskins Architects
Nestling between a swimming pool and college, The Bridge, a new arts centre and community library on the Easterhouse estate in Glasgow, provides theatre rehearsal, workshop and audiovisual and media suites, education and gallery spaces and a café.

Studio E Architects
The Burgess Park Community Sports Centre uses a ground source system that is set to halve CO₂ emissions and dramatically reduce energy. A photovoltaic should provide 20% of electrical capacity, in part powering the ground-source heat pumps and lighting.

Assael Architecture
The Tachbrook Triangle scheme sought to regenerate a site on the Vauxhall Bridge Road, close to central London. This included the conversion, extension and repair of a listed Georgian terrace, new-build residential accommodation and a new primary care facility for Westminster City Council — in short an example of inner urban brownfield development, ensuring maximum use of land.

Energy consumption is generally low-tech and includes passive measures such as building orientation to provide solar shading and opening windows to maximise natural ventilation. The solid mass of the building will allow for passive solar gain, while recessed glazing reduces direct sunlight penetration in hotter months. Large windows reduce the need for electric lighting.

The affordable housing is EcoHomes rated and the scheme draws on the district heating system to reduce energy consumption. Proximity to public transport significantly reduces car usage.

Additional entrances and windows have been introduced, providing more opportunities for social interaction. London-based craftspeople worked on the preservation of the listed buildings, where possible, ensuring superior workmanship.

“This work stands out above the other applicants’. It’s a good example of meeting the award criteria in the context of realities of housing development in the 21st century: the use of a brownfield site; good applicability to other sites and developments; and clear integration of health service provision.”

Award judges

Yvonne Maxwell
Social inclusion and equalities project manager, Care Services Improvement Partnership

Nigel Appleton
Principal, Contact Consulting

Tom Surrey
Head of supporting people policy strategy, DCLG

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Community Cohesion

Highly commended

Bristol City Council
St Paul’s Unlimited is a community partnership that — for the first time — has brought together residents, faith community representatives, local businesses and agencies in Bristol’s most culturally diverse neighbourhood. Its priorities include improving safety and creating a more stable community.

Finalist

Leeds City Council
A conflict resolution programme delivered by the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace, Leeds City Council and school staff has successfully tackled issues of conflict and cohesion at a newly merged high school.

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Services

The proactive approach to community safety taken by Cumbria Fire & Rescue upholds the belief that prevention is better than intervention and strives to embrace diversity both within the service and the local population.

Projects across the county include: supporting migrant workers through distribution of fire safety leaflets in a variety of languages; assisting social care workers to identify vulnerable and at-risk residents; championing a young fire-fighter scheme targeted at 14-16 year-olds; and delivering fire service experience days to young people who push the boundaries within mainstream education.

Older persons advocates have also been appointed to raise the profile of a potentially isolated group and a text message ‘999’ service available only to the deaf, hearing or speech-impaired has been created.

The number of property fires now being attended where smoke alarms are fitted and activated compares well with other areas. Numbers of youths killed or seriously injured are also falling year on year.

“This project showed what can be done to build community cohesion through one service with a strategic approach to all the community. Cumbria Fire Service has moved out of its comfort zone to address local needs. We liked the support for young people, including the work with the youth offending service, and the different ways of ensuring fire safety to a diverse community.”

Award judges

Heather Wakefield
National secretary, Unison

Kevin Crompton
Chief executive, Luton BC

Doreen Lawrence OBE
Director, Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust

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UNISON
the public service union
Community Project

Highly commended

Birmingham City Council
A new structure for tenant involvement at constituency level is making sure that voices from across the city’s diverse population are being heard. Half the tenancy group members are aged under 45 and 53% are from black and minority ethnic communities.

Rotherham MBC
Working with the area assembly office, a group of elderly residents at a sheltered housing scheme has set up an IT project to access online shopping and liaised with community transport to provide access to local shopping.

Finalists

Four Estates
The Listen! project was developed by Four Estates — a volunteer-led charity working across four social housing estates in Runcorn — to encourage children and young people to highlight and discuss issues and opinions and make positive suggestions for change.

Southampton City Council
Northam, an area of the city where there are lots of children but few green spaces or gardens, was the venue of a project to create a new park and ‘home zone’ — altering road layouts to make motorists take more care.

Watford BC
The Community Gateway Model involves more than 1,500 tenants and leaseholders in actively deciding their own future. The new housing trust board has a tenant chair and tenants decide how to spend £66m on improvements.

Award judges

Tony Hawkhead CBE
Chief executive, Groundwork

Neil Parry
Project co-ordinator, Sheffield East End Quality of Life Initiative

Ifor Jones
Acting director of constituencies, Birmingham City Council

Corby BC
After 30 years of decline West Glebe Park in the centre of Corby has been transformed. The area, which had become a location for drug use, fly-tipping and vandalism and was no longer considered safe by many, now plays host to a wide range of sports and recreational facilities.

These include a sports pavilion, Astroturf, multi-sports court, a play area, BMX track, skate park, a brass rubbings trail and tree sculptures — all with improved footpaths, lighting and the addition of CCTV.

Since 2002 the Friends of the Park group had been working on plans and raising funds to improve the state of West Glebe. Initial success made it clear that more than sports facilities were needed. Work on a master plan brought in artists and local historians, helping to identify the heritage of the park space and develop ideas for pieces of sculpture.

The council has contributed more than £1.1m for the development of the facilities, including match funding towards the Friends of the Park grants and awards applications.

“The ‘agency’ with this scheme is the friends’ group itself, not the local authority. It delivers real, tangible outcomes of benefit to the wider community and has successfully brought in investment in a range of facility improvements and opportunities for leisure and recreation. It’s an ongoing project that’s in it for the long term.”

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**Community Youth Initiative**

_highly commended_

**Bristol City Council**
The South Bristol URBAN Programme actively puts young people at the heart of decision-making. Capital investments, environmental improvements and peer education projects to prevent alcohol and drug abuse are providing new skills and solutions to long-term problems.

**Finalists**

**Croydon LBC**
HAP<25 — Housing Advice Project for under-25s — is a primary point of contact for single homeless young people providing housing advice, mediation and homelessness prevention, advocacy, drugs and alcohol counselling, and support to around 2,000 young people a year.

**Solihull MBC**
A five-year project to address nuisance and anti-social behaviour — North Solihull Fusion — uses targeted sport and recreation interventions to promote and encourage long-term behavioural change with young people at risk. Achievements include reductions in neighbourhood crime.

**Sunderland City Council**
The informal educational opportunities provided by the Sunderland Youth Development Group support young people to make and influence changes that prompt improvement in community services. Young people are setting up campaigns about issues that matter to them.

**Ashford BC**
Neighbourhood Youth Forums are enabling young people to have a say in their community, raising concerns, putting development ideas forward and participating in environmental activities. Five forums were established in the project’s first year.

**Peterborough City Council**
The Unity Youth Project was set up in 2002. It targets young people aged 13 to 21 from the five most deprived wards in the city and across a range of ethnicities and communities — White, Asian, African-Caribbean, Portuguese, African, Traveller — who have been involved in racial conflict as either victim or perpetrator.

Run by a full-time coordinator from the youth service in Peterborough, the project has done much to diffuse racial tensions in the city following serious disruption in one of its schools. The ethos of the project is to bring young people together with all their differences and celebrate the things they have in common — an interest in football and other sports.

Unity supports schools using conflict resolution approaches and also recruits and trains young people to organise local youth projects across the city. It runs sports, residential events and outdoor activities that engage and challenge young people.

The project is funded by the city council with a core budget of £50,000. External funding from Government Office East has brought in a further £25,000.

“This is a really positive community cohesion programme with a range of innovative elements. It places young people as the drivers of the programme and its related projects. It develops knowledge, skills and empathy within a framework of the Unity brand and makes a really strong contribution to community cohesion.”

**Award judges**

_Fiona Blacke_
Chief executive, National Youth Agency

_Ellie Roy_
Chief executive, Youth Justice Board

_Tony Breslin_
Chief executive, Citizenship Foundation

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The National Youth Agency
Creating a Lasting Legacy

Highly commended

Burnley BC
By using sport to divert young people from anti-social and criminal activity, Strike for Life provides unemployed 16-25 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds with work, training and further education. More than 400 people have gone through the programme, with half gaining places on training schemes and 32 finding work.

Essex CC
The Essex-Jiangsu Cultural Exchange 2008-09 is the celebration of links between the two regions stretching back over 20 years. Themes of community involvement, social cohesion and inclusion and sustainability run through the planning of the event.

Bexley LBC
With the award of £2.35m from the Department for Communities & Local Government’s Sustainable Communities Olympic funding stream for a replacement clubhouse and associated facilities the Erith Yacht Club (EYC) will provide a legacy for sport, the community and regeneration in a key Thames Gateway area.

The funding identifies the club as a leading sailing venue on the Thames and will enable EYC to develop its role providing affordable and accessible opportunities to participate in sport — especially for hard-to-reach communities, young offenders and people with disabilities.

Expansion will allow the club to increase its practical and theoretical courses, covering sailing techniques, boat maintenance and navigation. These courses have the potential to help not just budding sailing instructors, but also to improve discipline and self-sufficiency among disadvantaged groups.

As a sports and sailing centre of regional importance EYC will support the wider regeneration of Erith and the Gateway. The facilities will have major environmental benefits, supporting management of the adjacent Erith Salting, London’s last remaining salt marsh.

“The winner was a surprise initiative and a unique scheme that demonstrated innovation, social inclusion and sustainability in ways that will act as a catalyst for regeneration of the Thames Gateway. This fully funded scheme will build on the 2012 Olympic Games and provide a powerful legacy for the whole community, now and in the future.”

Award judges
Robert Van-Loo
Local government leader,
EC Harris

Laura Caton
Policy consultant,
LGA

James Hehir
Chief executive,
Ipswich BC

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EC HARRIS
Pathways Community Interest Company

A healthy eating café, supplied with locally grown in-season fruit and vegetables from its own allotments, has been improving people’s health and well-being and supporting the long-term unemployed to get back into work.

Pathways Community Interest Company leads the collaborative project working with partners that include Crewe & Nantwich BC, Wulvern Housing and Central & Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust. The allotments are a place for the kind of inter-generational work that changes attitudes. Disenfranchised young people learn from older members of the community, talk about things like growing crops from seed, while all the time developing a mutual respect.

The café opened in March 2007, is open seven days a week and is the venue for a Pathways-run employability programme, helping structurally unemployed people to move closer to employment.

Since April 2007, 25 people with disabilities, lone parents, mental health service users and long-term unemployed people have been supported, with 20 moving into mainstream employment.

Getting these people out of long-term unemployment costs £6,000. A life on benefits costs about £300,000.

“Quite inspirational. This is a real example of key components that deliver a sustainable healthy community, including skills for employment, building self-esteem and a real sense of fun. The inter-generational work is strong. This thoughtful approach is rooted in community and focused on targeting hardest-to-reach grassroots issues.”
Regeneration

Highly commended

HBG Construction North West
Liverpool South Parkway is a new eco-friendly public transport interchange providing fast links to Liverpool John Lennon Airport – as well as access to up to 11,000 jobs planned for a regeneration area identified by Liverpool Land Development Company.

Finalists

Birmingham City Council
A 12-year, £350m scheme is transforming a number of former council estates into a vibrant urban quarter of up to 1,700 new homes alongside shops, a hotel, business and community facilities and 3.2ha of landscaped community parkland.

South Tyneside MBC
The £90m Cleadon Park Regeneration Project is South Tyneside’s largest ever project. The Neighbourhood Action Planning approach uses participatory appraisal, a process where community members work together to set out visions for their neighbourhood and initiatives that help achieve them.

Plymouth City Council
The £14m East End Community Village helps address a range of housing, health and worklessness needs in one of Plymouth’s most deprived areas. Key elements include a GP surgery with NHS dental practice, and a sustainable community resource centre.

Southampton City Council
Northam, an area of the city where there are lots of children but few green spaces or gardens was the venue of a project to create a new park and ‘home zone’ — altering road layouts to make motorists take more care.

Neath Port Talbot CBC
The 72ha Baglan Energy Park — a high-quality, low-density business park — is central to Neath Port Talbot CBC’s plans to transform the area, secure a green industrial future and create thousands of jobs.

Launched in 1996 as a partnership between the council, the former Welsh Development Agency and BP to regenerate a large brownfield site next to the M4, the project has been joined more recently by GE.

Redeveloping the site required substantial reclamation of contaminated and derelict land. Public sector contributions of more than £20m have funded this and other essential infrastructure work.

Phase one has already released more than 24ha and phase two is now underway. Developments will include a manufacturing facility for a client in the pharmaceutical sector, the development of a 70-bedroom hotel and a 5,200m² office and conference centre.

Local procurement and employment initiatives have seen contracts for local businesses exceed £45m and provided 770 jobs, largely in the construction sector.

Award judges

Joe Montgomery
Director general, regions and communities, DCLG

Richard Jones
Partner, EC Harris

Mike Cuff
Chief executive, Rotherham MBC

Chris Wood
Acting chief executive, Newham LBC

Sponsored by

EC Harris
With demonstrable safety benefits across diverse groups in a deprived community, this project has clearly saved lives and is a long-term sustained effort and success. It takes an innovative approach to bringing communities together and provides visible reassurance, sometimes under difficult circumstances.
Suppliers Creating Sustainable Communities

Finalists

OTTER Therapy
The occupational therapy providers to the private sector look to use 100% recycled paper products, biodegradable cleaning products and medical loaned equipment that is recycled to developing world charities where appropriate.

Team Logic Systems
PretonSaver software optimises the toner and ink used by several NHS office printers, producing savings of between 25-50%. Print volumes are reduced by up to 20%. This saves paper, consumables and electricity and lengths printer life.

Wolseley UK
As a distributor of construction materials Wolseley UK is a major direct and sub-contractor supply partner to the NHS. Framework agreements with the NHS are in place for building and associated products, plumbing and sanitary ware, and mechanical and pipeline goods.

The Wolseley sustainable building centre project — a showcase for sustainable building products and construction methods, due for completion later this year — is set to help NHS organisations in delivering against their sustainability targets over coming years.

It will display a wide range of products, many in their working environment, to provide visitors with hard data on quantifiable benefits of materials and construction methods. Renewable energy generators will be installed with displays to show the amount of power they produce.

Wolseley has also identified logistics initiatives with positive environmental impacts such as mileage and CO₂ reduction and is currently implementing changes to reduce, re-use and recycle.

Since 2004, Wolseley has worked with the Timber Trade Federation to develop an assessment system of the legal and sustainable status of their suppliers’ timber products.

“\textbf{We were impressed with the holistic approach to sustainable development demonstrated by Wolseley, covering aspects of its operations, supply chain management, product stewardship and also the way it engages and supports local communities. Of particular note were the details of specific projects to address road safety and also the development of a building centre demonstration project which would be of great value and interest to a range of public sector organisations.}”
Sustainable Procurement

Wakefield MDC
Sustainability is integral to all of Wakefield MDC’s procurement activity. The local authority is now a nationally recognised leader, and has been awarded a Beacon grant to further develop and promote sustainable procurement practices.
In ensuring that social and environmental values are central, and by taking a focused approach to engaging with the third sector, Wakefield MDC is having a positive impact on the local economy.
With the use of social, economic and environmental assessment criteria in food, highways and transport contracts, spend in the region has increased from 40% to 56% over three years — a value of approximately £85m.
Key procurement officers are trained to look at sustainable procurement in their contracts and take a comprehensive approach to environmental issues when purchasing consumables and fuel as well as in all building work.
An online directory has helped to increase opportunities for the voluntary and community sector.
Wakefield is also leading on “Sustainability through Technology” for the Microsoft shared learning group.

“This excellent submission covered all three aspects that sustainable procurement projects should aim to deliver against — economic, environmental and social. It’s a good example of how councils can use procurement to have a positive impact on their communities.”
This imaginative, broad-based strategy focusing on a range of specific groups using a rounded, sustainable approach. It creates a strong focus on disadvantaged communities with impressive results.
Printed on sustainable paper