



## leading the agenda...

# the local government improvement story

### **Making a success of public services**

**Local councils across the country are working hard to satisfy the needs of their communities, as this snapshot portrait of just four different parts of the country shows. As the first Comprehensive Performance Assessment of councils is published, the LGA is committed to working with all councils to help them share best practice and seek support from each other to improve further.**

**Middlesbrough, Liverpool, Telford and Wrekin and Hampshire councils share their stories here.**

**Hampshire County Council** puts enterprise, innovation and consultation at the heart of solutions for local needs.

Developed in response to home closures and growing demands for more intensive care from an ageing and dependent population, around 500 additional nursing care beds are to be built on land attached to the council's residential homes, in partnership with health. This £60 million scheme is the first of its kind.

High house prices bring a shortage of affordable housing and the council realised the impact on attracting new teachers and social workers. In another first, it is working with housing associations and others to make council landholdings around schools available for low rent to these key workers.

Innovative partnerships are also seen in its Beacon status for waste management – involving all 14 local authorities in Hampshire and a private contractor – now producing one of the best recycling rates in the country. Delivering a light rail scheme to ease severe traffic congestion, to improve labour market flexibility and attract new investment in the south east of the county, is another example of public and private sectors working together for excellent results.

### **For further information**

To find out more about the initiatives outlined in this leaflet, please contact:

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For more information about the LGA contact our information centre on 0207 664 3131.

LGA executive

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**Telford and Wrekin** is one of the fastest growing areas in the west midlands according to the latest census figures. A recent business report said it was one of the UK's top locations for encouraging business growth and creating entrepreneurs.

Since becoming a unitary authority only four years ago, the council has delivered major change. From an inherited low performance base in 1998, the council has dramatically improved services and has gained a national reputation for its approach to 'Best Value'. Some of the significant improvements in its services to the local community include:

- established high quality education services that are recognised by OFSTED as one of the top 16 in the country;
- achieved 'Beacon' status for its approach to access and mobility;
- created a public-private partnership that has secured major new investment to improve environmental and highways maintenance together with recycling services, including the expansion of its doorstep collection service, refurbishment of two community recycling centres, with a third new centre to be opened in January 2003; and
- assembled a regeneration package of some £70million to revitalise its most deprived areas including remodelling of estates to plan out crime and other anti-social problems.

**Middlesbrough** is a unitary council delivering services to a compact urban community. Employment is predominantly in the service sector and there is a thriving town centre. Middlesbrough, however, contains some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the UK.

Middlesbrough's tremendous potential for regeneration and the serious levels of disadvantage mean that it is essential that the council provides excellent and accessible services and is a catalyst for sustainable regeneration and renewal.

Recent Social Services Inspectorate, OFSTED and Audit Commission reports indicate that Middlesbrough delivers effective services. The council's activities are constantly informed by the views of a citizens' panel and through the local strategic partnership led by the council. It has been successful in securing extra resources through New Deal, Sure Start, SRB and the government's city academy initiative to meet the challenges Middlesbrough faces. The Service Middlesbrough public-private partnership with HBS has created a single-stop shop for services and will deliver £2 million savings a year to the council.

Most recently Middlesbrough, with its independent Mayor Ray Mallon, has launched the 'Raising Hope' initiative, a comprehensive community safety and environmental protection strategy which aims to cut crime by 15 per cent in a year and radically alter citizens' and visitors' perception of the town.

**Liverpool's** transformation has been remarkable. Four years ago, the city council had poor services and the highest council tax in the country.

Four years on, the council tax has been frozen each year. Last year it was cut by three per cent. And seven out of ten performance indicators are rising.

The city council's call centre, Liverpool Direct, operates round the clock, handling 2 million calls and helping 3,000 people claim £1million in benefits. They are also calling parents of truants, with 70 per cent of them now back in class.

Action to reduce crime has cut burglary rates in half. Fly-tipping, graffiti and vandalism have been reduced and a thousand abandoned cars swept from the streets.

Education has been transformed. Exam results are better than ever; nursery children are learning foreign languages and 15 new schools are being built.

The largest health and fitness programme in Europe is leading the fight against obesity in children with after-school exercise clubs.

The city has eight new libraries, 23,000 new lenders and Sunday opening – a Beacon service!

Older people are going high-tech with alarms warning them if they leave the back door open, or reminding them to take medicine.

And now Liverpool has been shortlisted as European Capital of Culture in 2008.