

**THE BEACON SCHEME 2005  
APPLICATION FORM**

<b>PART 1 – AUTHORITY INFORMATION</b>	
Authority Name (Lead authority for joint applications)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Beacon theme for which you are applying	Delivery of Quality Services through Procurement
Type of authority (Unitary, County, District, Metropolitan Borough, London Borough) (Please list all authorities for joint bids)	County
Contact Name	Richard Potter
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County	Cambridgeshire
Region in which authority is located	Eastern
Councillor with portfolio responsibility for the theme area (if relevant)	Councillor John Powley
List any other themes under which you are applying for Beacon status in 2005	Road Safety Waste and Recycling
Do you agree to allow your application to be made available on the IDeA website once Beacon awards have been made? If there is information that you wish to remain confidential, please give the Part and Question number of the information.	yes
What is the geographical size of the authority in square kilometres?	3,044
What is the population of the area covered by the authority?	571,000 Office for National Statistics, mid 2003 estimate
Authority's gross budget	£680.3 million for 2005/06

## PART 2 – THEME CRITERIA

The information given in this section should not exceed 10 pages in length.

### 1. Please summarise (in 1 or 2 paragraphs) the excellent practice for which you are seeking Beacon status.

**The service we provide to customers, both internal and external:** procurement has been considered a critical element of excellent service delivery in Cambridgeshire County Council for many years. Since our Best Value Review of Procurement (October 2000), we have gone from strength to strength, taking a pro-active approach to improvement that has resulted in our winning a number of awards that recognise our approach to service delivery.

**Our culture of partnership and collaboration:** within this authority, a very common attitude is “don’t reinvent the wheel” – sharing our learning (and learning from others), collaborating with neighbours, colleagues, and organisations across the country, and joining together to make best use of our time and resources, are all part of the Cambridgeshire culture.

**Our focus on Efficiency and Continuous Improvement:** our customer service and our culture of collaboration combine with a positive attitude to innovation, improvement and challenge. This means that for many years we have been addressing the principles identified in the 2004 Spending Review. We had already achieved many efficiency gains before the introduction of the Efficiency Agenda as a result of this focus.

We will illustrate these strengths with examples of procurement contributing to the delivery of quality services in Social Care, Schools, Highways and in Corporate Services.

### 2. Outline how you meet the six key criteria below (the criteria are explained in more detail in the Application Brochure 2005).

#### 2.1 Outcomes (the tangible differences that have been achieved for your community)

All our contracts now seek to focus on securing high quality services and ‘added value’ activities from suppliers rather than only lowest cost – ensuring that wherever suppliers can provide something of additional benefit to us, we tap into it to provide better services for our customers. We also encourage suppliers to propose innovative solutions or changes to meet our needs, especially where the changes will result in better customer service or reduced costs.

#### Social Care Outcomes

As part of the procurement process for Social Care, our Contracts and Care Placements Team use ‘Safe in the Knowledge’, an electronic risk management monitoring tool designed in house for use as part of the selection and ongoing management of care providers. An integral feature of the procurement and contract management process, this provides data on the quality of suppliers’ service provision. ‘Safe in the Knowledge’ ensures that the care provided to customers is continuously improving, and that the needs of these particularly vulnerable customers are met.

The robust nature of the processes provides frontline commissioners with a choice of services that have been fully evaluated and gives them confidence that service quality will be high.

*There is a strong Contracts Team which works closely with commissioning Managers on developing new contracts. Service Specification and monitoring is robust and there is a constructive relationship with providers.*

*Standards and criteria for services are clear and the Contracts Team has developed a good*

*monitoring tool which makes use of IT to good effect. Safe in the Knowledge is an electronic database that allows criteria and standards for domiciliary care and supported living services to be stored and compared to measure compliance. It includes essential and desirable criteria and incorporates user views, staff comments and complaints. Data is aggregated year on year to allow progress and compliance with requirements and recommendations to be analysed. An annual report is produced.*

Social Services Joint Review Report 2003

### Schools Outcomes

The Purchasing Advisory Service for Schools (PASS) originated as a DfES funded project to develop a procurement handbook for schools. The successful project resulted not only in the Handbook but also a toolkit enabling LEAs to create their own service. This was published by CIPFA and issued to every LEA in the country.

PASS continued as a valued service beyond the end of the project, and regularly helps schools procure quality goods and services, as well as resolving contractual difficulties that may arise. We have trained heads, bursars, school admin staff and governors of more than 135 schools, and have provided advice and support to over 180 of our 252 schools in the 3½ years the service has been running.

Part of the role involves working with the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) to provide schools with access to a range of procurement options for a variety of goods and services. Thus these options provide choice to schools (as Ofsted desires), while saving them time and minimising risk by ensuring that quality, value for money solutions are on offer.

As part of the DfES Whiteboard Expansion Scheme in 2004, Cambridgeshire schools received £500,000 towards purchasing and installing whiteboards in classrooms. PASS benchmarked the DfES-endorsed BECTA contracts and found that the contract they had set up through ESPO (using the same suppliers as the BECTA contract) was significantly cheaper. By securing permission from the DfES to use this alternative contract, we saved £72,000 which was used to fit more equipment in schools, directly benefiting the children who attend.

### Highways Outcomes

Road maintenance, as part of our transport asset management, is vital for all members of the public and is a service that impacts residents, visitors and tourists alike. Visitors to shops, offices, schools and hospitals all use the road network, therefore the way the maintenance service is delivered affects a wide set of service users.

The traditional method of working with contractors is often an adversarial one, resulting in claims and disputes. Cambridgeshire has created a Partnership Charter with Ringway Highway Services, our present highways term maintenance contractor, whereby we work closely together with a common mission statement (*Everyone working together creating solutions and success for the Cambridgeshire Highways Network*) plus internal and external values.

The partnership's key internal values embody trust, mutual support, honesty, openness, best value and enjoyment. We have also agreed a series of goals designed to improve the service we deliver and the way we manage our service.

Ringway Highway Service have engaged their sub-contractors in a programme of customer care training to ensure that those on the ground actually doing the work understand the

importance of customer care in the delivery of the service. The recent session included many companies from across the country who work for Ringway in Cambridgeshire and with other Councils.

The success of this approach relies upon the client and contractor working together to deliver the highways maintenance service with early contractor involvement in scheme designs. This ensures that the way work is designed reflects the best way of building it and thus results in a better quality and faster build. The co-location of staff helps to improve communication and a recognition that those doing the work on the ground are a critical part of the process, and that their input and feedback is key to success.

Frontline supervisors are empowered to make service decisions and, through the pre-defined and current schedule of rates, are able to procure work. They involve the partner in the design stage and deliver the service in conjunction with a service provider who has the customer firmly in mind and is fully understanding of their needs.

### Corporate Services Outcomes

The labour market in Cambridgeshire is an unpredictable one, with low unemployment in most areas meaning that it can be very hard to recruit staff for a short fixed period. Rather than forcing agencies in this market to cut their prices (and therefore reduce the wage staff earn), we focused on the quality of the staff agencies can provide and the proportion of the fee that is paid to the temporary worker (the more that goes to the employee, the more the agency values their ability and the more likely they are to stay in that post for the duration of the placement).

In 2004, we let a framework contract for Temporary Staff in the Authority. The contract removes commission fees that used to be paid to the agencies when we took on as a permanent employee a temp who had worked for us for over 6 months. We estimate this alone will save us around £75,000 a year.

Under the framework contract, our users invite all the agencies in each category of provision (administrators, IT staff, social care staff, etc) to 'bid' for each placement. Benefits are that:

- agencies are offering higher-quality temps to improve their chances of winning the placement
- the hourly rates are being reduced as agencies try to gain a competitive edge
- we are paying the market rate so the agencies no longer seek alternative, better paid positions to move staff to and they stay in post for the duration of the placement (thus we only need to recruit and train one person).

Not only are we getting better value for money, but the services we deliver are providing a better quality of staff to help our frontline services.

## **2.2 Leadership, Vision and Strategy** (what you are trying to achieve and political leadership and strategic management that drives this agenda)

### **Leadership: Vision and Strategy**

Value for Money - achieving good or excellent services while spending public money wisely - has been a County Council value, adopted through our corporate plan for a number of years.

In our Comprehensive Performance Assessment Corporate Assessment Report, published by the Audit Commission in 2004, we were given a score of 4 out of 4 in both the Investment and Learning themes. Contract management was listed as a strength in both cases. Cabinet members are committed to the delivery of high quality services and acknowledge the high risk nature of service delivery. This has been demonstrated by their support for investment in

creating a robust contract management structure.

A Best Value Review of Procurement was completed in October 2000. The key outcomes of the Improvement Plan were that the Council would focus on five key areas. These were to:

- develop competition and improve our management of contracts
- improve our relationship with our consortium, ESPO, to ensure better value for money
- implement E-commerce
- develop a range of Corporate Contracts
- develop our procurement standards, core contract documentation and training.

The Improvement Plan has resulted in a overall culture change in procurement across the Council. This has been evidenced by a significant improvement to processes, procedures and contract management which has in turn resulted in the Council achieving better value for goods and services.

Our original Procurement Strategy was written by the Strategic Procurement & Contract Management Service (SPCM) in response to the BVR. It reflects the developments that the Council has made over the past few years, but still firmly embodies the Council's Core Values of Customer Focus, Partnership, Accountability, Value for Money and Equity. It is endorsed by our Strategic Management Team and by our Cabinet, with active support for its implementation from our Member Procurement Champion, Councillor Powley, who is also our ESPO member representative.

As part of our drive to improve the way we manage contracts and the value for money they deliver, we have introduced a Contract Management programme. Contract Managers provide a self-assessment of their contract management and performance on an annual basis; these assessments undergo a peer review by experienced contract managers, who make recommendations to improve the management and performance. Any contract deemed to be causing concern is escalated to the Contract Management Board (chaired by our Chief Executive) for more in-depth scrutiny.

Steps are being taken to develop the focus on benefits realisation and efficiency gains, to link in with the Efficiency Agenda.

The Highways Maintenance and Network Management Best Value Review 2003 (Good service. Excellent prospects for Improvement) sets out the highways procurement strategy for the new contract (2006 and beyond). The Council will move from a separate design and build contract to a combined design and build contract with greater early contractor involvement to further improve buildability. There will also be co-location to improve communications, shared computer systems to reduce process costs, and the creation of a single identity – i.e. all staff will be working for the partnership and delivering the service together.

### **2.3 Community and Customer Engagement** (how you engage your service users and wider community)

#### **Community and Customer Engagement**

Customer focus – putting the customer at the heart of everything we do – is another Council value expressed in our corporate plan. Consultation on procurement is one way this is put into practice.

#### Social Care

All Social Care service specifications follow a formal consultation process with key

stakeholders before being implemented. Within the disability services, new project developments have a strong user focus. The service works with housing associations that ensure service users have a choice of colour scheme, furniture, some aspects of building design and there is a consultation process for service specifications. Users are involved as part of the formal tendering process, being on the interview panel for selection of the care provider and, as contracts are monitored, all key stakeholders (housing, care management, family, carers and users) are contacted for their views on how the service is performing.

Safe in the Knowledge monitoring ensures all key stakeholders are consulted on a range of aspects about the quality of the service. Service Specifications are designed to have a strong locality focus ensuring service users have strong links to their community including local shops, post offices, schools. Questionnaires are designed to be accessible to all, regardless of circumstances, e.g. larger print for older people, and pictorial questionnaires (designed in collaboration with the speech and language therapists) for people with learning disabilities and those who experience communication difficulties.

### Schools Procurement

Property Maintenance in Local Government is risky issue, as recent high-profile incidents – such as an unmaintained air conditioning unit in Barrow-in-Furness that spread fatal Legionnaires Disease, and the gas cooker at a school in Bristol that exploded because of lack of maintenance – demonstrate clearly.

Schools have a duty to ensure that their property is well maintained, but financial pressures and lack of knowledge on the subject can mean that it is not seen as a priority. This can expose both the school and the Council to substantial risk.

Feedback to PASS from a number of schools indicated the problems they were having in securing a competent property management service. In response, PASS led a procurement exercise to set up framework contracts with suitable providers who could demonstrate their competence. Following consultation with the Council's Schools Forum (comprising Councillors, Headteachers and Bursars) and the School Property Managers forum (started by PASS) on their requirements, an EU compliant tender process was conducted in collaboration with ESPO and the County Council's Property Management Team.

A framework contract of suitable providers is now in place for schools to access when they return from the summer break in September 2005.

### Highways

For all our transport projects we actively consult with affected district councils, parish councils and residents before starting the design stage. Exhibitions, letter drops and other forms of information are provided. A pragmatic approach to comments is taken to ensure that as many objections as possible are dealt with before construction. On completion of construction, further consultation is carried out to determine the success of the project in delivering the original project objectives.

We also evaluate our role in delivering the scheme and conduct scheme evaluations to ascertain whether we delivered the desired outcome, that quality is high enough and what we can learn from the project.

For smaller works pre-paid cards are sent to all residents affected by the works and the responses are logged, issues raised are dealt with (such as procedures being put in place with

Ringway to ensure that subcontractors clear up litter properly), and scores compared to inform what serious improvements are needed.

### Corporate Procurement

Our corporate procurement activities require us to consult with our internal as well as external customers. Our building cleaning contract is currently being tendered, and this is a particularly emotive topic, as it not only impacts on the working environment of our staff, but in front line services (such as libraries and Register Offices) it also affects our external customers. We recognise that our staff want to be proud of all the elements of the services they provide to the public, the appearance of the facilities included, and so this contract has been the subject of user consultation on current service and future requirements. Robust mechanisms for feedback and complaints have been developed, and a new approach to monitoring at individual building level will empower our customers to secure the standards they desire.

## **2.4 Actions** (what initiatives or steps you have taken to deliver your vision)

### **Actions**

#### Procurement Strategy

Our Procurement Strategy (see section 2.2, above) is supports the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives, and the Strategic Procurement & Contract Management Service's business plans are based around delivering the Strategy. Our website provides further information for companies on 'Doing Business with the Council', hints and tips for winning business, and advertises for contracts valued at over £75,000. It also has links to the relevant pages of our District Councils' websites.

We have signed up to the SME Concordat. We have invested considerable time in developing links with the local Chambers of Commerce and Business Links to enable them to support businesses in winning Council business. Our aim is to develop SMEs' ability to compete in the marketplace by giving them transferable skills. We aim to support them to win more business from a range of potential customers in the long term, rather than just trying to give them advantages over other organisations in the present. For example, we:

- give detailed guidance on selling to the Council on our website
- include guidance documents with tenders
- inform unsuccessful bidders of why they did not win a contract
- provide feedback on a daily basis to enquirers
- draw up in advance a register of suppliers for upcoming contracts

#### Training and Development

The Council provides various levels of procurement and project management training for staff. We have had for many years courses on project management, procurement and contract management in our training directory, and all our management development programmes cover these topics, at both operational and strategic levels.

At an operational level, staff must have training before they can access the Council's e-procurement system; this training is not just computer-based system-use training, but also includes a significant amount of procurement best practice principles and responsibilities.

Recently the Council has invested in PRINCE2 training for staff involved in larger or higher risk projects, many of whom are also involved in procurement, so they can apply their learning to these projects. Within our SPCM Service, a quarter of staff are full member of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) and 50% more are student members. 75% have CIPS affiliation.

All Social Services Contract Managers, within a year of being appointed, attend the Contracting and Commissioning for Social Care training run by the School of Public Policy at Birmingham University. Regionally, the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Contract Management Group have had training provided through the regional Solicitors Group to enhance the skills of Contract Managers and to develop a consistent approach to procurement.

### Procurement Processes

The Council has standard procedures for procurement set out within our Contract Regulations. However, in order to ensure competition is a central part of all processes, and to make it as easy as possible for staff to undertake it, we have a number of other initiatives:

- quotation pads issued to staff to make it quicker to issue hard-copy requests for quotations
- an electronic version available for staff should they prefer to obtain quotes in this way and where suppliers can accept e-mail or fax – it is not only quicker and cheaper, but environmentally friendly as it uses less paper
- for Framework Contracts, electronic request for quotation forms (specially designed to require minimum information and pre-loaded with the necessary addresses) make the process fast, cheap, and straightforward.
- template documents as part of our Procurement Handbook (on the Intranet) with guidance on undertaking procurement activities, to make it easy for staff to tender, including a 'Quick Calculation' tool to provide timescales for procurement projects by just entering a start or contract award date.
- no additional competitive processes are required when using ESPO, so immediate purchases are possible
- Office of Government Commerce Buying Solutions (OGC BS) contracts can be used with mini-competitions to speed up procurement where the OGC offers a contract that that is not available through ESPO.

### PASS School Purchasing Assessments

The assessment, designed by PASS, has been of considerable interest to the DfES Centre for Procurement Performance (CPP), who have met with PASS on a number of occasions to draw on the team's experience. The savings generated by this unique approach tend to be in the region of 2.5% per school, thus the assessment can identify sufficient changes to enable schools to meet their Gershon Efficiency Targets.

*We were certainly delighted with the outcome of the school procurement review undertaken by PASS. We found it very useful to have an external view of our purchasing processes and the contracts we currently have with a range of suppliers.*

*As every penny counts in the Winhills budget, we found it very useful to have PASS identify areas where we could make savings. These seem very practical recommendations and we shall start implementation them as soon as possible – saving over £2,000 a year will bring significant benefits to the pupils and staff at Winhills.*

Governor, Winhills Primary School, Cambridgeshire

### e-Procurement

Cambridgeshire was a forerunner nationally in implementing e-procurement, went live with Oracle i-Procurement in January 2002 and had 800 users online within three months. Users can order from catalogues for our Corporate Contracts (providing them with quick and easy access to best value options), and can raise free-text orders for other purchases (but are required to provide evidence of competition and Value for Money before being able to add another supplier – in these cases, users are often then made aware of existing, better value

options to use instead). We also have purchase cards for use by staff when off-site, or for ad-hoc and low value purchases (such as travel, accommodation, or buying from websites).

We have taken a decision to undertake e-auctions through ESPO as they can achieve the volumes – and therefore larger savings – more easily than we can. Current e-auctions include bottled water and bin bags, in collaboration with the Central Buying Consortium (CBC) to maximise savings and ensure as many authorities as possible can benefit. We are also producing our business case for implementation of the ESPO Electronic Marketplace for suitable categories of procurement, thus meeting the e-procurement Priority Service Outcome targets.

We raise about 9,000 orders for highway works with Ringway each year and have linked the ordering module with e:business. Recently we have moved to an electronic ordering system with Ringway which has reduced the paperwork and speeded up the delivery of the orders, thus improving the service. We anticipate that by the end of 2005 Ringway will send electronic invoices, thus further improving the administrative links between us.

We have also negotiated a 1.5% discount for payment in 21 days rather than 30 days. The £135,000 saved each year is ploughed back into the service.

Within Social Care, all tender documentation is sent out and tracked through the e-mail system. We have implemented a technical solution, the Commitment Record Implementation Project (CRIP), in order to:

- to improve the method of recording financial commitments and reconciliation with actual spend
- provide accurate financial management information using existing IT systems
- calculate and forecast commitment from data entered in SWIFT (the client database)
- pay care providers electronically without the requirement to submit a paper invoice.

CRIP also:

- pays approximately 35 Independent Sector Providers of home based personal support services for 3,000 Service Users' care on a weekly basis.
- Pays 380 Independent sector providers of Permanent Residential and Nursing Care for 3,000 Service Users' care
- invoices 1,500 Service Users to collect income on a four-weekly basis.

**2.5 Partnerships** (who you work with to deliver excellent services and what makes these partnerships work)

### **Partnerships**

Improving services by pulling in the same direction with our partners is a third Council value which comes into play with procurement. The Audit Commission (2004) noted that "the council has continued to build on the strengths... It has continued to invest in innovative partnerships to deliver complex aims... This is an area of strength for the council."

### Social Care

The Contracts and Care Placements Unit has the responsibility through a number of Section 31 Agreements to carry out the contracting function for Social Care on behalf of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership Trust. Particularly in the case of the PCTs the Unit acts as the interface between the commissioners and the providers in order to achieve an effective working partnership arrangement between the locality teams and the independent sector providers, both private and voluntary.

*In Cambridgeshire our experience of working in partnership with Social Services has been wholly positive. The authority consulted the independent service providers at an early stage so that they were able to contribute to the thinking behind the chosen strategy. (This rarely happens despite the fact that the independent sector delivers most of the domiciliary care in the UK).*

*By establishing a declared rate, the County enabled the service providers to work with rather than against each other and achieved the major benefit of very experienced service providers working together as a team to achieve the fundamental objectives. Overall, I think most people would agree that the end result represents Best Value and that the arrangements in place fit nicely with the Independence, Well-being and Choice agenda.*

Mike Rogers – Home Care Provider

Regular meetings are held within the local areas that involve the commissioners and the independent sector to look at issues of unmet need, workforce development and commissioning strategy. This provides a forum for analysis of gaps in service, planning and developing strategies that bridge the gaps in mutually acceptable ways. The process also ensures service providers are able to develop their services to meet the strategic direction of the commissioners. One Contracts Manager represents Cambridgeshire County Council at the Older People's reference Group within Cambridgeshire to ensure that strategy and policy is communicated through this group to service users now and in the future.

Cambridgeshire has a commitment to working with the Voluntary Sector to support the delivery of community services and Cabinet members made a decision in 2003 that services delivered via a grant payment of £3,000 or more would move over to a formal contract arrangement in order to provide longer term stability for those groups.

*As a small local charity, support from the Councils in the area is vital to enable us to provide our services. Cambridgeshire CC have worked with us for many years to ensure that our services are available to support young people in the county who require information, counselling, advice, advocacy or just a safe place to go for help.*

Paul Morrish, Chair, Centre 33

*The process of negotiating the contract between CCC and Age Concern Cambs was handled very professionally. As well as the obvious and necessary attention to the standards of service delivery required, we found a great understanding of the needs and expectations of the end user as well. It was especially helpful to be able to talk over issues specific to a voluntary organisation - for example working with volunteers rather than paid staff - and negotiating changes to the contract wording to accommodate our individual organisation.*

Gloria Culyer, Director, Age Concern Cambridgeshire

### Highways

Our main partnership is with Ringway Highway Services for the Term Maintenance contract, with further partnerships with the Traffic Management Services Contractor, the Structural Maintenance Contractor and the Major Works Framework Contractor. We have signed partnership charters with each, have set key performance indicators, and are working to deliver better services through working together. (see section 2.1, above)

### Corporate Services

The Council assesses progress against all National Procurement Strategy targets. We have achieved three of the targets applicable to the *Partnering & Collaboration* theme:

- incorporating our approach to partnering and collaboration

- incorporating the new trading powers into our procurement strategy
- including robust and challenging options appraisals in Best Value Reviews.

We have achieved two of the added *One Year On* Priorities:

- establishing a baseline for EU procurement processes, and
- collaborating with neighbouring Councils.

We are part-way towards completing the two remaining targets on reducing the length of major projects under EU procurement procedures.

In 2003, we created the Cambridgeshire Collaborative Procurement Group – a group where all the District Councils and the County share good practice, agree joint procurement agendas and strategies, and identify opportunities to work together on procurement activities. Recent examples include our Print framework contract (which one District used to save £36,000 on a number of printing projects), and the creation of a standard training programme, with a council-specific section (to be tailored to cover Contract Standing Orders, internal policies, etc) and a generic procurement section (covering EU procurement, best practice, etc) that can be used by all councils.

**2.6 Equalities and Diversity** (how you routinely consider equality of access to services, the various needs of different communities and develop strategies to address diverse views)

One of the Council's longstanding core values is Equity – serving all our communities well, making sure services are accessible to all and are fairly allocated. In all tenders for Council contracts, tenderers are required to have an active approach to equal opportunities. All contracted providers are required to have an equal opportunities policy and services must be delivered in accordance with regulation.

All Social Care providers have access to an interpreting service free of charge through the Local Authorities Service Level Agreement with CINTRA (the Cambridge Interpretation and Translation Agency). Information is provided through the County Council Internet site about how to deliver care services to people from differing cultures and ethnicity through ethnic community profiles.

When staff transfer is involved, TUPE will apply and we work hard to ensure that pensions are broadly comparable. We also involve the Trade Unions where significant numbers of staff will be transferring. To improve customer service, the old highway Agency Agreements with Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council have been terminated, to enable one organisation to provide the service rather customers having to contact different organisations depending on where they live. We will also be replicating the single approach in the new contract which will be for the whole County rather than parts. A number of staff transferred to Cambridgeshire recently with full TUPE terms and conditions.

### PART 3: CASE STUDY

The information in this section should not exceed 2 pages in length.

**Outline, with reference to a specific case (a geographical area, a particular section of the community, an individual or a particular issue) how you have taken action to address an issue and the impact that this action has had.**

*This case study will be used to assess how your leadership, vision and strategy and partnership working draws upon the messages received through community and customer engagement and feeds through to actions and ultimately to improved outcomes (including outcomes that seek to promote equality and diversity).*

Cambridgeshire's Case Study is the Commissioning Strategy for people with a learning disability with particular reference to the commissioning of a Supported Living Project in Willingham, Cambs.

The aim of the Commissioning Strategy for people with a learning disability is to offer services that give them the greatest degree of choice and autonomy locally in Cambridgeshire rather than automatically making placements in residential care settings with traditional-style day services. Supported Living projects enable the young people to hold secure tenancies, instead of being in a care setting, and to have full access to their benefit entitlements. This gives them choice on how the entitlement is spent and puts them in a position where they themselves are able to influence the way they are supported, what they do throughout the day, and who they do it with. The expectations and aspirations of young people and their parents have been raised through early involvement in the development of services.

Early involvement in these developments works most effectively for young people with profound disability who are moving through the assessment and care management process between Children's Services and Adult Services. Services are planned in advance with partners from housing, health and the parents to identify the style of service which best meets the needs of the young people.

The supported living project at Wilford Furlong in Willingham, a village near Cambridge, was opened in October 2004 for six young people of 16-19 all attending special schools. This group of young people all have significant physical health needs and significant learning disabilities that require time from the people who work with them to get to know them, to build trust, and to understand their communication needs. As carers work on different communication methods, these methods are then employed by the young people to comment on the service as we monitor it using Safe in the Knowledge.

The process of letting the contract for a provider for the supported living service has had a strong customer focus throughout, with support provided from the Council's contracts team to enable parents and service users to have confidence in and an understanding of the procurement procedures. A Parent Group was set up, to help develop the service specification, and this group was consulted during the process to ensure that the outcomes of the contract would provide a high-quality service that allowed their children to experience independence in a safe and secure environment.

Members of the Parent group and an advocate (an independent person appointed to speak up on behalf of the service users) were also part of the evaluation and selection process and two parents and the advocate attended the formal selection interviews of shortlisted organisations. All the parties involved understood the importance of selecting a service provider who would be committed to working with the Council over the life of the contract, so

that the support provided to the service users would meet their needs throughout the whole of their time in the supported living project. The process was carefully planned so that contract letting process was completed one year in advance of the project opening, to ensure a smooth transition for the group of young people from home/school to a more independent lifestyle.

The successful provider of care and support became an integral part of the Project Team, a multi-agency partnership. The Project Team consisted of representatives from the Housing Association responsible for the build of the new project, the appointed advocate, occupational therapists (to ensure the physical needs of service users could be met within the build design), care managers (addressing the social care needs of the service users) and specialist community nurses (ensuring that the health needs of service users were met). There were also development managers from the Learning Disability Partnership and from the Care and Support provider to see the project through to completion.

The Care and Support provider was appointed a full year before the opening the project to ensure there was sufficient time to allow them and their staff to work directly with the service users and their parents before they moved into their new home. This time was critical, as it enabled both service users and their parents to build relationships with the Care and Support provider team, so that when the time came to make the transition, all parties were happy and comfortable with the change.

Key tasks undertaken in that year between September 2003 and October 2004 were:

- Visiting service users at school in various locations across the country and liaising with education colleagues to gather relevant information on how they are supported
- Meeting with Parents to explore parental expectations and seek supporting information
- Working with the service users and the Housing Association to choose colour schemes for the building and furniture requirements
- Link with the local health services, GP, and District Nurses to ensure health needs could be met at a local level
- Drawing up initial care and support plans for each service user
- Exploring day time opportunities in the area
- Reporting back to the project team ensuring each aspect of the project development was completed on time.

The advantage of this long lead-in time is that all involved have developed a good working relationship and there is a shared understanding of the way the service will operate. All involved take ownership of their own roles within the project to ensure its success.

*Working with Cambridgeshire's procurement strategy allows for integrity and consistency for providers due to the explicit nature of the service specifications with a clear intention from tender to service delivery. The lead in time for the Wilford Furlong project assisted in the transition process especially for those young people leaving the family home.*

John Ellis, Operations Manager, Pentahact

## PART 4: DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE AND LESSONS

The information given in this section should not exceed 2 pages in length.

**Authorities will be asked to provide more detailed information on their dissemination proposals if short-listed.**

**4.1 On the basis of the practice you have described in Parts 2 and 3, what are the key messages you have to share and whom do you see as the audiences for these?**

**a) Factors that underpin your success –**

- Strategic Approach to procurement with senior level support
- Focus on Core Values – using procurement to deliver our corporate agenda
- “Don’t Let and Forget” – the work doesn’t stop when the contract starts
- Challenge, collaborate, and be willing to try something new.
- Work with Partners to deliver services, in particular with early Contractor involvement

**b) Successful initiatives –**

- Safe in the Knowledge
- Online Procurement Handbook
- Schools Procurement Project/ Service
- Contract Performance Programme, supporting the Efficiency Agenda
- Cambridgeshire Highways Partnership
- Customer Consultation Cards
- Implementation of electronic payment and client invoicing system which projects financial outturn
- Internal Gateway Review of Library Database system contract, now being rolled out

**c) Audiences –**

- procurement staff in Local Government - general/ corporate, social care, highways
- non-procurement staff who have an involvement in procurement-related projects/ activities e.g. finance or IT staff involved in e-procurement implementations
- LEAs who want to know more about supporting procurement in schools
- senior managers who wish to see alternative approaches to procurement-related activities
- non local government staff who want to see how we do things

**4.2 Beyond the national Learning Exchange conference and Open Day, how might you work with other Beacons within your theme to maximise the impact of your dissemination activity?**

- Regional approach to delivering workshops that may or may not include presentations from contracted providers/service users.
- Specific presentations to individual Authorities where the procurement practice is weak and acting as mentor for those Authorities during any development that they may want to undertake.
- Themed procurement workshops (for example, on Social Care, Highways, Corporate Services, Efficiency)
- Use of scaled-down Gateway and Best Value Review style processes or Critical Friend groups with other Local Authorities who are seeking to make improvements but are unsure how.

**4.3 What experience does your authority have in sharing lessons with others? Give examples of where your dissemination activity has supported other authorities to improve.**

**e-Procurement:** Cambridgeshire is recognised as one of the earliest successful adopters of e-Procurement, having gone live in January 2002. We have been a Board Member of the National e-Procurement Project since the start, and have shared our learning with many organisations through case studies, national workshops and presentations, and by phone and e-mail.

**Procurement Best Practice:** In 1999, Cambridgeshire created an electronic Procurement Handbook to support our staff in all aspects of the procurement process. In 2000, it was published by CIPFA; a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was published in 2004 and has sold over 400 copies.

**Schools Procurement:** Following the publication of our Handbook, the DfES asked Cambridgeshire to undertake a pathfinder project in Procurement in Schools. We developed a tailored version of the Handbook specifically for schools, and it was again published by CIPFA (with a free copied issues to all English LEAs) as part of a package for LEAs incorporating the materials and learning we gathered throughout the project. Staff have presented at national events on this topic and are regularly contacted by other Authorities interested in our work.

**Cambridgeshire Procurement Group:** We drove the creation of a collaboration group comprising the County and District Councils. This group allows all parties to learn from one another's experiences and make use of opportunities to improve value for money.

**Oracle Reference Site:** As a reference site, we are regularly visited and contacted by other potential and new customers, to find out more about what we have done and how they can make use of our learning and approaches, using 1-2-1 sessions, presentations and Q&A sessions.

**East Of England Directors of Environment and Transport (EEDET) Group.** Director level group for all local authorities in eastern England for support and sharing of ideas. Has a structure of sub groups for all the functional areas of the department and supporting groups for the sub areas again for support and sharing of ideas.

**Procurement Groups** for both road condition surveys to combine quantities and share expertise. Also for Winter Services for a number of highway authorities and trunk road agents in East Anglia.

**Lincolnshire County Council's Winter Maintenance Best Value Review,** critical friend to act as challenge to present practices and share expertise.

**Well Maintained Highways** – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management – Had representation on the National Steering Group and provided technical advice and assistance in the preparation of the document

**Guidance Document for Highway Infrastructure Asset Valuation** – Cambridgeshire chaired the Steering Group in the preparation of the document

**Beacon Status for Public Transport, Asset Management, and Social Inclusion through use of ICT** – so the Council already has staff experienced in Beacon activities

**General contact** - We are regularly contacted by other Authorities within the Eastern Region for information about Commissioning, Service Specifications and in particular the monitoring tool. Presentations have already been made to a number of Authorities that cover Cambridgeshire's approach to commissioning, procuring and monitoring of social care contracts.

**National Commissioning and Contracting Conference** - recently ran a workshop on outcome focussed monitoring.

**Japanese Visitors** - Hosted a visit of Japanese delegates from municipalities of Tokyo looking at developing a social care market for older people living in the community with a particular emphasis on contracting and service monitoring. Second visit arranged for November 2005.

**CIPFA** have shown an interest in commercially developing the Safe in the Knowledge tool to encompass all contract monitoring.

**Project NOMAD** – Cambridgeshire have led the ODPM's National Mobile Working project.

**Inter Authorities Group (IAG)** – Cambridgeshire is a member of the Executive Committee of the IAG. We have been invited to speak at the October 2005 Seminar on Efficiencies in Local Government.