



Friday 7 March 2008

Winners of the ShiNE Awards 2008

The winners of the first ever local government awards for the North East have been announced.

The ShiNE Awards 2008 were held at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton Hotel last night. They recognise the achievements, performance and improvement of the region's 25 councils and four fire and rescue services since July 2005.

The awards, which include ten categories that reflect the commitments, areas of policy and work of North East local government, will be used to help improve the performance of local authorities through the sharing of ideas, knowledge and examples of good practice. From a total of 228 submissions, 47 entries were shortlisted by a panel of independent judges.

The authorities which have won a ShiNE Award 2008 are: Alnwick (two awards); Chester-le-Street, Derwentside; Gateshead (two awards); Middlesbrough; South Tyneside; Sunderland; Wear Valley.

A Partnership Working Award also recognised the contribution of Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, Castle Morpeth Borough Council, Tynedale Council and Northumberland County Council, which all worked in partnership with Alnwick District Council to develop a popular walking route, the St Oswald's Way.

See supplementary sheets for details of all winners, judges' comments, highly commended and shortlisted entries.

The ShiNE Awards 2008 were organised by the Association of North East Councils, the political voice for local government in the North East.

Councillor Mick Henry, Chair of the Association, said: "The ShiNE Awards 2008 showcase how the region's local authorities and fire and rescue services make a positive difference to the citizens and communities they represent."

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The ShiNE Awards 2008 were sponsored by the Improvement Partnership for North East Local Government. Launched in July 2005, this region-wide voluntary partnership is led by North East local authorities and agencies with a shared goal of improvement.

Councillor Henry added: "The ShiNE Awards not only recognise the hard work and commitment of local authorities and fire and rescue services to achieve and deliver high standards, but also contribute to their continuing improvement through the sharing of good practice, knowledge, innovation, ideas."

Notes for Editors

1. See the supplementary sheets for those local authorities that have won a ShiNE Award, been highly commended or shortlisted. This includes comments on the winning submissions by the judges.

Please contact local authorities directly for requests to interview their representatives or for more information about their submissions.

2. The ten categories of awards were: Engaging with Young People; Unsung Hero; Reputation; Value for Money; Green Award; Crime and Community Safety; Public Service Delivery; Place Shaping; Partnership Working; Improvement.

3. North East councils are the best performing in the country, according to the independent Audit Commission. In February 2007, the Commission confirmed that three quarters of single tier and county councils in the North East had achieved the top 4 star rating in its annual assessment of their performance, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Commission stated that this made the region the best performing in England for the fourth consecutive year.

4. For more information on the Improvement Partnership, please visit:
www.northeastcouncils.gov.uk/improvement.

5. The Association of North East Councils is the political voice for local government in the North East. It represents all 25 local authorities in the region, throughout Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and the Tees Valley on issues of concern to them and the communities they serve.

It is a cross-Party organisation, with all of its Members democratically elected and accountable politicians.

For more information on the ShiNE Awards 2008, please visit:

www.shineawards2008.co.uk or to request interviews, please contact Neal Smith, Media and PR Manager, on 0191 261 3915, 07940 879 419 (mobile) or email

neal.smith@northeastcouncils.gov.uk or Bethan Hughes, Communications Officer, on 0191 261 3917, 07957 823 864 (mobile) or email

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SHiNE Awards 2008 – Results

The Engaging with Young People Award

Winner: Derwentside District Council (with support from Durham County Council) - SPICE (The Special Programme for the Implementation of Children's Elections)

Judges' comments:

The SPICE campaign generated positive responses to all issues raised and ensured young people felt they had been really listened to and successfully engaged with. They have fully participated with Derwentside District Council which has successfully acted upon their work, opinions and concerns.

Highly Commended: North Tyneside Council - "Have Your Say"

Shortlisted:

- Blyth Valley Borough Council - Blyth Valley's Make-a-Move Saturday Night Inclusion Leagues
- City of Durham Council - Future Business Magnates
- Durham County Council (in partnership with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service) - Bikewise Mini Moto Club
- Middlesbrough Council - "You can manage without criminal damage!"

The Unsung Hero Award

Winner: Sunderland City Council - Ralph Sidney

Judges' comments:

This might be an area of work that can be taken for granted but Ralph Sidney, Operations Manager (Drainage) for Sunderland City Council, is truly passionate about his job. He has demonstrated excellent commitment and dedication to public service each and every working day of his 39-year career. He has shown great leadership to his loyal team and has never been shy of getting his hands dirty while leading them as they complete more than 8,000 jobs a year in almost 1,000 miles of drains, to help improve the lives and well-being of people and communities in Sunderland.

Highly Commended: Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council – Jo's Motivation for Berwick - Jo Curtis

Shortlisted:

- Alnwick District Council - Syd Carr
- Northumberland County Council - Singing the Praises of the Man with the Van - Donald White
- Sunderland City Council - Andy Lamb, Youth Advocate

The Reputation Award

Winner: South Tyneside Council - Improved Reputation

Judges' comments:

South Tyneside Council has been brilliant at effectively demonstrating and communicating how it delivers its services, and at improving and managing its reputation. It has achieved this through the use of strong communications, branding and evaluation together with an ongoing commitment to an open and honest policy that builds trust and dialogue with citizens and communities. It has delivered excellent internal communications that have also ensured staff participation and buy-in to help it improve its reputation.

Highly Commended: Sunderland City Council - Creating a Better Reputation for a Council - and a City

Shortlisted:

- City of Durham Council - Durham City News
- Durham County Council - Countywide Residents' Magazine
- Newcastle City Council - Improving Customer Satisfaction by Improving Service Delivery

The Value for Money Award

Winner: Alnwick District Council - Alnwick Community Projects

Judges' comments:

This was an innovative project by Alnwick District Council which produced significant and clear benefits for the community. It created new affordable housing, an attractive new public park and a new purpose built council depot, all delivered at no cost to the authority or local council tax payers.

Highly Commended: Sunderland City Council - Overnight Home Care - Investing in Customer Peace of Mind

Shortlisted:

- Northumberland County Council - Transforming Finance in Northumberland County Council

The Green Award

Winner: Gateshead Council - Transport Improvements

Judges' comments:

Gateshead Council delivered a real leading edge project that clearly demonstrated the changes made internally within its transport department to both vehicles and fuel consumption. The submission had addressing the challenge of climate change at its heart, and it was able to demonstrate very tangible results which included not only a vast reduction in the authority's carbon emissions, but also a visible reduction in accident rates.

Highly Commended: North Tyneside Council - Tynemouth Sand Dunes Project

Shortlisted:

- District of Easington Council - Pride in Easington
- North Tyneside Council - Waggonways Network
- Wear Valley District Council - Innovative Solar Panels Hit the Dales

The Crime and Community Safety Award

Winner: Middlesbrough Council - STEM - Community Safety in East Middlesbrough

Judges' comments:

The STEM project has demonstrated a strong and effective partnership approach which has included Middlesbrough Council, Cleveland Police and other agencies working together with local people. The local community has had a real sense of involvement with this partnership, and their participation and engagement with it has been crucial to making a major difference to local people's quality of life and well-being.

Highly Commended: Newcastle City Council - The Bottlewatch Scheme in the East End of Newcastle

Shortlisted:

- Darlington Borough Council (in partnership with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service) - Streetsafe Week
- Newcastle City Council - ARCH and Westgate Community College Learning Mentors - Conflict Management Training for Young People
- Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service - Fireworks Course

The Public Service Delivery Award

Winner: Wear Valley District Council (with support from Durham County Council) - Wellness on Wheels

Judges' comments:

Wear Valley District Council has had to tackle the challenge of reaching people in a large and sparsely populated geographical area and encourage them to improve their health and fitness. The solution was an innovative and incredible project that has ensured a lasting legacy to local community groups and helped to improve people's health and well-being.

Highly Commended: Sunderland City Council - Sunderland Customer Service Centre - Bunny Hill

Shortlisted:

- Darlington Borough Council - The Dolphin Centre
- Northumberland County Council - Providing an Innovative Service in Health and Social Care
- Tynedale Council - Hexham Sensory Garden

The Place Shaping Award

Winner: Gateshead Council - Transformed - Place Shaping in Gateshead

Judges' comments: Gateshead Council has demonstrated an incredible track record in engaging with communities. It has involved elected Councillors and citizens at the heart of its approach and created and delivered tremendous projects that have placed it on a world stage. Gateshead Council has demonstrated it is committed to avoiding complacency and to involving local people in its aspirational "2030 Vision" for its future.

Highly Commended: South Tyneside Council - The Place Shaping Award - Horsley Hill Estate

Shortlisted:

- City of Durham Council - Regenerating the Villages of Durham
- District of Easington Council (in partnership with Durham County Council) - Regenerating a Community

The Partnership Working Award

Winner: Alnwick District Council (in partnership with Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, Castle Morpeth Borough Council, Tynedale Council and Northumberland County Council) - St Oswald's Way

Judges' comments:

This project was initiated by local residents who approached their local authority for help and advice. This resulted in the development of a genuinely innovative and strong partnership, led by Alnwick District Council and which included Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, Castle Morpeth Borough Council, Tynedale Council and Northumberland County Council. With a clear vision, combined with the commitment of a wide range of public and private sector partners, this project continues to deliver great results.

Highly Commended:

Sunderland City Council - Wellness in Sunderland - Better Health for a Better Future

Shortlisted:

- Middlesbrough Council - Easterside Neighbourhood Management Project
- Northumberland County Council - The Northumberland Renewable Energy Group - project innovator, generator and facilitator
- Tynedale Council - Hexham Community Partnership

The Improvement Award

Winner: Chester-le-Street District Council - From a 'Poor Poor' to a 'Good Good'

Judges' comments:

Chester-le-Street District Council has been utterly transformed. It went from one of the poorest rated in the country to be rated "Good Good" in such a short space of time it has become a national first – the most radically improved council in the country. It is now an example of best practice for other authorities. It demonstrated a great recovery plan with improvement encompassed in every aspect of the council's work. With a rate of improvement that has been truly phenomenal, this council epitomises what the Improvement Partnership for North East Local Government is all about.

Highly Commended: Newcastle City Council - ARCH and Westgate Community College Learning Mentors - Conflict Management Training for Young People

Shortlisted:

- County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service – Zero Tolerance (Fire Watch) Campaign within Derwentside
- Darlington Borough Council - Darlington's Gateway to Success