

Parks & Open Space *Towards an Excellent Service* (TAES)

Working Together Towards Excellence

Introduction

Towards an Excellent Service (TAES) is widely recognised as a significant tool to underpin continuous improvement and to help you thrive in the CAA environment. The current national direction of travel for local government focuses on self-driven and peer-supported improvement – CABE Space, GreenSpace and the IPGS (and other sector agencies and practitioners) have developed TAES to provide an easy-to-use tool for the parks & open space sector, which reflects these two principles and which is aligned with the broader Culture & Sport Improvement Toolkit (CSIT).

Since April 2008 organisations have been using TAES and CSIT in conjunction with Peer-Led Challenge and other peer support for the improvement activity. Peer-led Challenge is a key part of the national Culture & Sport Improvement Strategy and a powerful, cost-effective and sustainable alternative to external Validation.

Following the successful programme of TAES workshops last year, CABE Space, GreenSpace and the IPGS are keen to continue promoting and supporting TAES, along with Peer-Led Challenge and other structured peer support, especially given the positive feedback from the sector. The IPGS (in conjunction with Steve Wood & Associates) is delighted to be able to offer the following two learning & development opportunities in the South West. As soon as the workshop and course are completed, we will be supporting the region to implement the tools and take advantage of the excellent opportunities of peer-supported improvement.

Implementing TAES Workshop (15 October 2009)

This one-day workshop will give your team the underpinning knowledge and skills to enable you to plan and implement a successful TAES programme and explore peer-supported improvement opportunities, whilst enhancing your understanding of - and passion for - *Excellence*.

The Workshop covers the following areas:

- **What is TAES and what it is for**
- **Understanding the TAES Criteria**
- **Planning and scoping your TAES activity**
- **Self-Assessment methods and skills**
- **Peer-supported improvement opportunities**

Peer-Led Challenge Course (27 & 28 October 2009)

We are very happy to present this opportunity for you to complete the national Peer-Led Challenge training course. This extremely popular two day course has been tailored to meet the needs of the parks & green space sector. Delegates completing the two-day course will be able to conduct effective Peer-Led Challenge and will develop their understanding of TAES. Trained peers also have the opportunity to join the reserve list of IDeA Accredited Officer Peers.

Peer-led Challenge involves organisations within a regional or sub-regional network pairing up and providing a challenge to each other's Self-Assessments, to ensure accurate, rigorous and incisive Self-Assessment findings and to develop partnership working which will assist future joint improvement work and sharing of knowledge and practices.

Peer-Led Challenge is suitable for all local authorities (and their partners) using – or thinking of using - TAES. It is valuable even if the organisation's Self-Assessment has already been Validated, as organisations will benefit significantly from the Peer-Led Challenge training, conducting Peer-Led Challenge and the Local Improvement Network activities which follow. The great advantage of Peer-Led Challenge is that both the receivers and providers of support learn from the process; therefore the capacity and capability of the sector continues to grow.

The two-day course covers the following areas:

- **What is Peer-Led Challenge (and what it isn't!)**
- **Enhanced understanding of the TAES Criteria**
- **The Peer-Led Challenge process**
- **An opportunity to practice Peer-Led Challenge skills within a safe 'bubble'**
- **What happens next?**

The Main Benefits of this Improvement Activity

We aim to develop a successful improvement programme in the South West, (along with other regions around the country), based on TAES, Peer-Led Challenge and other peer-supported improvement activities. Organisations taking part in this improvement programme will benefit from the following:

- Clear, workable improvement plans, containing improvement projects, which will change the way the organisation works and lead to improved outcomes for customers, staff, partners and the community
- Measurement of present and future organisational health
- Implementing self-driven and peer-supported improvement approaches which are recognised as good practice by relevant national agencies and which are in line with the national improvement strategy for local government
- Robust external challenge, recognised by the IDeA, delivered in a very cost effective way by your peers
- The opportunity to improve quickly by learning from other organisations in the network and working on joint learning and improvement projects
- Training and development programmes based on the identified strengths and areas for improvement (and therefore tailored to meet your specific needs)
- Many opportunities to improve partnership working across the network and with external partners
- Enhanced understanding of what 'Excellence' means for the organisation, the concepts and practices of continuous improvement and best practice (the use of Peer-Led Challenge encourages this knowledge to stay within the sector)
- The opportunity to become accredited as an IDeA Officer Peer
- Enhanced knowledge of the organisation and ownership of the service amongst a wide range of staff
- The opportunity to implement a sustainable cycle of Self-Assessment, external challenge and improvement
- Enjoyable and valuable training and development