

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL UPDATE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND
HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

21 FEBRUARY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To confirm the Council's 2007 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Direction of Travel statement issued by the Audit Commission on 7 February.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendations

THAT the report be noted.

Reasons

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) measures how well councils are delivering services for local people and communities. It looks at performance from a range of perspectives and combines a set of judgements to provide both a simple and easy to understand rating and a picture of where councils should focus activity to secure improvement. It brings together information from other inspectorates to form an overall view of the performance of councils.

The direction of travel assessment is intended to reflect a council's progress towards achieving improvement in the services it delivers to the public. It is reported alongside a council's CPA category to give a two-dimensional view about its performance. In summary:

- The CPA star category gives a rating about current performance.
- Direction of travel provides an assessment about the direction and strength of improvement a council is showing.

Considerations

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

1. The Council's overall CPA score has fallen from 3* to 2*. The Audit Commission assessment is retrospective and relates predominantly to performance to the year-end 31st March 2007. A comparison of the scores between 2006 and 2007 is shown in the table below:

	2006	2007
Use of Resources	3	2
Children and young people	2	2
Social care (adults)	2	2
Benefits	2	3
Culture	3	3
Environment	2	3
Housing	2	1

2. The application of the rules-based approach used by the Audit Commission has meant that the main determinant in the deteriorating overall score is the change in rating from a 2* to a 1* for Housing.
3. However, it should be noted that although the score for Housing has fallen to 1, this does not represent a deterioration in performance; instead, this is the result of a one-year change in the selection of housing performance indicators used by the Audit Commission for the purpose of the assessment, which do not reflect the success that the service has had in moving families out of temporary accommodation.
4. To put the Audit Commission judgement into context, the following table shows the star ratings by government office region:

Overall CPA star rating by government office region							
	Number of councils	4 star	3 star	2 star	1 star	0 star	Subject to review
East Midlands	9	3	2	3	1	0	0
East of England	10	1	8	1	0	0	0

Overall CPA star rating by government office region							
	Number of councils	4 star	3 star	2 star	1 star	0 star	Subject to review
London	33	10	21	2	0	0	0
North East	12	10	2	0	0	0	0
North West	22	11	4	5	1	0	1
South East	19	5	12	2	0	0	0
South West	15	3	7	5	0	0	0
West Midlands	14	4	7	3	0	0	0
Yorks and Humber	15	8	5	2	0	0	0
Total	149	55	68	23	2	0	1

5. Further changes to the performance indicators used in the housing service assessment for 2008 are expected to return housing to a score of 3, again without this necessarily reflecting any change in aggregate performance. If all other service scores were to be maintained at the 2007 level, the overall 2008 CPA score for the Council, which will be published by the Audit Commission in February 2009, is forecast to remain at 2*. This would come about as a result of the removal of protection of the 2002 Corporate Assessment score, which has been applied since 2005, and of its replacement by the 2005 Corporate Assessment score of 2.
6. The CPA system will end with the 2008 judgement, being replaced by the new system of the Corporate Area Assessment. A separate report about the preparation for the new system is on the agenda for this meeting.

Direction of Travel

7. For the third year running, the Audit Commission has judged the council as **improving adequately**.
8. The following summary has been provided to support the 2007 direction of travel statement:

"Herefordshire Council is improving adequately. Performance has improved in

most priority areas. Children's services remain adequate overall with some improvement in exam results and arrangements for looked after children. Progress in adult social care has been steady with more vulnerable people helped to live at home. Tax collection and benefits administration have improved, along with the speed of planning applications, street cleanliness and recycling levels. However, it costs more to collect waste and there has been limited progress on the Council's business transformation programme. The Council continues to contribute to improvements in road safety, regeneration initiatives and better health for children and vulnerable adults through working in partnerships. Value for money is reasonable but is not measured consistently. Progress is being made on most improvement plans but the overall picture is not being reported clearly. Further improvements are expected to result from the new managers of adult social care and a joint head of Human Resources with the Primary Care Trust. Some significant weaknesses in the governance of ICT have been recognised by the Council and plans agreed to address them."

9. To put the Audit Commission judgement into context, the following table shows the direction of travel assessment by government office region:

Direction of Travel judgement by government office region						
	Number of councils	Improving strongly	Improving well	Improving adequately	Not improving adequately	Subject to review
East Midlands	9	1	4	4	0	0
East of England	10	1	3	5	0	1
London	33	9	22	1	0	1
North East	12	2	7	0	0	3
North West	22	3	12	6	0	1
South East	19	2	10	6	0	1
South West	16	2	9	5	0	0
West Midlands	14	2	11	1	0	0
Yorks and Humber	15	0	10	2	0	3

Direction of Travel judgement by government office region						
	Number of councils	Improving strongly	Improving well	Improving adequately	Not improving adequately	Subject to review
Total	150 ¹	22	88	30	0	10

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Risk Management

The following are intended to mitigate against the risk of the council's performance failing to improve:

- regular updates to CMB on performance of the indicators included in the Audit Commission's, performance information profile, which is used as part of the direction of travel statement.
- the Corporate Plan 2008-11.
- the Comprehensive Area Assessment preparation programme.

Consultees

Not applicable.

Background Papers

CPA – The Harder Test: Scores and analysis of performance in single tier and county councils 2007 (<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPORT/8906AF89-014B-4462-9094-5DE69A5D5C8F/CPATheHarderTest.pdf>)

¹ The Isles of Scilly are exempt from a star rating in 2007 because of the applicability of the methodology to the island's circumstances. This accounts for the variance between the number of authorities with * ratings and the number with direction of travel judgements.