

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY & FINANCE

CABINET

19 MARCH 2009

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To report the Council's 2008 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Direction of Travel judgement published by the Audit Commission on 5 March.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

THAT the report be noted.

Reasons

This report presents the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scores for the council. From 1st April CPA will be replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which will take a much wider look across local public services, focusing on how well people are being served by their local public services working together, not just how individual bodies perform.

Considerations

1. CPA measures how well councils are delivering services for local people and communities. It does this by bringing together information from the Audit Commission and other inspectorates to form an overall view of the performance of each council.
2. CPA has two elements:
 - a. The CPA star category gives a rating about performance in the previous year, based on an aggregation of service scores, plus a 'Use of Resources' judgement and a periodic Corporate Assessment, the last of which for Herefordshire Council was carried out in 2005.
 - b. The Direction of Travel assessment judges the direction and strength of improvement.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

3. The council's overall CPA score remains **2***. Although unchanged, this represents an improvement on 2007, which relied on the protected use of the original corporate assessment from 2002, applied to all authorities that faced a fall in ratings following the introduction of 'CPA – the harder test' in 2005. This protection no longer applies, since all authorities have now been assessed under the harder test regime.
4. The following table shows our equivalent scores for the previous three years of CPA:

		2005	2006	2007	2008
Level 1 Services	Use of Resources	3	3	2	3
	Children and Young people	2	2	2	2
	Social Care (adults)	2	2	2	2
Level 2 Services	Benefits	3	2	3	4
	Culture	2	3	3	2
	Environment	2	2	3	3
	Housing	4	2	1	3

	Corporate Assessment	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	2
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	OVERALL CATEGORY	3*	3*	2*	2*
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5. The overall score is arrived at using a matrix of minimum scores from all three elements (Corporate Assessment, Level 1 services and Level 2 services)

Direction of Travel

6. The Audit Commission has judged the council to be ***improving well***, compared with the *improving adequately* judgement received for the previous three years.
7. The following summary has been provided to support the 2008 direction of travel judgement:

“Herefordshire Council is improving well. Performance has improved in most priority areas. Good outcomes are being secured for children, although assessments for social care and reviews of child protection are slower than average. Exam results and safeguarding of vulnerable children have improved. Most areas of adult social care have improved with waiting times for

¹ The 2005 Corporate Assessment was 2, but continued use of the 2002 score of 3 applied until all other authorities had undergone a revised corporate assessment

assessments reduced and more people being helped to live at home. The new Rotherwas access road is a springboard for future regeneration, although a slowdown in progressing planning applications weakens ability to respond to developers. More waste is recycled and composted but waste collection and disposal costs continue to increase. Responses to rising housing demand are developing well. The Council contributes positively to community outcomes and works well in partnership to reduce crime and engage diverse communities. Services are more accessible. Use of resources has improved although value for money remains adequate. Plans are clear and capacity to deliver them is good. Delivery of outcomes for the public is strengthened by the innovative Council and primary care trust joint management structure. The response to previous failings in information technology has been good.”

Benchmarking

8. The Council's 2* CPA score places the council in the lower quartile of performance when judged against other authorities, with 42% reaching 4*. The 'improving well' judgement, is shared by the majority (59%) of authorities, with 24% 'improving strongly'

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications.

Risk Management

Taken alone, the overall star rating resulting from the application of the mechanical scoring rules under CPA could be misconstrued and mask the stronger than hitherto performance in most service blocks, including Children's Services and Adult Social Care, which is reflected in the *Improving well* Direction of Travel Assessment. This risk will be mitigated by means of targeted communications.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Consultees

Not applicable.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None identified.