



Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)**

Forward Timetable of Consultation and Meetings

Performance & Value for Money Select Committee
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Cabinet

31st July 2008
6th August 2008
1st September 2008

**Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) - Corporate Assessment
2008**

Report of the Director of Partnership, Performance & Policy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 3rd June 2008 reports on the Council were published by the Audit Commission on the Corporate Assessment, and by Ofsted on the Joint Area Review (JAR) for services to children and young people. This report focuses on the corporate assessment drawing out the areas for improvement in terms of the actions already taken, underway or requiring new initiatives and some general points of learning.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The council was awarded an overall score of 2, 'adequate performance' as per the scale below:

- 1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance
- 2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance
- 3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
- 4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly

The last assessment was in 2002 and then the council was awarded an overall score of 3. Since that time it is important to note that the CPA regime has changed and has become much tougher. Nevertheless in broad terms the later score shows the council over the six years has not kept pace with the higher expectations on this aspect of the overall CPA rating. In combination with the other aspects, use of resources and the service blocks, the Council for 2008 will retain its current three star rating.

- 2.2 The Audit Commission recognised the leadership the new administration has given to the authority, and the clear ambition it has for the City. Also recognised was the Councils' attraction of substantial amounts of money to regenerate the city centre. There were four key areas for improvement as follows:
- Ensure that its 25-year vision for Leicester is sustainable in the longer term.
 - Demonstrate more effective leadership around the Equalities and Diversity agenda.
 - Strengthen performance management.
 - Strengthen the transparency and accountability of decision-making.
- 2.3 The CPA will be replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) on 1st April 2009. The reports on the Corporate Assessment and the Joint Area Review provide timely advice in preparing for the forthcoming assessment framework.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- Note the learning points arising from the experience of the Corporate Assessment.
 - Consider the actions set out in the report to address the areas for improvement.

4. Report

- 4.1 The corporate assessment (CA) is a complex high-level analysis of the Council and its arrangements for securing continuous improvement. The score for this has a major bearing on the overall star rating of the council which in turn materially affects not only the reputation of the council but also its freedoms and flexibilities. More specifically the CA examines how the council is working corporately, and with its partners, to improve services and deliver improved outcomes for local people. It:
- Examines the political, managerial and community leadership of the council.
 - Measures how well councils understand their local communities
 - Assesses how well this understanding translates into the council's ambition and priorities
 - Judges the council's capacity to deliver these ambitions and priorities, and their achievements.
- 4.2 The CA was aligned with the Joint Area Review (JAR) of services for children and young people undertaken by Ofsted. This meant that the part of the corporate assessment covering the Council's achievements in relation to children and young people was assessed using the evidence provided from the JAR.

Lessons from the corporate assessment process

4.3 Evidence collection against the Key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) began in January 2007 to submit the self-assessment by early December 2007. The inspection activity took place in January/February 2008. The aim was to provide time to identify and where possible address areas of weakness and to allow time to build consensus that the self assessment was a fair reflection of the Council's position.

4.4 The following key messages come from managing the process of evidence collection, self-assessment and inspection:

Become a pro-active organisation

- It was apparent that few services used the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs), published in 2005 in the planning and delivering of services. Where improvements were put forward with the submission of evidence they tended to be actions already in train rather than address the areas of weakness highlighted by the self-assessment.
 - ❖ **The lesson:** make more use of inspection frameworks and KLOEs as good practice guides to inform our service planning and delivery.

Focus on Outcomes

- A lack of outcome focus across the Council made it difficult to tell the story for the self-assessment and provide case studies to the inspectors. The Inspectors reiterated their difficulty in evidencing outcomes throughout their visit. Our focus is always on actions, not the impact those actions have on the people in the city. Consequently, we don't "tell it as it is" and lack the information to tell an unfolding story of improving the lives of people in the city.
 - ❖ **The lesson:** planning starts with outcomes, monitor the outcomes to be clear that our actions are having the desired impact on the lives of people in the city. (Use the service planning guidance)

Improve Responsiveness

- The opportunity to address the problems highlighted in the early self-assessment was not taken. When the situation was urgent and the inspection was imminent, the organisation reacted but it was a case of too little, too late. This characteristic of the council slows up progress and contributes to our reputation with inspectors that we are slow to act and to change. Consequently, we are now slipping further away from other councils.
 - ❖ **The lesson:** focus on what's important to release capacity to be proactive and responsive to learning opportunities.

Recommendations of the Audit Commission

4.5 The Audit Commission set out four key areas for improvement which are underpinned by a number of recommended actions. These are set out below in together with outline details of actions. The detailed planning for these actions will be undertaken as part of the planning for the Corporate Plan which is currently under preparation. This will align with delivering 'One Leicester' currently being supported by DeLoittes.

Key area for improvement	Recommendation	Action taken	Action in progress	Further initiative
The Council should ensure that its 25-year vision for Leicester is sustainable in the longer term:	Strengthen partnerships;	ERS review of Leicester Partnership Communities of Interest - Task & Finish Group recommendations approved by Leicester Partnership - 11 th June 2008	Implementation of ERS review and Communities of Interest - Task & Finish Group recommendations Deloittes review of support to Leicester Partnership and its structure	

Key area for improvement	Recommendation	Action taken	Action in progress	Further initiative
	Develop a more dynamic relationship with the private and business sector;	Paper agreed by - 11 th June 2008	Proposed amendments to Leicester Partnership constitution at October AGM.	To be developed
	Develop greater capacity through partnerships;	Publication of 'One Leicester' – Leicester's sustainable community strategy;	Review of delivery arrangements and infrastructure and support Formalising the meeting of the four delivery group chairs Developing the council's corporate plan	
	Strengthen the approach to joint commissioning;	LAA commissioning framework agreed	Collaborative work with neighbouring cities and counties Alignment of service planning with the vision INLOGOV training for Commissioning Sub Group Procurement strategy Contract management and improvement plan	
	Managerial capacity needs to be strengthened;	Interim appointments made	Corporate management structure under review	
	Develop a more corporate approach to workforce planning.	Completion of the HR review	Pay and Workforce Strategy	
Demonstrate more effective leadership around the Equalities and Diversity agenda:	Develop a more strategic and focused approach to addressing imbalances in the workforce;	Champions for Equality and Diversity leading on initiative to improve workforce representation to reflect City's diverse population;	The Corporate Equality Strategy Group (CESG) has agreed four priority actions for driving the Equality and Diversity agenda. Pay and Work Force Strategy	

Key area for improvement	Recommendation	Action taken	Action in progress	Further initiative
	Set high standards for disability access;			To be developed
	Take a lead role in delivering outcomes for diverse groups.			To be developed
Strengthen performance management:	Enable councillors to take a more robust and transparent overview of performance;	Cabinet Member performance portfolios Quarterly performance reports New structure and ways of working in Scrutiny	Member use of the Performance Plus system	Develop elected member and management capacity to drive performance management and change.

Key area for improvement	Recommendation	Action taken	Action in progress	Further initiative
	The current focus around CPA indicators is not helpful;	35 Priority Indicators (PI's) agreed in LAA (Plus 17 Statutory PI's for Children & Young People)	New national indicators under implementation	Local indicators to be developed
	Financial and performance management should be linked;	Reporting of performance and finance together		
	A greater focus on setting challenging targets;		Inter authority Benchmarking Club	To be developed
	Improve the timeliness and clarity of performance reporting;	New reporting arrangements in place	Customer feedback - one contact	Ensure arrangements for reporting performance are not affected by changes in committee meeting timetables
	Less departmentalism and more collaboration across departments.		One Leicester workshops	
Strengthen the transparency and accountability of decision-making:	<p>The role of the Standards Committee, Monitoring Officer and Leader should be clarified in setting and maintaining the highest standards of ethical governance;</p> <p>Some practices should be discontinued immediately</p>	<p>The Standards Committee increased its membership in May at its Annual meeting. There are now 3 independent members and 6 councillors. The membership is now representative of all facets of the council structure.</p> <p>No cabinet members are currently on regulatory committees to comply with the ethical,governance guidelines.</p>		<p>A review of political conventions</p> <p>Development of a Monitoring Officer protocol</p>

Key area for improvement	Recommendation	Action taken	Action in progress	Further initiative
	A more proactive approach taken to training and developing councilors and staff in modern corporate governance; Should such training be mandatory;	The Standards Committee agreed to introduce a series of training mechanisms, e.g. workshops, 1:1s and presentations to political groups instead of mandatory code of conduct training Members development forum Training has been provided		
	Need to reinforce the Council's standing in the community;	'Making it real event'	Communication strategy	
	Demonstrate effective and confident community leadership.	'Making it real event'		

5. Key Financial and Legal Implications

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. It is envisaged that the recommended improvements, the conclusion of the actions in progress and the further initiatives outlined in the table at paragraph 4.5 above can be completed within existing budgets. Any improvements found to require additional funding in the future will be included in the appropriate departmental revenues strategies in the preparation of the 2009/10 budget. (Andy Morley, Chief Accountant, Resources)

Legal Implications

- 5.2 (Peter Nicholls, Head of Litigation, Resources)

- 5.3 Other implications:

Other Implications	Yes/No	Paragraph References with Supporting Information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Appendices one and two
Policy	No	No specific reference

Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	No specific reference
Crime and Disorder	Yes	No specific reference
Human Rights Act	No	No specific reference
Elderly People on Low Income	No	No specific reference

6. Background Papers

- Corporate Assessment report from the Audit Commission, 3rd June 2008

7. Consultations

7.1 Corporate Directors' Board

8. Report Author

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)