

**COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT : SELF-ASSESSMENT  
(Report by the Head of Policy)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with background information on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process, and specifically to provide an opportunity to comment on a very early draft of a Self-Assessment — the starting point for the overall assessment process.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 CPA was introduced by the Government following the White Paper "*Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*". As the "cornerstone" of the Government's proposals for changes in the performance management framework for local government, the CPA framework and process have been developed to help Councils deliver better services to local communities, to remove restrictions and requirements on planning, spending and decision-making for high performing authorities and to establish targeted support, capacity building and (if necessary) intervention measures for those which require them.

**3. THE SELF-ASSESSMENT APPROACH**

- 3.1 The methodology for undertaking the CPA recognises that the Council has a key role to play in shaping the assessment which ultimately will be made by the Audit Commission. The self-assessment is the starting point for that process.
- 3.2 This approach seeks to —
- ◆ encourage the Council to identify areas where it performs well and those in need of improvement, based on robust and objective evidence;
  - ◆ gives the Council an opportunity to demonstrate self-awareness, an ability to assess strengths and weaknesses and to prioritise areas for improvement; and
  - ◆ provides an opportunity for a realistic, evidence-based appraisal of actual progress in improving services.
- 3.3 The attached document is the first draft of a self-assessment and represents an Officer view of the Council's performance in delivering improvements. It will need to be developed and refined over the ensuing months so that it is reflective of a broad range of views – Members, partners, other stakeholders, etc. Specifically, the Peer Challenge in early November will make a significant contribution to the final self-assessment document.

3.4 The self-assessment comprises five sections —

- ◆ setting the scene — the general context in which the Council operates, the key challenges and opportunities it faces;
- ◆ corporate assessment — an opportunity to describe progress in the planning and delivery of key priorities to improve services for local people;
- ◆ self-scoring summary — where the Council scores itself against ten corporate assessment themes and summarises key strengths and weaknesses (further on the assessment framework follows in paragraph 3.5 post);
- ◆ diagnostic assessments — a brief statement of how the Council performs in “balancing housing markets” and with regard to “public space”; and
- ◆ an improvement plan — a high-level summary action plan describing the actions the Council is going to take over the next three years around its key priorities.

3.5 The assessment framework will comprise —

- ◆ a single annual judgement covering core service performance;
- ◆ the scoring and weighting of the ten corporate assessment themes as follows:-
  1. (ambition  
(prioritisation  
(focus
  2. (capacity  
(performance management
  3. (achievement of quality  
(achievement of improvement
  4. (investment  
(learning  
(future plans;
- ◆ an annual classification related to points scoring as follows:-
  - excellent
  - good
  - fair
  - weak
  - poor.

#### 4. TIMETABLE

While a detailed timetable for the exercise will be presented to the meeting, Members should note the following key stages in the process:-

23rd October	draft self-assessment to Cabinet
10th November	Peer Review (3 days)
December	review self-assessments following Peer Review, including SOLACE "reality check"
23rd January 2004	revised draft self-assessment to Cabinet
February (no later than 13th)	submission of self-assessment and supporting documentation to Audit Commission
29th March	CPA Inspection starts
March/June	Report and publication
June onwards	Improvement Plan

#### 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council's self-assessment of its performance will be an important part of the CPA exercise and the views of Members of the Panels will be important in ensuring that the assessment is both realistic and robust.

#### **Background Papers**

Self-Assessment Guidance for District Councils (April 2003) produced by the Audit Commission

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