

**COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
: DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
(Report by Head of Policy)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is designed to achieve improvements in services for local people and to enhance the quality of community leadership. As such, it is a means to an end rather than an end itself, and the Council is now required, having received its CPA assessment, to move immediately into improvement planning. This process is linked closely to the Council's duty under the Best Value legislation to ensure the continuous improvement in services.
- 1.2 A draft Improvement Plan is attached.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The draft Plan has been framed on the basis that existing high standards of service will be maintained and will be focused on delivering the Council's priorities. It sets out subjects highlighted during the assessment as areas of weakness or those requiring development, where the Council is expected to demonstrate improvement. The areas were identified either by the Council as part of its own self-assessment, through the Peer Challenge or by the Audit Commission during the inspection. Account has also been taken of changes to the CPA process for the future.
- 2.2 The plan is pitched at a high level, identifying only the main areas of focus and actions to be taken. For each subject there will be a detailed action or project plan to deliver the improvements required.
- 2.3 Both Overview and Scrutiny Panels have been invited to comment on the draft plan. The Service Delivery & Resources Panel have established a working group to examine the Plan in detail, particularly to consider the extent to which the weaknesses or development areas of the CPA report have been addressed. The Planning & Finance Panel have suggested that the Improvement Plan should include timescales to enable monitoring of progress and it is proposed that the Plan should be annotated in this way as and when the detail action or project plans have been established. At the request of the Panel, the Plan has been cross-referenced to source documents.
- 2.4 In addition, it is open to the Council to include in the Improvement Plan other development issues, for example, issues which are highlighted through the Comprehensive Performance Management Framework (CPMF) or the review programme described in paragraph 2.4 post. It is suggested that the Improvement Plan will be the basis

of a rolling programme that will be reviewed and updated regularly to meet the changing demands faced by the Council.

- 2.5 To satisfy the requirement on the Council to review services and demonstrate continuous improvement, the Plan proposes the establishment of a new review programme – to replace the Council's existing Best Value Review (BVR) programme – which concentrates on reviewing services which contribute to the Council's main priorities. This programme will be closely linked to and informed by the CPMF. It is suggested that two of the Council's overall priorities will be reviewed each year over the next three years in the following order, which is based on recent consultation with local residents:-

Year

2005/06	◆	safe and active communities;
	◆	a healthy population
2006/07	◆	housing which meets local needs;
	◆	a clean, green and attractive environment
2007/08	◆	accessible services and transport choices;
	◆	a strong and diverse local economy.

- 2.5 Starting the programme in 2005/06 will enable the Council to concentrate on key aspects of the Improvement Plan for the remainder of the year and to complete reviews already under way. The BVR programme will then be replaced by the new Review & Improvement Programme. As part of this process, the Council will be invited to consider each of the overall priorities and to make specific choices about the priority and non-priority activities which contribute towards them and the level of resources allocated to them. A revised methodology for conducting the reviews will be produced to reflect new requirements and the changed emphasis from the former Best Value regime. In due course the Overview & Scrutiny Panels will be invited to allocate Members to participate in the reviews.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The Improvement Plan represents the first stage of improvement planning following the Council's first CPA. It will form the basis of a longer-term programme which will be designed to meet the requirements of external evaluation and inspection but, more importantly, to help to deliver improvements to services for local people in accordance with the Council's own priorities.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Cabinet are recommended to note the action taken in response to the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels and to adopt the Improvement Plan as submitted, subject in due course to the deliberations of the Working Group established to consider the plan.


BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CPA Report

District Council's Self-Assessment

Peer Challenge Report

Minutes of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels (Service Delivery & Resources) and (Planning & Finance) on 5th and 12th October 2004.

Contact Officer: Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy
 (0480) 388005