

Executive

27th March 2007

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Comprehensive Performance Assessment Refresh 2006

Summary

1. This report provides members with the Council's 2006 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) score, and explains why block scores have changed since 2005. This report provides information about the score but does not ask members to make any decisions.

Background

2. CPA is the national performance management framework for the council overall, administered by the Audit Commission. Each year the Commission reports the CPA rating of all English councils. This allows for year on year comparison of each council's performance, and allows residents to compare the performance of different councils.

Consultation

3. Not applicable.

Options

4. This report provides information for members. No options are presented.

Analysis

5. The table below sets out the council's CPA score for 2006, and compares this with the position for 2005 (reported December 2005).

CPA area	2005	2006
Overall Star Rating	3 star	3 star
Direction of Travel	Improving Adequately	Improving Adequately
Corporate Assessment	3	3
Children and Young People	4	4
Benefits	3	3
Culture	2	2
Environment	2	3
Housing	3	2
Social Care for Adults	3	3
Use of Resources	3	2

Overall Position

6. The council's star rating remains at 3 stars (equating to 'good' council label) for the 5th year running. This is on a scale of 0 stars (worst) to 4 stars (best).
7. The council's direction of travel rating remains at 'improving adequately'. This is on a scale running from 'not improving' to 'improving strongly'.
8. Taken together, the star rating and direction of travel rating make up the council's overall CPA position.
 - Among the 46 unitary councils, only 10 have 4 stars overall, 23 have 3 stars, 10 have 2 stars and 3 councils have 1 star. Given our comparative level of spend, the maintenance of a 3 star rating within a comparatively based performance mechanism, is a positive achievement.
 - York's Direction of Travel rating does not compare as well as the overall star rating. Of the 41 unitary councils rated, 2 were improving strongly and 26 improving well. York was in a group of 12 councils which were improving adequately.

Corporate Rating

9. Our corporate arrangements were last assessed by the Audit Commission in 2002, via a major inspection. We have benefited from carrying a very positive score of 3 (on a scale of 1 to 4) forward from that inspection. Our next corporate inspection will take place in January / February 2008. This

inspection will assess the quality of the council's overall leadership and management, and rate how successfully it is achieving its overall strategic ambitions. The 2008 inspection will use a much more stringent inspection criteria than the 2002 inspection. Preparation for the 2008 inspection is underway – with an initial self evaluation due to be prepared by July 2007.

Service Blocks

10. While the council's overall rating has been stable since CPA was introduced in 2002, there has been a degree of change at the service block level. In 2006, the Environment service block improved its score, while the Use of Resources and Housing blocks each dropped a rating point. All of the blocks are rated on a consistent scale running from 1 to 4.
11. Members should note that as one of the Audit Commission's aims with CPA is to drive improvement across local government, the CPA framework is made tougher each year. This gradual tightening of rules and performance targets within the service blocks means councils need to perform better to maintain the same score from year to year. This is most apparent within the Use of Resources block, but applies to all the other service blocks.

Environment Block

12. 90% of the environment block is rated on performance on a group of 31 nationally comparable performance indicators. The indicators cover a range of service areas – development, environmental health, highways, planning, road safety, trading standards, transport, and waste management. Therefore this rating is mostly a measure of performance during the 2006/07 financial year. Seven of the 31 indicators measure customer satisfaction with key services – these indicators were measured in Autumn 2007.
13. Of the 31 performance indicators, 14 were above the upper performance thresholds set by the Commission, 15 were between the upper and lower thresholds, and 2 were below the lower performance threshold set by the Commission. This level of performance provides a strong 3 (out of 4).
14. The other 10% of the environment block score is based on a waste management inspection carried out in Autumn 2004. That inspection scored 2 out of 4.
15. In 2005 the council's score was pegged at 2 due to the council being designated a planning standards authority. In the year to June 2006, our speed of processing planning applications performance measured by Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 109a-c improved so markedly that we stopped being pegged back. This, allied to the continued strong performance across the range of performance indicators, allowed the Environment block score to rise from 2 to 3.

Housing Block

16. 85% of the housing block is based on performance across 20 nationally comparable performance indicators. Twelve of these indicators cover housing management services, and eight cover 'community housing' service areas (homelessness services including temporary accommodation, and private sector housing). Three of the 20 indicators were above the upper performance thresholds set by the Commission, 14 were between the upper and lower performance thresholds, and three were below the lower performance thresholds. Both the housing management and community housing indicator sub-blocks scored 2 – meaning that the overall housing block scored 2.
17. The community housing sub-block scored 2 rather than 3 because 2 indicators too few were above the upper threshold. In 2005 this sub-block scored 3.
18. The housing management sub-block scored 2 because 1 indicator too few was above the upper threshold. This sub-block scored 2 in 2005.
19. The other 15% of the housing block score is based on a supporting people inspection carried out in Autumn 2004. That inspection scored 2 out of 4. A strong housing management inspection score from 2002 that had been included in the 2005 assessment, was 'timed out' in 2006. This placed more weight onto the performance indicators.
20. Between 2002 and 2005 the housing block sat just above the 2/3 threshold. This year the block scored just below that same threshold.

Use of Resources.

21. This service block is rated based on an annual auditor's judgement of performance against a published set of criteria. The UoR block rating is assembled from ratings for 5 sub-blocks. The scores for the sub-blocks are set out below. Members will note that financial management and value for money elements continue to be rated as 3 (on a scale of 1 to 4). Just 5% of single tier and county councils are able to score a 4 on the value for money theme.

	2005	2006
Financial Reporting	3	2
Financial Management	3	3
Financial Standing	3	2
Internal Control	2	2
Value for Money	3	3
Overall Use of Resources	3	2

22. This service block is rated by the Audit Commission using a complicated framework of over 150 individual criteria. A number of these criteria are seen as 'must-do' criteria at their particular level. So for example within the financial reporting theme, all the must-do criteria at level 2 must be in place before the financial reporting theme could possibly score a 3 – even if all the level 3 financial reporting criteria are in place. Each year the number of criteria being made 'must-do' at each level is increased – making the assessment tougher. The auditors can exercise some discretion, for example if a new development is being put into place which will meet a criteria. However as this is a system to allow comparison between councils, auditors need to follow the rules quite strictly.
23. In 2006, across the whole block, we met 74 of the 77 level 2 criteria, and 40 of the 53 level 3 criteria. Therefore while a large majority of the level 2 and level 3 criteria are in place, a relatively small number of issues remain to be put in place to the auditor's satisfaction. The most significant actions still in progress or outstanding from the 2006 action plan relate to partnerships and the ethical framework governing the council's work.
24. A further detailed action plan is now being developed to ensure that Use of Resources reaches level 3 by the 2008 assessment. Members should be aware that successfully delivering a 3 by 2008 is likely to depend on additional resources being found to undertake the work, and will depend on members engaging with a range of training opportunities. The detailed action plan for Use of Resources will be submitted to Audit & Governance Committee once completed. Any additional resource implications will be taken to CMT and reported to members as appropriate.

Other Service Blocks.

25. The score for the other four service blocks – Adults Social Care, Benefits, Children & Young People, Culture – remained unchanged from 2005.

Future Position

26. The Audit Commission will consult in the next few months on the detailed framework for 2007. However members will remember that the 2nd in year performance report published in January 2007 forecast a likely maintenance of our 3 star rating for the 2007 refresh. The 2007 refresh will mainly be based on performance during the 2006/7 financial year, and will continue to include the strong corporate rating from 2002.
27. Once the Audit Commission publish their plans for 2007, and suggest an approach for 2008, we will be better placed to understand the likely position for 2008 (2007/08 financial year) and will be able to put measures in place to ensure that we continue as a highly rated council under CPA.

Corporate Priorities

28. Successful delivery of the council's 13 priorities impact positively on the council's CPA rating.

Implications

29. These are no financial, human resources, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, information technology or property implications of the report's recommendations.

Risk Management

30. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations below.

Recommendations

31. Members are asked to note the council's latest CPA rating.

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Report
Approved



Date 12/3/07

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here.

Audit Commission documents:

- Letter to CYC 19th February 2007
- CYC Culture, Environment and Housing block reports 19th February 2007
- 'CPA – The Harder Test – scores and analysis of performance in single tier and county councils 2006' (February 2007)