

Executive

15 December 2009

Report of the Director of Resources

Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009

Summary

- 1 The purpose of this paper is to present to Executive the Audit Commission's final reports for the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 2 The council is pleased to receive the Comprehensive Area Assessment reports set out the final results for 2009, these are attached as annexes as follows:
 - Area assessment with one green flag for 'working together for disabled children' (Annex A) and no red flags (see Annex B for summary version, Annex C for full version);
 - Organisational assessment with an overall score of 2, Performing Adequately (see Annex D for summary version, Annex E for full version);
 - Annual Audit Letter with a clear audit opinion on the council's financial statements for 2008/09 (see Annex F). The content of this Letter has already been published in the Annual Governance Report, presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on 21 December 2009.
- 3 The final reports in addition to other performance information relating to the city have been published by the Audit Commission on the 'One Place' website as from 9 December 2009.
4. The council's detailed response to these reports is contained in a further report called "Response to CAA 2009" published in agenda item 11 for this meeting.

Background

The process

- 5 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is the new framework for the independent assessment of local public services in England; CAA was introduced in April 2009.
- 6 The CAA framework is area based and focused on outcomes delivered by councils working alone or in partnership. It is designed to be more proportionate than previous performance frameworks, and is aligned with frameworks in other public sectors. The development of CAA came at a time when government was committing to an overhaul of performance management. CAA has been developed to work closely with the new Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the National Indicator Set as part of a single system.
- 7 By bringing together evidence across different local services, the Audit Commission believe that CAA is more effective in driving improvement than separate assessments for each sector can be.
- 8 CAA has two main elements which inform each other:
 - An area assessment that looks at how well local public services are delivering better results for local people across the whole area, focusing on agreed priorities such as health, economic prospects and community safety, and how likely they are to improve; and
 - Organisational assessments for councils, combining the external auditor's assessment of value for money in the use of resources with a joint inspectorate assessment of council service performance, for example Audit Commission, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission.
- 9 The area assessment is not be scored, it is a narrative report providing an overview of key priorities for the area, overall success and challenges, and a summary of prospects for improvement highlighting where different or further action is required. It identifies significant contributions made by individual partners and, if need be, where a partner organisation needs to do more. The area assessment may include green and red 'flags':
 - **Green flags** highlight exceptional performance or outstanding improvement from which others can learn
 - **Red flags** represent significant concerns about outcomes or future prospects where more or different actions are required.

- 10 The organisational assessment is carried out annually across all councils, fire and rescue services (FRSs), police authorities and PCTs. Organisational assessment will include two elements:
- use of resources
 - managing performance

The organisational assessment is scored for the use of resources and performance elements separately. These two scores will then be combined to give an overall organisational score as follows:

Score	Descriptor	Performance
1	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements	Performs poorly
2	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements	Performs adequately
3	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements	Performs well
4	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements	Performs excellently

- 11 The Area and organisational assessments are being published annually; the first round of CAA results are to be published on 9 December 2009. The Audit Commission is committed to making the CAA more relevant and accessible to the public and has adopted the 'oneplace' brand for public reporting to help this. The main vehicle for publication will be on the 'oneplace' website where results of both area and organisational assessments are accessible by geographical area. The Audit Commission envisages 'oneplace' becoming a powerful tool for public accountability.

Summary Results 2009

Area Assessment:

- 12 York has been assessed on how well it delivers against its seven aims in the Sustainable Community Strategy - to create a Thriving City, Sustainable City, Safer City, Learning City, Inclusive City, City of Culture and Healthy City.
- 13 The council is delighted that the city has been awarded a Green Flag for its achievements and innovative working with disabled children. Strong partnership working, including the involvement of parents, is having a significant and positive impact on the lives of children with disabilities in York. Annex A gives fuller details of the submission made by the council for the Green Flag, which demonstrates how the council and its partners are at the forefront of excellent service delivery.
- 14 York has one of only seven green flags in the Yorkshire & Humber Region and significantly no red flags. Nationally there are 62 red flags in areas of concern with a lack of future prospects.

- 15 York is quite unique, with only two other authorities (Slough & Wolverhampton) matching York's CAA profile in terms of:
- achieving 1 green flag and no red flag
 - scoring only a 2 overall for the organisational assessment, despite scoring a 3 on managing performance. Most councils in this position score a 3 overall (see 'Analysis' below).
- 16 The area assessment in summary:
- a. **City of Culture** - highlights the satisfaction amongst residents regarding art galleries and museums in the city, as well as a lower level of satisfaction with leisure and sporting facilities.
 - b. **Healthy City** - praises York as a healthy city, where life expectancy is higher than the national average. The number of early deaths from heart disease, strokes and cancer has reduced in recent years. The number of adults taking part in regular physical activity, however, is decreasing.
 - c. **Inclusive City** - highlights York's growing BME population and that people from these backgrounds are less likely to have positive experiences in the city. It recognises the work that has already been done to tackle issues of equality, but also raises concerns about high house prices in York and the impact that has on home ownership.
 - d. **Learning City** - rates York's educational and children's services as excellent quality and highlights the city's exam results as amongst the best in the country. The OFSTED children's services annual rating for York has been confirmed as 'performing excellently'.
 - e. **Safer City** - rates York as a safe city, where overall levels of crime have fallen in recent years. Youth offending is also relatively low, but alcohol and drug misuse is a significant contributory factor to crime.
 - f. **Sustainable City** - praises the work of organisations making York more sustainable, for example through its status as Cycling City and the use of Park & Ride as particularly good. The assessment praises the city for planning to mitigate further flooding in the future as a result of climate change. Particularly strong performance has been highlighted in reducing waste and increasing recycling in partnership with communities, with this being raised as a potential Green Flag area for the future.
 - g. **Thriving City** - rates York's local economy as strong, with levels of unemployment below regional and national levels and weekly wages high. It recommends that the main area of focus should be on ensuring that local people can acquire the necessary skills to get the new jobs that are coming to the city, as well as helping businesses weather the recession.

Organisational Assessment:

- 17 The council has been awarded a score of 3 'Managing Performance' within its services and a 2 for its 'Use of Resources'. The Audit Commission weighted combined score for the organisation is 2 'performing adequately'. See 'Analysis' below for national comparisons relating to this score.
- 18 The Managing Performance score reflects the continuing strong performance scores across the council with Children's Services continuing excellent performance and in respect of adult care services, the council responding well to address the need for improvement in its services provided for older people.
- 19 Within the Use of Resources score there are elements of stronger performance in some areas, in particular the council's provision of value for money services, its risk management arrangements and elements of its commissioning of services. The report acknowledges that the council has already embarked on a challenging programme to deliver £15m efficiency savings over a three year period, the need for which was identified through our own self assessment processes. The successful effective delivery of the 'More for York' programme should have a positive impact on the council's future use of resources.

Annual Audit Letter:

- 20 The Letter summarises the findings from the District Auditor's audit of the council's 2008/09 financial statements, giving an unqualified audit opinion, and the work undertaken to assess the council's arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources. This confirms the outcomes reported earlier this year by the Audit Commission in the Annual Governance Statement (Audit & Governance Committee 21st September 2009).

The Council's Response

- 21 The council's response to the CAA reports is outlined in item 11 on this meeting's agenda, which also updates progress against the council's Improvement Plan 2009/10.

Consultation

- 22 The Audit Commission consulted with the council and its partners on the CAA findings before presenting the final report.

Options

23 No options are required in this report.

Analysis

24 Unlike York, the vast majority of councils who scored a 3 for managing performance and a 2 for Use of Resources, received a 3 overall for their Organisational Assessment:

	All Authorities	District	Single Tier	Authorities in Yorkshire & Humber
Scored 3 for organisational Assessment made up of 3 – managing performance 2 - UoR	71	24	29	4 Wakefield Scarborough Harrrogate Hambleton

25 A much smaller proportion of councils received an overall score of 2 for their organisational assessment, having scored a 3 for managing performance and a 2 for Use of Resources:

	All Authorities	District	Single Tier	Authorities in Yorkshire & Humber
Scored 3 for organisational Assessment made up of 3 – managing performance 2 - UoR	19	10	9	2 York Richmondshire

26 Also, other councils who have scored 4 (excellent) for Children's services, also scored well on their overall organisational assessment. However in comparison to Kingston on Thames (who have the same scores for Use of Resources and managing performance), York's overall Organisational Assessment score has been labelled a 2 rather than a 3 (see table below). It should also be noted that Kingston upon Thames received a red flag, whereas York did not.

	Green Flags?	Red Flags?	UoR	Managing Performance	Overall OA	Children's score
York	1	0	2	3	2	4
Blackburn with Darwen	0	1	3	3	3	4
Camden	2	0	4	4	4	4
City of London	2	0	3	4	4	4
Kensington and Chelsea	2	0	3	4	4	4
Kingston upon Thames	1	1	2	3	3	4
Lewisham	1	0	3	3	3	4
Tower Hamlets	1	0	3	3	3	4

Corporate Priorities

- 27 The delivery of the council's priorities through the sustainable community strategy and the corporate strategy is a fundamental part of the comprehensive area assessment, both at a citywide level and at a more local level through the organisation assessment.

Implications

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- (a) **Financial** - There are no implications
- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications
- (c) **Equalities** - There are no implications
- (d) **Legal** - There are no implications
- (e) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications
- (f) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications
- (g) **Property** - There are no implications.

Risk Management

- 29 Comprehensive Area Assessment is a key strategic risk area for the council, which is being monitored by CMT and the Audit & Governance Committee.

Recommendations

- 30 Executive members are asked to consider the content of this report and its annexes in context of national comparisons, and in conjunction with next item on the agenda for this meeting entitled 'CAA Response'.

Reason

To ensure that members are aware of inspection and audit outcomes, recognise the achievements and also areas for improvement identified in the report.

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Report Approved

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) Not applicable

Wards Affected Not applicable

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

Comprehensive Area Assessment (Framework Document)
published by the Audit Commission

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/caa/pages/caaframework.aspx>

Annexes

Annex A Green Flag Submission
Annex B Area Assessment summary report
Annex C Area Assessment detailed report
Annex D Organisational Assessment summary report
Annex E Organisational Assessment detailed report
Annex F The Annual Audit Letter