



Meeting **CORPORATE STRATEGY & CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE**

Date **20 DECEMBER 2004**

agenda item number

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT 2004

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a summary of the initial feed back from the Audit Commission inspection team and an analysis of how accurate we were at assessing our own performance in the self assessment submitted prior to the inspection. This report also provides a breakdown of the costs involved in producing the self assessment and the on site inspection.

Background

2. From 15 to 19 November 2004, the Audit Commission carried out a Corporate Assessment of the Council. The outcome of this inspection will determine whether the council is rated as 'excellent'. As part of the preparations for this inspection the Council was required to produce a self-assessment of its achievements and progress since the 2002 CPA report. The self-assessment was submitted to the Audit Commission prior to the on-site inspection. We will receive the official report on Wednesday 15 December (after the submission of this report), but we have received some initial feed back from the inspectors. A copy of the Corporate Assessment report will be made available to Committee members when it has been received.

The Self-Assessment

3. The table below shows the scores from the 2002 report and the scores from the self assessment in 2004.

Theme	CPA Report 2002	Self Assessment 2004
Ambition	4	4
Prioritisation	3	3
<i>Focus</i>	3	4
<i>Capacity</i>	2	3
Performance Management	3	3
Achievement	9	9
Investment	6	6
Learning	3	3
<i>Future Plans</i>	2	3
Total Score	35	38

4. The themes highlighted by italics are those where we assessed there had been sufficient improvement to increase the score in the self assessment. Where the score for a theme was not improved in the self assessment we have assessed that performance had been maintained but there were still weaknesses preventing us from increasing our score for that theme.
5. The initial feedback from the inspection team, which is provisional and not moderated, shows general agreement with the view of the authority presented in the self assessment. The table below summarises the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspection team and probable scores based on this feedback. This shows that the only difference from the self assessment is in Capacity, where there are still significant weaknesses that may prevent this from improving to a '3'.

Theme	Self Assessment weighted score	Probable CA report weighted score	Strengths	Weaknesses
Ambition	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear ambitions • Strong basis for ambitions • Strong leadership 	
Prioritisation	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear priorities • Priorities reflect local and national issues • Priorities are widely understood • Resources shifted into priority areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not explicit about what are not priorities
Focus	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained focus on priorities • Members willing to make difficult decisions • Strong focus on equality and diversity 	
Capacity	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring improved capacity at senior level • Effective monitoring officer • Good relationships with Trade Unions • Use of experts to increase capacity • Financial capacity is sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of corporate level data in HR • High sickness absence • Culture not supportive of outsourcing • Some silo working prevails
Performance Management	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound performance management systems • Good monitoring arrangements • Good approach to tackling underperformance • Clear efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDPR underdeveloped • Risk management not fully integrated into service planning • Not yet able to demonstrate value for money

Theme	Self Assessment weighted score	Probable CA report weighted score	Strengths	Weaknesses
			and productivity targets set for projects	
Achievement	9	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant progress in education and childrens' services • Cultural services rated good by inspection • Significant improvement in the planning service • Improved community cohesion through extended schools, sure start, youth service and environmental projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone access in some services areas is poor • Some targets missed
Investment	6	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong building blocks in place • New procurement strategy • New arrangements for communication and consultation • MTFS strengthened • Mansfield by-pass • Waste PFI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a robust HR strategy • Slow pace of change in some areas
Learning	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic understanding of challenges that remain • Leadership encourages learning • Learning results in changed approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little evaluation of impact of initiatives • Sharing of learning is not systematic
Future Plans	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong future plans • Stakeholder engagement in planning for future • Responds to failure to deliver • Reassesses plans in light of developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of robust project plans in some areas
Total score	38	37		

6. In conclusion, the council's self assessment appears to have been accurate in eight of the nine themes and some progress has been recognised in the Capacity theme even though the score is unchanged. It should be noted that the inspectors commented on the high level of self awareness and openness in the council.

Financial implications of producing self assessment and on site corporate assessment

7. The table below shows costs incurred to produce the self assessment and host the inspection team during the on site visit.

NCC staff member	Activity/resource	Total cost
Andrew Muter, Assistant Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with lead officers in Policy & Performance Meetings with CPA Reference Group Briefings for officers and members meeting with inspectors Moderation of self assessment Preparation for on site inspection On site inspection 	£5,333.00
Peter Elderton, Head of Policy & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with Assistant Chief Executive and P&P lead officer Meetings with CPA Reference Group Briefings for officers and members meeting with inspectors Moderation of self assessment Preparation for on site inspection On site inspection 	£3,087.00
Eve Dewsnap, Policy & Performance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Policy & Performance Meetings with CPA Reference Group Collation of evidence for self assessment Writing and production of self assessment on CD ROM Briefings for officers and members meeting with inspectors Preparation for on site inspection On site inspection 	£6,104.00
CPA Reference Group (5 officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderation of self assessment Collation of evidence Meetings of CPA Reference Group 	£1,543.00
Policy & Performance Team (5 officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for and support of on site inspection 	£3,087.00
	Production of self assessment and supporting evidence on CD ROM	£8.76
	Tour of the county for the inspection team (including hire of a people carrier and chauffeur)	£90.00
	Refreshments for the inspection team whilst on site	£459.81
	Total =	£19,712.57

RECOMMENDATION

8. It is recommended that:

The Committee considers the process used to carry out the CPA self-assessment and the outcomes of the inspection.

Andrew Muter
Assistant Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None.