



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Chester-le-Street District Council

**Audit Commission Consultation document –
“CPA – district council framework from 2006”**

Briefing Paper

May 2005

Appendix 1

1. Purpose of this Paper

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Council of the proposals options for a revised framework for CPA of District Councils from 2006, with a view to agreeing the Council's response to the current consultation document.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 This paper forms the basis for consultation of the Audit Commission's proposals throughout the Council. Corporate Management Team have considered the report and concur with the conclusions drawn.

3 Background

- 3.1 In June 2005, the Audit Commission published its new framework for CPA in single tier and county councils, "**CPA: The Harder Test**". This followed two consultation periods in January 2004 and December 2004-February 2005.

- 3.2 In 2004 the Audit Commission proposed changes to the CPA framework and consulted on the broad outline for the framework for CPA from 2005 for all councils. They identified the need for CPA to be refined and updated in line with the Commission's principles of Strategic Regulation, and councils' duty of continuous improvement. They set out proposals whereby the overall CPA architecture for single tier and county councils would remain broadly similar but key changes would make it a more rigorous test of council performance while at the same time reducing the overall burden of regulation. The Commission also proposed that the annual use of resources judgement would be a prominent element of the new CPA architecture and would be conducted in all councils, including district councils from 2005. They highlighted their intention to make a more demanding assessment of financial management and also to provide a value for money judgement.

- 3.3 The consultation paper set out a broad proposal for district councils. It proposed that in addition to an annual use of resources judgement each district council would receive:

- annual performance assessments covering specific service areas;
- a direction of travel statement; and
- instead of a comprehensive programme of corporate assessments, a targeted approach would be adopted with corporate assessments taking place in a significantly reduced form.

- 3.4 The Commission received over 300 written responses. Just over 100 of the written responses were from district councils. It was clear from these that more work was required to develop an appropriate framework for district councils. In particular, concerns were raised about the lack of detail and questions were raised about opportunities for re-categorisation.

- 3.5 During the consultation it became apparent that the Audit Commission's thinking about District CPA was not so well developed, and this resulted in the publication of a separate consultation document on 6th September 2005. Entitled "**CPA of District Councils**", the document outlines a range of options for the future assessment of District Councils. Once agreed, the chosen approach was intended to be in operation until March 2009. The

Appendix 1

Council responded to this consultation in November 2005. A copy of the response forms Annexe 1 attached to this briefing paper.

- 3.6 Having consulted widely on the options, the Commission is now publishing firm proposals on the overall framework for CPA for district councils. However, they feel that there are some outstanding issues about specific aspects of the framework and how it will be applied on which they are now inviting further comment. On 26th April 2006 the Audit Commission published their consultation document entitled "CPA – district council framework from 2006.

4. Timetable

- 4.1 Responses to the proposed options within the document need to be received by 30th May 2005. the Audit Commission make it clear in their paper that representations will not be entertained if received after that date. The final approach to be taken by the Audit Commission will be confirmed in July 2006, with a view to implementation from the Autumn of 2006.

5. Outline of the Consultation Document

- 5.1 Section 2 of the Consultation gives the background and context to the proposals, followed by an explanation of the overall framework and the approach to re-categorisation in Section 3. Details of the individual elements within the framework are set out in Section 4, including:

- identifying councils for re-categorisation activity;
- use of resources;
- direction of travel;
- analysis of service performance; and
- corporate assessment.

- 5.2 The consultation questions are listed in Section 5.

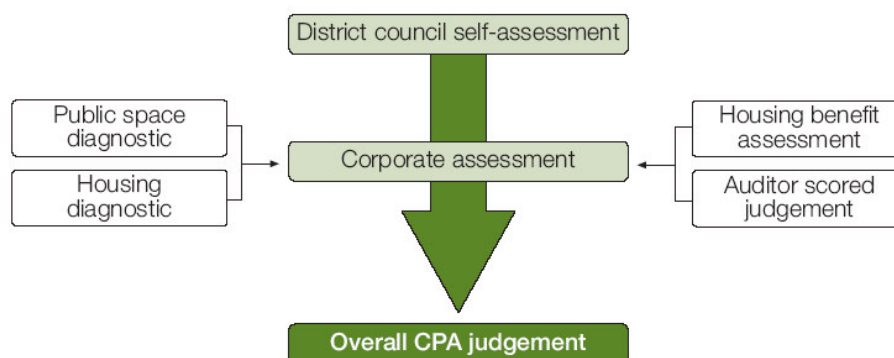
6. The proposals

What was the 2003/2004 methodology?

- 6.1 The methodology applied in the first round of district council CPA produced a single overall judgement covering core service performance and council ability to improve. The programme was implemented and reported on a county-by-county basis. Unlike single tier and county councils, district council CPA categories have not been updated on an annual basis because they rely solely on a corporate assessment. The arrangements for undertaking the first corporate assessments involved completion of a self-assessment by the council, followed by an accredited peer challenge. This informed the corporate assessment which brought together an external auditor scored judgement, a housing benefit assessment (undertaken by BFI) and two thematic diagnostic assessments to produce an overall CPA judgement.

Appendix 1

2003/04 CPA model



- 6.2 The corporate assessment methodology comprised four key questions and ten themes, with each theme scored on a 1-4 scale (where 1 was weak and 4 strong). Three of the ten themes (investment, achievement of service quality and achievement of improvement) were given additional weighting. The weighted scores were added to produce a CPA category of excellent, good, fair, weak or poor. Chester-le-Street was judged to be 'poor' as a result of re-categorisation.

Corporate assessment 2003/04: key questions and themes

Key questions	Themes
1. What is the council trying to achieve?	1. Ambition
	2. Prioritisation
	3. Focus
2. How has the council set about delivering its priorities for improvement?	4. Capacity
	5. Performance management
3. What improvements has the council achieved/not achieved to date?	6. Achievement of service quality
	7. Achievement of improvement
	8. Investment
4. In light of what the council has learnt, what does it plan to do next?	9. Learning
	10. Future plans

What is the background to the new proposals?

- 6.3 In September 2005 the Commission published a consultation paper setting out options for how we might take forward district council CPA. This paper set out a series of guiding principles and five different ways of combining the key elements of CPA (use of resources assessments, service assessments, corporate assessments and direction of travel statements). The options fell into two broad categories:

- options that would allow the Commission to re-categorise all district councils (Group A) through a programme to be delivered over a number of years; and
- options that would allow the Commission to identify, from initial evidence of improvement or deterioration, that a district council may

Appendix 1

be ready to be considered for re-categorisation, before any re-categorisation activity takes place (Group B).

Chester-le-Street supported Group B proposals.

6.4 The September 2005 consultation paper also identified the potential for a shift towards area-based assessments after 2008, in response to the changing national policy context. The Commission therefore consider that it is important that the new framework is capable of contributing to future area-based assessments of public services and focuses on the achievement of local as well as national priorities. In determining the principles that will underpin the Commissions approach to CPA for district councils, the Commission took full account of the consultation responses. There was widespread support for the guiding principles outlined in the consultation paper. In particular the principles that the future CPA framework for district councils should be targeted, risk-based and less intensive.

6.5 There was overwhelming support among respondents (83 per cent) for the Group B approach to re-categorisation (options 4 or 5). This would allow the Commission to identify, from initial evidence of improvement or weakening in council performance, whether further activity should be undertaken to assess whether the council should be re-categorised. This is the approach that the Commission are now proposing to adopt. Forty-five per cent of those stating a preference supported Option 4, and 36 per cent supported Option 5: both of these involve a targeted approach to re-categorisation. The only difference between these options is that Option 5 did not include service assessment as part of the model. Chester-le-Street supported Option 5.

What will the new framework look like?

6.6 There was a high level of agreement on the published principles. Strategic Regulation is at the heart of the Commissions approach to CPA. This means that the CPA framework for district councils will:

- continue to encourage improvement;
- be seen from the perspective of service users;
- provide value for money for taxpayers;
- be targeted and risk-based; and
- be delivered in partnership with others.

6.7 Furthermore the new framework will:

- build on the previous round of CPA of district councils but be much less intensive,
- both in terms of inspection activity and the impact on the capacity of district councils;
- be affordable, both in terms of the level of central government grant and fees paid by councils; and
- include appropriate involvement of other organisations supporting improvement, including the use of council peers in assessment activity.

In what circumstances will re-categorisation take place?

6.8 In line with the principles of Strategic Regulation and the response to the consultation exercise, the Commission will adopt a targeted and risk-based approach to CPA of district councils from 2006. This means that we will undertake re-categorisation activity only where there is significant evidence to indicate a potential change in CPA category. This will apply in the following circumstances:

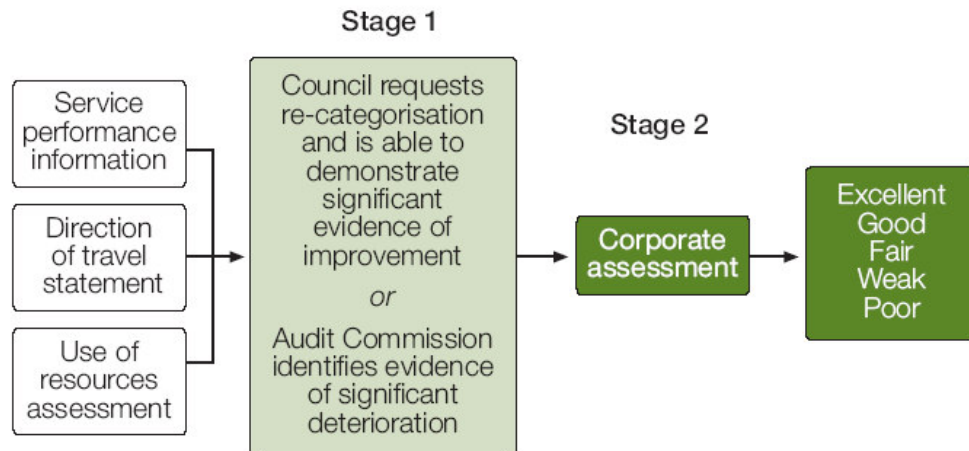
Appendix 1

- where councils can demonstrate performance that is significantly better than that identified in the original corporate assessment, and the council wishes to be considered for re-categorisation; or
 - where there is evidence of significant deterioration in either service or corporate performance which would potentially result in re-categorisation if a further corporate assessment was undertaken.
- 6.8 Where there is no deterioration in performance, councils will only be considered for re-categorisation activity if they request it.
- 6.9 The framework will involve a two-stage approach:
- to decide whether or not there is sufficient evidence of a potential category change; and if so then
 - to undertake a corporate assessment following which a change in category may be warranted.

Who will decide on whether re-categorisation takes place?

- 6.10 Decisions about whether or not to undertake re-categorisation activity will be made regionally by Commission panels which will include council peer representatives. If a panel decides that there is evidence of sufficient improvement or deterioration to justify re-categorisation activity this will take place through a corporate assessment. It is noted that in the case of Chester-le-Street the ODPM will have a say in whether the council is ready for re-categorisation.

District council CPA re-categorisation from 2006



- 6.10 Although it is intended to introduce some changes into the way district council CPA will take place from 2006, the Commission will not introduce a harder test into re-categorisation activity. The Commission feel that categories must remain the same and corporate assessment broadly similar, to ensure comparability between 2003/04 categories and those determined from 2006 onwards.
- 6.11 Councils will be given the opportunity to request re-categorisation activity from October 2006, and subsequently on a six-monthly basis. It is expected that councils will work closely with their relationship managers in deciding if and when to apply for a corporate assessment. The key decision on whether or not this will be undertaken will be made by regionally coordinated panels,

Appendix 1

with council peer representatives and out-of-region Commission involvement to ensure consistency and transparency. The panels will also consider those cases where there is evidence of deterioration. In deciding whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment, the Commission will take into account both quantitative and qualitative evidence of improvement or deterioration. The test the panels will apply is whether there is a realistic prospect of a change in category if the corporate assessment is carried out. Key sources of evidence will include:

- use of resources assessment (scored);
- direction of travel statements;
- service performance information summarised to show any changes in performance since 2002/03 and current performance, service inspection reports (if any) and Benefits Fraud Inspectorate scores; and
- any other relevant evidence of improvement or deterioration.

6.11 This first stage will not involve any fieldwork or on-site activity, although some discussion with the council may be necessary. Further details of the arrangements for requesting re-categorisation activity will be published in due course.

What about Use of Resources Judgments?

6.12 In terms of Use of Resources councils would like more notice of planned changes to the use of resources KLOE. The Commission intend to meet this request by phasing in the changes, which means that it will:

- incorporate into the 2006 assessment modifications to the wording of the criteria and descriptors;
- defer to the 2007 assessment the alignment of the assessment to the financial year, to allow optimal integration with work carried out by auditors as part of the Code of Audit Practice;
- defer to the 2007 assessment the upgrade of specified criteria to 'must have' status, and require only those councils that scored 1 for value for money to produce a new self assessment.

Councils that scored more than 1 for the value for money theme would only be asked to submit an updated self-assessment to reflect any significant changes.

6.13 In 2005 for Use of Resources, a council needed to score 3 on at least three themes to achieve an overall score of 3 for use of resources. This would still apply, but the Audit Commission are now seeking views on whether an additional rule should be introduced which would give the value for money theme additional weighting. This would mean that a council could only score 3 or more overall for use of resources if its value for money judgement was scored at 3 or above.

What about Direction of Travel Statements

6.14 The evidence collected in the course of preparing direction of travel statements will inform decisions about re-categorisation. In September 2005, the Commission issued interim guidance for district councils on our proposals for direction of travel statements. These statements are designed to recognise progress achieved since the last CPA categorisation. The direction of travel statements provide public assurance through a robust annual assessment of whether councils are complying with their duty of making arrangements to secure continuous improvement. In 2005/06, district councils received an unscored summary commentary for inclusion in the annual audit

Appendix 1

and inspection letter on the council's overall progress in delivering its improvement priorities since CPA categorisation. The Commission intends to maintain this light touch approach to direction of travel. However, in response to feedback from the district council reference group, they propose to introduce some common statements which can be used to report progress in annual audit and inspection letters in a more consistent way.

How will Service Performance Information be used?

6.15 The systematic analysis of service performance information will form a key part of the evidence considered by the Commission in deciding whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment. This element will include:

- analysis of performance indicators; and
- inspection scores (by Commission and by others such as the BFI).

6.14 The weight given to the analysis of service performance information as a source of evidence will depend on the circumstances of the individual council and other evidence. The Commission do not intend to calculate or report separate scored service assessments for district councils. However, we will present and analyse service performance information for district councils in a clear and consistent way. The Commission will produce a tool which sets out, for each district council, improvement and current performance on an agreed set of performance indicators (PIs). This tool will be made available to district councils as soon as possible after the publication of the final methodology to assist with their internal discussions about whether to apply for a new corporate assessment.

6.15 We have identified a number of PIs, both best value PIs and other performance measures, which will be used in the analysis of service performance information for district councils. These PIs are based on those used in the service assessment of single tier and county councils in 2005. They have been selected as robust and reliable measures of service performance, covering a broad range of the services that district councils provide. These Indicators are set out in Annexe 2. District councils will be able to use other robust performance information as part of the evidence they wish to be considered if making a case for re-categorisation.

6.16 When deciding whether to carry out a new corporate assessment, the Commission will consider the following evidence from the analysis of service performance improvement information:

- the extent – what proportion of the PIs in the set are improving;
- the strength– whether improvement seen at the individual PI level is significant or better than expected; and
- the areas of improvement – whether improvement is seen in areas of previously weak performance or areas of local priority.

The extent of improvement and current performance will be considered in the context of other district councils. The analysis of service performance information will not be used to make a decision about a new corporate assessment in a mechanistic way as other evidence and local circumstances will be taken into account.

When will the assessments take place?

6.17 In line with Strategic Regulation, the Commission will focus its efforts where it can achieve maximum impact. In undertaking re-categorisation activity,

Appendix 1

priority will be given in the first instance to those councils where there is evidence of deteriorating performance. Subsequently, priority will be given to councils in the poor and weak categories where there is significant evidence of improvement and where the council has requested re-categorisation activity.

6.18 There will be a window of opportunity to apply for a re-categorisation in October. The first assessments will be undertaken in January 2007. The detailed programming of those councils prioritised for re-assessment will depend on factors such as:

- proximity to next category boundary in the 2003/04 assessment;
- length of time since the last published CPA category; and
- strength of evidence for re-categorisation.

What form will Corporate Assessment take?

6.19 Self-assessment will remain the starting point for corporate assessment. The Commission is working with other members of the Local Services Inspection Forum (LSIF) to rationalise and align self-assessment requests to reduce the burden on councils. The content of district council self-assessments will be informed by the outcome of this work. 64 The 2003/04 corporate assessment methodology has been streamlined to make it more proportionate. Changes proposed include:

- no diagnostic assessments;
- auditor's judgement (now use of resources) and BFI assessments are no longer separate components, although they will be integral to the evidence considered for corporate assessment;
- direct involvement of a council peer in the assessment process;
- five corporate assessment themes instead of ten;
- greater reliance on pre-site analysis to minimise the on-site work; and
- the introduction of web-based stakeholder surveys, as currently used in corporate assessment for single tier and county councils. This involves web-based surveys of key partners within the locality to ascertain their views of the council, reducing the need for extensive interviews and written evidence.

The Commission anticipate that corporate assessments will be more proportionate and significantly less resource intensive than those undertaken in 2003/04.

6.20 The new Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) have been updated and streamlined but map directly across to the original KLOE used for corporate assessment in 2003/04. Some changes have been made to reflect the continuous improvement which has taken place in local government since 2003/04. There are also some changes of emphasis; notably more explicit references to partnership. The key questions and themes are set out below. The self-assessment will be used by councils to explain their achievements in the context of their locally determined priorities. However, as before, councils will be expected to demonstrate that they have focused on an appropriate balance between local and national priorities.

Appendix 1

Corporate assessment from 2006: key questions and themes

Key questions	Themes
1. What is the council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	1. Ambition for the community 2. Prioritisation
2. What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	3. Capacity 4. Performance management
3. What has been achieved?	5. Achievement of improvement

How will judgements be scored?

- 6.21 In line with our other inspection activity and that of other regulators, the Commission proposes to adopt the LSIF scoring system for corporate assessment theme scores. This remains a four-point scale, but with some changes to the labels. These are as follows:

Corporate assessment theme scores from 2006

Score	Label
4	Well above minimum requirements – performing strongly
3	Consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
2	At only minimum requirements – adequate performance
1	Below minimum requirements – inadequate performance

- 6.22 As there are now five themes instead of ten, the theme weightings have been adjusted accordingly. This is based on mapping the previous KLOE to the new ones. All the new theme scores will be multiplied by a weighting factor, to align them with the original themes, so that they form approximately the same proportion of the overall score. The proposed weighting for the new themes is as follows:

Proposed weighting for corporate assessment theme scores from 2006

Theme	Weighting
Ambition	2
Prioritisation	2
Capacity	2
Performance management	2
Achievement	7

- 6.23 Councils will still be categorised as excellent, good, fair, weak and poor. The Commission recognise that the individual theme scores will be affected by changes to the scoring system. They therefore propose to compensate for this by adjusting the category bandings. The proposed bandings are outlined below 2003/2004 scores are on the right.:

Appendix 1

Proposed bandings for corporate assessment

Category	Required score	2003/2004
Excellent	45 - 60	48-60
Good	36 - 44	42-47
Fair	28 - 35	36-41
Weak	21 - 27	30-35
Poor	20 or less	15-29

How important is Use Focus and Diversity?

- 6.24 User focus and diversity will continue to be a core element of the corporate assessment. Judgements on each of the themes will take into account how effectively a council is addressing these issues within the local context.. The Commission will also ensure that any areas of notable or poor performance are highlighted in their reports.

Will the Commission be subject to quality assurance?

- 6.25 The Commission has in place an effective quality assurance framework for single tier and county council corporate assessment. This will also apply to district council CPA. Specific arrangements will be put in place to assure the quality of our work at each stage. Within corporate assessment this will cover:

- pre-assessment analysis;
- initial challenge and scoping;
- on-site evidence gathering; and
- reporting.

There will be a review procedure built into the process

7. Analysis

- 7.1 The Audit Commission have decided that they are to progress a revised CPA process which was supported by the council in principle following the September 2005 consultation. The only difference is that a service assessment will not be part of the overall assessment.
- 7.2 Chester-le Street was categorised as 'poor' in the last round of Comprehensive Performance assessment in March 2004. It has made substantial changes and improvements. The recent Progress Reports and Direction of Travel assessments by the Audit commission have shown that the council is making good progress against its 2004 judgement. It is hoped that recent service inspections will achieve positive results and there are signs of sustained improvement in performance indicators. It is important for the organisation and our community that the council secures re-categorisation as soon as possible.
- 7.3 The proposed approach appears to offer the council the opportunity to do this. If the council sustains its progress it could be possible that the council could have the opportunity to apply for re-categorisation in October with the possibility of an assessment in or around January 2007. While this will be a

Appendix 1

decision to be made by the OPPM and the Audit Commission it is a possibility.

- 7.4 It is not considered that the proposals have any demonstrable adverse impact on the council's ability to approach CPA. On the contrary the proposals would appear to benefit the future of the organisation and, as a result our communities.
- 7.5 It is considered that the Council ought to support the proposals. A suggested response to the latest consultation in the form requested by Audit Commission forms Annexe 3.

8 Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Council supports the proposals and responds to the Audit Commission in the terms set out in Annexe 3.

Background Papers

Audit Commission Consultation Document – “The framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment of district councils from 2006 “

Audit Commission Consultation Document – “CPA –district council framework from 2006

Audit Commission – Chester-le-Street Annual Inspection and Audit Letter March 2006

Audit commission – Chester-le-Street Progress Assessment Report March 2006

Ian Forster
Assistant Chief Executive

May 2006



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Annexe 1

Consultation document – “CPA – district council framework from 2006”

May 2005

Response to September 2005 consultation document

District Council CPA Consultation



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Response to Audit Commission by Chester-le-Street District Council

Consultation document – “The framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment of district councils from 2006

November 2005

1. Do you think that peers should play a part in our assessment activity and if so what do you think is the best way of using them?

The Council considers that the use of peers assists the council in its development. It currently uses peers such as the IDeA as a natural part of its improvement activity. It supports the use of peers but considers that it depends on what option is taken in terms of the future framework. It may be more difficult to envisage a role for peers in Options 4 and 5 for example. Perhaps in the latter an agreement could be made locally between the council and the Audit Commission on a focused area of peer engagement based on any weaknesses established after Direction of Travel assessments.

2. How do you think that the key elements of CPA should be used in relation to district council CPA? Please indicate the relative weighting or priority each element should have:

- **use of resources assessments?**
- **service assessments?**
- **corporate assessments?**
- **direction of travel statements or scored judgements?**

Depending on the option taken the council considers that the weighting should relate to the importance of the specific part of the proposed architecture. Corporate assessments and direction of travel statements ought to have greater weight than use of resources and service assessments. Service Assessments ought to have greater weight than use of resources assessments.

3. How should they be brought together to allow recategorisation?

The council has no specific opinion on how these may be brought together.

Appendix 1

4. Which of the two main approaches do you prefer?

On balance the council, as an improving 'poor' authority would be prefer an approach which reduces the burden of inspection activity but allows the council to seek re-categorisation as soon as the Audit Commission and the council feel it has made the improvement progress to justify it. It therefore supports the approach in Group B.

5. Of the five framework options outlined in the consultation paper, which do you prefer and why

The Council on balance favours Option 4. This would allow the council to secure re-categorisation early but retains the external challenge to improving service delivery through the inclusion of the service assessment element.

6. How burdensome do you think each option would be?

It is clear that those options in Group A would have significant resource implications to both councils and the Audit Commission. Those in Group B would have manageable resource implications.

7. Is there an alternative framework you would suggest?

The council has no specific alternate model to put forward.

8. Do you have any comments on our approach to quality assurance?

The council would request that the any quality assurance arrangements put in place are robust enough to ensure that the community and District Councils can have faith in the consistency of application of the chosen option.

9. Do you have any comments on any other aspect of the consultation paper or any issue in relation to the future framework for district council CPA?

While the assessment of the options provides a potential choice as to how quickly the council may be re-categorised there is nothing in the proposals that link this to coming out of intervention or engagement. As a result the council could be re-categorised upwards under the new architecture but not necessarily allowed out of intervention as a result. The council would request consideration to be given to the establishment of a formal process to be established linking coming out of intervention with re-categorisation

The council have no other comments to make.

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District Council

Annexe 2

Consultation document – “CPA – district council framework from 2006”

May 2005

Set of Performance Indicators for CPA from 2006

Appendix 1

Annexe 2. District Council CPA – performance information set for use in the analysis of service performance information

The proposed performance information (PI) set for use in the analysis of service performance information is supplementary to *CPA – District Council Framework from 2006* – consultation document

Description of PI Source and reference

Time taken to determine planning applications against targets

BVPI – BV 109a,b,c and Office Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) - including PS2 return

Satisfaction of applicants with planning service

BVPI – BV 111

Cleanliness of public places (litter and detritus)

BVPI – BV 199a - data at land-use class level is held by Department Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and underlies BVPI 199

Provision of kerbside recycling collection (one recyclable)

BVPI – BV 91a

Satisfaction with waste collection

BVPI – BV 90a

Satisfaction with recycling

BVPI – BV 90b

Percentage of standard planning searches carried out within 10 working days

BVPI – BV 179

Environmental health checklist

BVPI – BV 166a

Satisfaction with the cleanliness of public space

BVPI – BV 89

Recycling and composting performance

BVPI – BV 82a + 82b

Use of brown-field land for housing

BVPI – BV 106

Energy requirements of council housing

BVPI – BV 63

Tonnage of waste per head of population

BVPI – BV 84

The proportion of non-decent LA homes

BVPI – BV 184a

Percentage change over year of local authority decent homes

BVPI – BV 184b

Urgent repairs in time

HIP – BPSA section E5 (previously BV 72)

Average time for non-urgent repairs

HIP – BPSA section E6 (previously BV 73)

Appendix 1

Percentage of responsive repairs for which local authority made and kept an appointment

BVPI – BV 185

Rent collection and arrears

BVPI – BV 66a

Average re-let times

HIP – BPSA section E3 (previously BV 68 – reintroduced as a BV 212 from 2005/06)

Average weekly management cost

HIP – BPSA section E1 (previously BV 65a)

CRE code for rented housing

BVPI – BV 164

Council homes SAP ratings

BVPI – BV 63

Overall satisfaction with housing service

BVPI – BV 74a

Satisfaction with opportunities to participate

BVPI – BV 75a

Average time in temporary accommodation – time spent in B&B

BVPI – BV 183a

Average time in temporary accommodation – time

spent in hostels

BVPI – BV 183b

Repeat homelessness acceptances

HIP – section E1b

Private unfit made fit

HIP – HSSA

(previously BVPI – BV 62)

Percentage of total private sector homes vacant for more than 6 months

HIP – HSSA section A1 and A7

Racial incidents with further action

BVPI – BV 175

Domestic refuge places

BVPI – BV 176

Resident satisfaction parks / open spaces

BVPI – BV 119e

Resident satisfaction sport/ leisure facilities

BVPI – BV 119a

Resident satisfaction museums / galleries

BVPI – BV 119c

Resident satisfaction theatres / concert halls

BVPI – BV 119d



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Annexe 3

Consultation document – “CPA – district council framework from 2006”

May 2005

Suggested Council Response to Consultation Document

District Council CPA 2006 Consultation



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Response to Audit Commission by Chester-le-Street District Council

Consultation document – “CPA - district council framework from 2006”

May 2005

1 The overall framework (pages 8-11)

1.1 Do you agree or disagree with the overall approach proposed for the future CPA framework for district councils? If so, which aspects do you disagree with?

The Council agrees with and supports the overall approach to the future framework for CPA for District Councils.

2 Re-categorisation (pages 12-13)

2.1 Do you agree or disagree that we should undertake re-categorisation activity only where there is significant evidence to indicate a potential change from the original CPA category?

The council agrees and fundamentally supports the proposals to undertake re-categorisation where there is evidence to indicate a change from the original CPA category

2.2 Do you agree or disagree with our proposals about how a council can seek re-categorisation and how that decision will be made?

The council agrees with the proposals for how the council can seek categorization and how that decision will be made.

2.3 We have suggested a range of evidence that the Commission should take into account in deciding whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment. Do you agree or disagree with this? Is there any other evidence we should consider?

The council would agree with the proposals for making a decision on whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment. In respect of ‘poor’ councils that are improvement the Commission should additionally take into account the views of the ODPM.

Appendix 1

3 Use of resources

3.1 Following the consultation recently undertaken for use of resources assessments, do you have any additional comments?

The council feel there is the need to develop national models for proving value for money. This would allow better comparison between councils.

3.2 What are your views about the most appropriate timing of the use of resources assessment and reporting for district councils in the future?

The council have no issues with the proposed timing arrangements.

4 Direction of travel

4.1 Do you agree or disagree that we should continue the approach to direction of travel statements introduced in 2005? If you disagree, how should it be changed?

The council has no issue with the continued approach to direction of travel statements.

4.2 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce some common statements so that progress is reported in a more consistent way?

The council support any proposals which will increase consistency.

5 Analysis of service performance information (page 16-17)

5.1 Do you agree or disagree with our proposals for the analysis of service performance information which will be used as part of the evidence in deciding whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment?

The council have no disagreement in principle with the use of performance information to help decide on whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment. It is noted that performance is not just about PIs and the council would wish to seek clarification on what other performance information will be taken into account. The council would wish to ensure that performance against its improvement programme in both qualitative and quantitative terms ought to be able to be taken into account.

CPA – district council framework from 2006 | Consultation questions

5.2 In relation to the proposed set of performance indicators, do you agree or disagree that these are appropriate in the context of considering either improvement or deterioration in services? If you disagree, which indicators would be more suitable?

The council generally agree with the proposed set of indicators. However the council would ask the audit commission to consider the level of the Equality Standard met and Quality of the Race Equality Scheme (BV2 a and 2b)

5.3 Do you think the proposed set of performance indicators are broadly representative of the services district councils provide?

The council generally agree that the proposed set of indicators are broadly representative of the services district councils provide although in many districts museum and theatre services are not provide (BV. 119c and 119d)

Appendix 1

6 Corporate assessment (pages 17-22)

6.1 What are your views on the proposed changes to the corporate assessment process including:

- a) a reduction in corporate assessment themes from ten to five;
- b) involvement of a council peer on the assessment team;
- c) the introduction of web-based stakeholder surveys;
- d) no diagnostic assessments and a greater reliance on pre-site analysis to minimise the on-site work; and
- e) the use of BFI assessments, use of resources as part of the range of evidence taken into account rather than specific components of the corporate assessment.

The council agrees with the proposed changes in the process.

6.2 Do you agree or disagree with the key lines of enquiry proposed for use in corporate assessment from 2006? If you disagree, what amendments do you propose?

The council broadly agrees with the KLOE's proposed.

6.3 Do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to scoring and weighting, which adopts the LSIF scoring system, but allows comparability with previous assessments? If you disagree, what alternatives do you propose?

The council does not dispute the proposed scoring and weighting.

7 Supporting Strategic Regulation

7.1 In addition to our questions about the proposals for specific changes to the CPA framework, we are also interested in your views on any areas of change, which might support the Commission's principles of Strategic Regulation.

The council have no specific views on areas of change which might support the Commissions Principles of Strategic Regulation

7.2 How could CPA be used over the next two years to ease the transition to a new assessment framework from 2008?

The council have no other comments to make.

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