

# Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities

2 September 2002

## Improving the Focus of the Sub- Committee - Comprehensive Performance Assessment

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### Report of Head of Overview and Scrutiny

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#### Purpose of Report

1. To suggest that the work of the Sub-Committee should be particularly focused on the issues raised by the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

#### Background

2. So far, the Sub-Committee has used the Council's Best Value Performance Plan and the Performance Indicators within the Plan to assist in determining which areas of the Council's services should be scrutinised to seek improvement. The opportunity now arises to use the work carried out as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) to enhance the focus for the Sub-Committee. Bearing in mind the significant agenda within the jurisdiction of the Sub-Committee, this clearly is a necessary process.
3. The Sub-Committee also needs to continually keep in mind that its aim is to improve services which have a direct impact on the community served by the local authority.
4. The Self-Assessment document which was produced as part of the CPA explained the context of what the Council was trying to achieve, how it had set about delivering its priorities, what the Council had achieved and not achieved and the Council's future plans.

#### The context of County Durham

5. *As far as this Sub-Committee is concerned, it should be noted that the population of the County is expected to hold level over the next ten years and then to rise slightly to 495,000 in the following ten years. However, over this twenty year period, the number of young people is likely to fall by some 12% and those aged 16-39 by 6%. In line with national trends, the number of older people is anticipated to increase substantially. The most significant changes will be the retirement age groups with those aged 60+ anticipated to increase by 27% and those aged 85+ by some 59%.*
6. *The County's strong sense of identity with both the County and local towns and villages is a particular feature to be borne in mind. Due to the rural nature of the County, there are many communities that experience problems of isolation and this highlights the importance of effective communication and transportation systems.*
7. *The index of multiple deprivation shows that nearly 32% of the County's residents live in wards ranked amongst the worst 10% in England. The concentration of deprived areas cover most of East Durham and two areas in the North-West and South-West*

of the County. Looking at wards ranked among **the worst 10%** in England within the County, the following are the percentages of residents living in such wards:-

Health	58%
Employment	40%
Income	24%
Education skills	13%

8. *In terms of crime, levels are not comparatively high within the County but are rising. The latest Crime and Disorder audits show that there is significant public concern about crime and the fear of crime.*
9. *The impact of low income, poor health and other disadvantages within the County can lead to social exclusion and a culture of low aspiration.*

### **Challenges**

10. The key challenges facing the Council and its partners in terms of improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the County which are particularly relevant for the Sub-Committee were identified as:-
  - *Ageing population*
  - *Community development*
  - *Crime and fear of crime*
  - *Health*
  - *Inequalities*

### **Priorities**

11. The Self-Assessment process also identified the Council's priorities within the jurisdiction of the Sub-Committee. The main areas have been:-
  - ❖ *Supporting and protecting vulnerable adults, young people and children*
  - ❖ *Helping to reduce crime and fear of crime*

An added priority this year is to:

- ❖ *Help to improve the health of local people and make County Durham a safer place*

### **Areas for Improvement**

12. The areas identified for improvement were:-
  - ❑ *Enhancing support for children in care, including the review of child protection cases, better health care assessment, providing personal education plans, improving educational attainment and increasing the level of adoption, the latter two being LPSA targets*
  - ❑ *Achieving stability in the residential and nursing care market through agreeing payment rates and arrangements for regular review*
  - ❑ *Developing whole systems approach to intermediate care services, including improving hospital discharge arrangements*
  - ❑ *Better use of community buildings and compliance with Disability Discrimination Act access requirements; and*
  - ❑ *Improving road safety in relation to child deaths and casualties, which is the focus of one of the LPSA targets.*

13. The issues identified by the CPA are clearly key areas for the Council and must be important areas for the Sub-Committee in planning its work to achieve maximum assistance to the Council to fulfil its aims. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in August, has confirmed that the CPA issues should drive the work of the non-Executive.

**Recommendation**

14. The Sub-Committee is asked to note this report and consider how to implement this approach in prioritising its work

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