

Cabinet Briefing

18 September 2007



CPA Corporate Assessment: Self Assessment Document

Report of Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. To present an updated self assessment for the pending CPA corporate Assessment.

Background

2. The focus of the Corporate Assessment is to look at the Council in relation to three key questions and five themes.

1. What is the Council, together with its partners trying to achieve?	
Theme 1	Ambition for the council
Theme 2	Prioritisation
2. What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	
Theme 3	Capacity
Theme 4	Performance Management
3. What has been achieved?	
Theme 5	Achievement Considering the priority areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable Communities• Safer and stronger communities• Healthier Communities• Older People• Children and Young people

3. Integral to the Corporate Assessment is the submission of a self assessment document on how we are performing against the five themes. This had to be submitted to the Audit Commission Inspectors by 10th September.
4. The latest version of the Self Assessment document (Appendix 2) is based on that previously prepared for the postponed April Inspection.

Main Messages of the Self Assessment Document

5. The Council continues to work differently, to focus on better outcomes for local people and make a positive contribution and is currently assessed as a 'Four star' Council which is 'improving well'.
6. The Council is looking forward to the opportunities and challenges posed by the Local Government White Paper around community empowerment, local leadership, our role as a convener of public services and the transition to Unitary status.

7. The main challenges for the County and Council are:
- **Demographic change** – providing services for older people and helping to keep them in their homes and be part of the local community;
 - **Community Development** – improving community engagement and the capacity of individuals and community groups to fully participate in decisions that affect their lives;
 - **Crime and Fear of Crime** – responding to public concerns about anti-social behaviour;
 - **Educational attainment and adult basic skills** – improving the levels of attainment in schools, particularly secondary schools, and adult skills for the modern labour market;
 - **Economic vulnerability and lack of employment** – addressing the need to diversify and strengthen the economy and the fact that too many people are without jobs;
 - **Environment** – tackling waste management and the need for environmental improvements in towns and villages and increasing awareness of sustainability issues;
 - **Public health and adult care** – meeting the needs of increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities and helping to tackle high levels of ill health, teenage pregnancy and obesity;
 - **Inequalities** – supporting vulnerable adults and children and addressing the impact of inequality and social exclusion, including transportation and access to services and opportunities.
8. **Ambition** - The County Council is a leading player in tackling these challenges through developing and supporting strong partnerships which have undergone considerable change in recent years. The Council plays a key role in supporting partners to achieve their aims as 'accountable body' for many of these partnership arrangements.
9. **Prioritisation** - The Council carries out an annual review of improvement priorities as part of the overall strategic planning and performance management framework.
10. **Capacity** - The Council has focussed on reshaping council services and 'opening up' decision making process, seeking to transform the culture of the council and raise levels of aspiration and performance.
11. **Performance Management** - Performance management is an essential and integral part of the functioning of the County Council. Our priorities and targets are clearly outlined in our Corporate Plan and progress is regularly monitored and reported upon. Value for money is a strong strategic theme underpinning all of our decision-making.
12. **Achievement** - We are making a real difference in people's lives. Through effective leadership and robust systems we are working with partners and communities in achieving positive outcomes to meet the diverse needs of County Durham.

13. **Self Score**

Theme	Score (Out of 4)	Key
Ambition	4	3 = consistently above minimum requirements – performing well 4 = well above minimum requirements – performing strongly This would provide the Council with an overall score of 4 out of 4
Prioritisation	4	
Capacity	3	
Performance management	3	
Achievement	3-4	

Recommendations

14. Cabinet is recommended to note the self assessment in Appendix 2.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

None

Staffing

None

Equality and diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Sustainability

None

Human rights

None

Localities and Rurality

None

Young people

None

Consultation

None

Health

None