

Analysis of 2008 CPA

The Scale of Things

Councillor Newton Wood

Chair Overview and Scrutiny



23 JULY 2008

FOREWORD

The contents of this report have the approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group for presentation to the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for their consideration on Wednesday 23rd July 2008.

It is important that this report identifies, for officers, members and the community, the exact position Teesdale is in, that is in relation to *the scale of performance* within our own county, County Durham and in the bigger picture that is in the country as a whole.

Without being aware of where we are, we are unlikely to know where we are going!

Unitary status is on the horizon. Durham County Council is a 4 star authority and has compared itself to other single tier councils in the country.

Beyond doubt, with such expertise, acknowledged skills and professionalism the new authority will serve to compliment and improve upon the quality of services for the Teesdale community.

However, as many weaknesses have been identified by the 2008 CPA inspection, our position in relation to the rest of the country has already been determined by The Audit Commission.

This report highlights:-

- Where we are at this point in time
- Areas which need attention
- Those weaknesses which can be handed over to county methods and procedures.
- Some areas which need urgent attention by Teesdale District Council
- The new county councillors representing Teesdale will now, hopefully, be aware of where we are in the scale of things and the work they have ahead of them to bring us in line with our fellow districts in County Durham.

In 2004 an analysis of the CPA was prepared by Overview and Scrutiny to draw attention to the shortcomings of Teesdale District Council. This analysis emphasised the weaknesses identified in the CPA report of 2004.

This analysis was submitted to the Director of Corporate Services but was not acted upon.

This presentation of the analysis was followed with the report 'The Role of Elected Members'. Advice was gathered from 31 councils categorised as excellent in addition to those in recovery.

In this report (which took some six months after completion to reach the Executive Committee) there was a recommendation proposing the introduction of Area Committees.

The introduction of Area Committees was found through research to be used by *best practice councils* to gain an understanding of their communities, needs and aspirations.

Area committees and other proposals have not been implemented in Teesdale due to the lack of strategy, forward planning and a true understanding of the Local Government Act 2000 and the community at large.

It is suggested that all of the weaknesses identified in the CPA reports 2004 and 2008 are within the area of responsibility of the Executive and Senior Officers, and that they have no bearing whatsoever on the staff whose work, commitment and cooperation has never been brought into question.

In the CPA 2008 it is noted that staff have expressed concern in respect of the overall strength of strategic leadership and this report recommends that this issue is addressed with a sense of urgency.

This report on the CPA 2008 is *an even greater* in depth analysis than prepared in 2004. It has been prepared in the hope that its contents will enable Teesdale District Council to focus on those issues necessary to make significant improvements.

Teesdale District Council needs to be aware not only of the level of its own improvement but also to understand where they stand in the bigger picture in respect of not only the county but also the country.

It is hoped that Teesdale and the newly elected county councillors will respond and act upon this information, prioritise the key areas with a sense of urgency such that we can all equip ourselves to move Teesdale forward into and after unitary status and in so doing truly represent the needs of our community which we all serve.

The information provided in this report in relation to other district councils has been provided in discussion with The Audit Commission and information available on their website.

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All information researched and collated in this document is available to the public on

The Audit Commission website

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The weaknesses highlighted in the Corporate Performance Assessment 2008 were already apparent to many staff and members of Teesdale District Council.
- 1.2 Teesdale's score has increased by 4 points and jumped one category to 'fair', this being an improvement from 2004 when we were assessed as 'poor' and were then one of the 9 poorest authorities assessed of 238 in the country.
- 1.3 Of these 9 'poor' district councils 7 have now been re-assessed and of these, 4 are now 'good', 1 'fair (TDC)', 1 'weak' and 1 'poor', the remaining 2 have not yet been re-assessed,
- 1.4 This report has been prepared to provide information to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to make a decision on the priorities they and the Council feel need to be addressed as identified in the CPA report as a sense of urgency within the parameters of the changeover to unitary status.
- 1.5 It is important that we are all aware of the realities and implications of being judged by the Audit Commission as 'fair' and the evidence and reasons for Teesdale's slow recovery.
- 1.6 Firstly, in 2004 we were assessed as 'poor' with a score of just 28. This assessment was beyond doubt a reality shock for Teesdale District Council. It was during this period I was elected to the position of Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 1.7 At this time, myself and others involved were totally unaware of the function of Overview and Scrutiny, the importance of the Local Government Act 2000 and the subsequent CPA which was introduced to monitor the implementation of the legislation introduced in the new Act.
- 1.8 This Act has affected Teesdale in three 4 year stages:-
 1. The introduction of the Act which completely revolutionised Local Government in 2000.
 2. Four years later, 2004, the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment to monitor the progress of councils in respect of the Local Government Act 2000.
 3. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection undertaken in March of this year was to monitor the progress Teesdale District Council had made in respect of the weaknesses identified in 2004.
- 1.9 This assessment recognised that:-
 - Unitary authority status was on the horizon
 - Many of the weaknesses outlined in the CPA cannot be rectified within the timescales imposed by the forthcoming unitary status
 - It is vital that the newly elected councillors and the new unitary authority are aware of those areas of weakness that need to be addressed

- 1.10 The Audit Commission, however, listed many weaknesses to show Teesdale's shortcomings which reflected against a 'fair' assessment.
- 1.11 These weaknesses need to be examined in the hope that at least some of them can be rectified prior to unitary status.
- 1.12 Following the assessment in 2004 an analysis of the areas of weakness identified in the CPA report was prepared. It was hoped that the Council could focus on these and other relevant areas which resulted in Teesdale being assessed as a 'poor' council.
- 1.13 In addition, Overview and Scrutiny contacted all of the excellent councils to examine their working arrangements. With information gleaned from these excellent authorities ('The Role of The Elected Members' report) it became apparent that:-
1. The Local Government Act 2000 had not been acknowledged, understood or studied nor its recommendations implemented by Teesdale District Council
 2. In discussion with other authorities it was clear that:-
 - They had read and studied the Local Government Act 2000
 - They had spent up to 4 years setting in place those changes that were necessary in a modernised authority to enable them to meet the challenges of the 21st century
 - Most importantly they had nurtured an awareness and understanding as to how they would be assessed by the impending new type of audit in 2004.
 3. It is clear now Teesdale District Council had no effective strategic plans in place in 2000 to accommodate the new mandatory legislation and this was evidenced by a 'poor' assessment in 2004.
 4. This lack of preparation or understanding resulted in the 'poor' assessment given in 2004 which placed Teesdale in the poorest category as assessed at that time in the country.
- 1.14 This Council was taken into the CPA arena 2008 with only 6 months preparation with the expectation of a 'good' assessment.
- 1.15 The new rating accepts that there are still major areas that need to be addressed if excellence status is to be achieved. There is beyond doubt a significant difference between the 'fair' category and that of 'excellence'.
- 1.16 In my interview with the Audit Commission I identified and discussed those areas which I felt had prevented the development of Overview and Scrutiny and those that would have benefited this authority had they been acknowledged and implemented as a result of the 2004 assessment:-
1. The lack of officer support
 2. The lack of understanding of the areas to focus on as identified in the CPA 2004 that were necessary for improvement

3. Operating principles had not been implemented by officers that were mandatory for the Overview and Scrutiny function, these were:-

- Pre-decision information was not made available
- Access to proposed policies and recommendations was not made available
- Overview and Scrutiny reports were not progressed through to the Executive in acceptable time scales
- The recommendations in these reports would have at least solved some of the weaknesses identified by the Audit Commission in 2008. (performance, community involvement, waste management etc).

For example, attention to weaknesses identified by Overview and Scrutiny in 2004:

- Requests to undertake Performance Management and Best Value reviews were denied by officers after visits had been made to other authorities to discuss best practice (Selby)
- Overview and Scrutiny was denied involvement in setting the Council's priorities in relation to overcoming the weaknesses outlined by the Audit Commission as previously stated
- Recommendations to implement strategies were ignored

1.17 The following statement from the 2008 CPA clearly highlights the uncomfortable situation this council finds itself in, in relation *to diversity and equality* –

'because the council does not understand the needs of its communities, it cannot promote these needs during the development of the new council 'Para 49 CPA 2008

1.18 A presentation was made in 2004 to the Project Initiation Document (PID) Managers' Forum highlighting 50 areas of weakness identified in the CPA 2004 that needed to be challenged and addressed.

1.19 This observation was presented to the Lead Officer designated by the ODPM, IDeA and consultants from KPMG working within the authority at this time and there was agreement that it was difficult to see how the weaknesses identified would be resolved in the Project Initiation Document programme.

1.20 As the PIDs were not focussed towards an ideal strategy to overcome the weaknesses highlighted within the four year period prior to the 2008 assessment it was difficult to see how Teesdale could make the improvements in line with other authorities in the country.

1.21 It should be noted at this point that one of the significant rules of Performance Management is that *'problems will not effectively be resolved until such times that the cause is removed'*.

In the pages of this report the reader may, with the evidence provided, come to a clear conclusion as to how and why our Council has been prevented from achieving a good/excellent assessment.

- 1.22 To overcome the failures a recommendation was made to the Chief Executive and to the Lead Officer from the ODPM at the time, that a strategy group should be set up consisting of the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny in order to construct a strategic plan of action to drive forward improvement with an aim to reshape our authority in line with other 'excellent' councils.
- 1.23 This same idea was presented again recently without any interest being expressed.
- 1.24 This strategic group would have coordinated the activities of Officers, Executive, Overview and Scrutiny with a common objective to improve the Council's performance in the interests of the community of Teesdale.
- 1.25 However, as we go into the last stages of transition into the unitary council and we do not learn from our past experiences then we have failed to make significant improvement as our past experience shows.

2.0 WEAKNESSES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE CPA 2004

- 2.1 The following tabulation shows the comments which were made within the 2004 CPA report.
- 2.2 These comments although specific to areas in 2004 are relevant to some of the comments in the 2008 report.

Overview & Scrutiny Report CPA 2004 Newton Wood. Chair O&S Committee

CPA 2004 – report comments

1. Political leadership .is weak. Are plans in place to improve?
2. Corporate Plan- no detailed consultation
3. Decision making is ineffective
4. No long term targets
5. No ownership or understood
6. Consultation is not systematic or effective to set ambitions
7. No clear priorities
8. Council reacts does not plan ahead
9. Insufficient research to guide activities
10. Consultation is not systematic to drive service improvements
11. Lack of focus on critical issues and leadership
12. Council meetings long and not focused on priorities
13. Weak focus - lack of priorities
14. Decision making not focused on priorities
15. Inadequate financial monitoring
16. Leadership capacity is ineffective not addressed
17. No attempt to assess value and cost of partnership working
18. No systematic training for councillors or staff
19. No effective Standards Committee
20. Lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities
21. HR inadequate recruitment and training
22. Financial reserves low
23. Procurement strategy out of date few options for Service Delivery
24. Service Planning is weak
25. No agreed Management Performance Management system
26. No Performance Management culture
27. Project planning and risk management is weak
28. Ineffective management of finances slip in capital program
29. No agreed performance management system or culture
30. Ineffective control- finances ex capital programme
31. Low levels of recycling
32. Benefits service poor fraud prevention poor
33. More half council houses nor meet decent homes standard
34. 61% of Performance Indicators failed to improve
35. Benefits service not improved
36. Poor Performance in collecting tax
37. Little improvement in the proportion of decent homes
38. No agreement for investment in remaining Modernisation Proposals
39. Capital Programme under spent
40. Council House transfer not risk assessed

41. O&S not well developed
42. No medium term financial plan
43. Learning not addressing weaknesses
44. Few examples of learning from best councils
45. No systematic sharing of best practice in council
46. No plans to address weakness in leadership
47. Some key strategies missing
48. Existing plans not clear
49. Resource implications of plans not thoroughly assessed
50. CSG does not provide an effective leadership forum

3.0 COUNCILS ASSESSED AS POOR IN THE CPA 2004

- 3.1 "Although the CPA have introduced some changes to the way District Council CPA will take place from 2006, the commission will not introduce a harder test into re-categorisation activity. The categories will remain the same and the corporate assessment broadly similar to ensure comparability between the 2004/2008 categories and those determined from 2006 onwards"
- 3.2 The bands for achieving 'fair' good' etc. have changed to compensate for changes in the other elements of the final score.

(All scoring is correct at the time of printing and accessed from direct enquiries with The Audit Commission and their website)

Category	Banding 2004	Banding 2008
Excellent	48 - 60	45 - 60
Good	42 - 47	36 - 44
Fair	36 - 41	28 - 35
Weak	30 - 35	21 - 27
Poor	15 - 29	20 or less

- 3.3 District Councils assessed as poor:

District	CPA 2004
Chester-le-Street	Poor
North Shropshire	Poor
Rossendale	Poor
Harlow	Poor
Teesdale	Poor
Castle Point	Poor
Northampton	Poor
Torridge	Poor
Bromsgrove	Poor

4.0 COMMENTS ON THE 2008 ASSESSMENTS

- 39 councils, to date have requested re-categorisation and re-categorisation is still on going.
- The trend in re-categorisation is upward so undoubtedly we will drop lower in the country wide league table as other authorities apply.
- At present we have the lowest score in County Durham family of districts.
- Chester le Street was rated as 'poor' along with ourselves in 2004 and has now been re-assessed as 'good'.
- Evidence shows that we are among the lowest improving councils in the country.
- It is suggested that this is the direct consequence of the weaknesses highlighted in this report

5.0 NEW ASSESSMENTS FOR COUNCILS ASSESSED AS POOR IN 2004

DISTRICT	CPA 2004	2008
Chester-le-Street	Poor	Good
North Shropshire	Poor	Good
Rossendale	Poor	Good
Harlow	Poor	Good
Teesdale	Poor	Fair
Castle Point	Poor	Weak
*Northampton	Poor	-
*Torrige	Poor	-
Bromsgrove	Poor	Poor

(*Northampton and Torrige yet to be re-categorised)

6.0 TEESDALE'S POSITION IN COUNTY DURHAM 2008

6.1 As stated earlier Teesdale's score of 32 is the lowest in our county family of district councils.

DISTRICT	CATAGORY	SCORE
Easington	Excellent	49
Wear Valley	Excellent	47
Derwentside	Good	44
Sedgefield	Good	42
Chester-le-Street	Good	39
Durham City	Fair	37
Teesdale	Fair	32

6.2 It is clearly identified that we are not performing at the same rate or level as our neighbours in County Durham.

6.3 The Audit Commission provides information on the existing categories of all of the district councils in the country. The Audit Commission has changed the scores in relation to the categories of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

6.4 As a result the scores of some councils are now no longer relevant to the band they had previously attained and in most cases their old score would shift into the next category.

7.0 RE-CATEGORISATION

7.1 The Audit Commission has provided Teesdale Overview and Scrutiny with a list of those councils re-categorised since 2004 and the results of their assessment.

7.2 This information has given us the following results:-

- There are 238 district councils in England
- Of these councils 39 councils (16%) have at this juncture, July 2008, applied for re-categorisation and have now received, along with Teesdale, their re-assessment results
- These results clearly show Teesdale's position in the bigger picture of County Durham and the country as a whole
- Teesdale's improvement has not been significant in comparison with other councils
- The many of these councils have made dramatic improvement particularly into the 'good' and 'excellent' categories.
- To make progress to the 'excellent' category from the 'good' category is no doubt more difficult than movement upward in the lower categories.

7.3 The upgrading results for the 39 councils are as follows:-

Category	Number of councils	Approx. %
Excellent	17	44%
Good	17	44%
Fair	4	10%
Weak	0	0%
Poor	1	2%

8.0 DISTRICT SCORES FOLLOWING CATEGORY CHANGES

District	Score 2004	Category 2004	Score 2008	Category 2008	Improvement
Mid Beds	41	weak	39	good	-2
Ribble Valley	41	fair	39	good	-2
Wychavon	46	good	45	excellent	-1
Thanet	30	weak	30	fair	0
North Devon	34	weak	34	fair	0
Newark and Sherwood	41	weak	41	good	0
West Lancs	45	good	45	excellent	0
S. Somerset	40	weak	41	good	+1
Mansfield	34	weak	36	good	+2
Lancaster	36	fair	37	good	+2
Ashfield	39	fair	41	good	+2
Watford	35	weak	38	good	+3
Teesdale	28	poor	32	fair	+4
Hyndburn	41	fair	45	excellent	+4
S. Norfolk	43	fair	47	excellent	+4
Staffs Moorlands	47	good	51	excellent	+4
Nuneaton and Bedworth	34	weak	39	good	+5
Fenland	40	fair	45	excellent	+5
Bolsover	42	good	47	excellent	+5
S. Oxfordshire	42	good	47	excellent	+5
Congleton	35	weak	41	good	+6
Chelmsford	46	good	52	excellent	+6

North Dorset	34	weak	41	fair	+7
Wyre	32	weak	39	good	+7
Vale Royal	45	good	52	excellent	+7
Stratford	31	weak	39	good	+8
Harlow	27	poor	36	good	+9
Wear Valley	37	fair	47	excellent	+10
South Ribble	45	good	54	excellent	+11
Bedford	43	good	54	excellent	+11
Rushcliffe	45	good	56	excellent	+11
Chester-le-Street	26	poor	39	good	+13
Castle Point	28	poor	41	good	+13
NE Derbyshire	32	weak	45	excellent	+13
St Edmondsbury	45	good	58	excellent	+13
Sevenoaks	44	good	58	excellent	+14
Bromsgrove	15	poor	0	poor	+15!
N. Shropshire	22	poor	40	good	+19
Rosendale	20	poor	40	good	+20

- 8.1 It is hoped that the county councillors will be truly aware of our position and that all involved make strides towards excellence on our behalf.
- 8.2 The information collated in these tables is available on the Audit Commission website and is available for the public to access.
- 8.3 These tables show how we fit into the scale of things in comparison with the other 238 councils in the country.
- 8.4 We are still not within the top 200 councils.
- 8.5 This information clearly shows how we have fallen behind other councils within our family in Durham County and more dramatically in the country.
- 8.6 With the help of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive the introduction of professional skills and experience is already in evidence.

This will work to improve upon our performance over the last 8 years.

9.0 WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN THE CPA 2008

- 9.1 It is noted that there are several comments relating to recent developments stating that they are so recent that it is too early to make an assessment on their development, improvements or outcomes.
- 9.2 This clearly indicates that these have been introduced at a very late stage prior to the CPA 2008.

PARAGRAPH	THEME	COMMENT
4	Overall	1. There is still much to be done
5		2. High level outcomes have been identified and some have been realised, but others have yet to be translated into challenging plans
6	Ambition	3. Target setting and action planning are still inconsistent
8	Ambition	4. Political capacity has improved but there are still shortcomings 5. The council does not manage the scrutiny function effectively and it often works in isolation 6. Not all minority groups are sufficiently consulted or represented
9/10	Ambition	7. Overall developments are at an early stage 8. Some good work has been done to share info about performance of partners but again target setting remains an area for further development 9. A number of areas of poor performance relate to the Council's priorities e.g. 10. Performance indicators for waste and recycling reflect performance that is well below average, 43% are off target
11	Ambition	11. However, the amount of waste collected is increasingly above national trends
31	Ambition	12. A number of high level outcomes have been identified in relation to broad themes, but these have yet to be fully translated into challenging action plans
33	Ambition	13. The CP priorities are supported by appropriate actions, but the eleven high level outcomes identified within the SCS have not been fully translated into challenging and specific measures at action plan level, which hinders the LSP's and Councils ability to measure progress and success
35	Ambition	14. The council has performed well in involving stake holders in the development of the vision (Barnard Castle Vision), although this has not been consistent

		<p>across all communities</p> <p>15. There is less evidence to demonstrate that the council has fully involved other minority communities</p> <p>16. But the council and LSP cannot be confident that the vision reflects the diverse needs of all the district's communities</p> <p>17. Consultation and engagement is less well established at corporate level than in some services</p>
36	Ambition	<p>18. Consultation and engagement is less well established at corporate level than in some services</p> <p>19. 'Teesdale Listens' But is at an early stage in making an impact on improved outcomes for local people</p>
39	Prioritisation	<p>20. Action planning is still inconsistent</p>
40	Prioritisation	<p>21. The council has demonstrated an ability to focus on key areas, although the broad range of priorities it faces, together with limited capacity, means it is not always able to do so as effectively as it might wish</p>
42	Prioritisation	<p>22. Although the approach to strategic delivery and prioritisation is becoming more robust, the fact that so many key strategies and plans are newly developed or still in development that as yet their impact is unclear</p>
48	Prioritisation	<p>23. The overall approach to corporate and service planning to deliver priorities is adequate, but action planning is still inconsistent</p> <p>24. Plans do not consistently , make clear what impact actions will have, particularly on local and regional priorities</p>
49	Prioritisation	<p>25. The council cannot be confident that its priorities take into account the diverse needs of all the communities. It also has implications for future service delivery</p> <p>26. Because the council does not understand the needs of its communities, it cannot promote these needs during the development of the new council</p>
51	Capacity	<p>27. The approach to asset management is inadequate (NB para 3)</p>
52	Capacity	<p>28. However, attendance at some partnership meetings remains poor. This means the council is not maximising its impact in all areas of partnership activity</p>
55	Capacity	<p>29. A staff survey in November 2007 showed improvement in staff attitudes to political leadership and managerial leadership, but a substantial proportion expressed concern about the overall strength of strategic leadership</p>
58	Capacity	<p>30. Shortcomings in the scrutiny function which limit its capacity to improve services</p> <p>31. Officer support has been limited and not sufficient to allow it to flourish</p> <p>32. Scrutiny plays little part in performance monitoring</p>

		<p>33. The council does not manage scrutiny well</p> <p>34. The energies of scrutiny are not being channelled to support delivery against council priorities</p> <p>35. Council cannot be confident its scrutiny function is contributing effectively to service improvement</p>
61	Capacity	<p>36. The council makes good use of its limited staff and skills to deliver its priorities in most areas but there is little if any additional capacity within the organisation</p>
		<p>37. This is further tested by the additional demands of LGR with many staff involved in transition groups, which puts pressure on service delivery and staff access to training opportunities</p> <p>38. This pressure means that while improvement is clear, there is still some way to go before capacity issues are fully resolved</p> <p>39. The Council also lacks capacity to fully resource work when staff are on sick leave</p> <p>40. The impact of this is that the council cannot be confident that it has capacity to deliver against priorities</p>
63	Capacity	<p>41. The way in which the Council uses its resources is adequate overall. Although asset management is inadequate (NB paragraph 3)</p>
64	Capacity	<p>42. There is limited involvement of scrutiny in budget and financial monitoring</p>
69	Performance Management	<p>43. The council is able to demonstrate that performance management is leading to some improvement, but overall developments are at an early stage and impact on outcomes is less evident</p> <p>44. Target setting is inconsistent</p>
70	Performance Management	<p>45. The council has put in place a good data quality strategy and performance management framework, but this is not yet fully embedded.</p> <p>46. The council has the mechanisms agreed to operate an effective performance management regime, but as yet there is no indication of the impact this is having on performance</p>
71	Performance Management	<p>47. In relation to poor performance around collection of household waste per head the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked to examine performance against this indicator in more detail, although it is too soon to identify the impact of this</p>
73	Performance Management	<p>48. Target setting is inconsistent</p> <p>49. Shortcomings in target setting means that the Council cannot be confident that its performance is underpinned by targets that will enable it to achieve the necessary improvements in services</p>
74	Performance Management	<p>50. Target setting within LSP is inconsistent</p> <p>51. Action plans for thematic groups do not always contain measurable outcomes</p> <p>52. Without setting specific measurable and outcome focused targets the LSP cannot tell whether it is</p>

		making progress against thematic objectives: without being challenging it cannot be sure it is pushing its achievements to their maximum potential
75	Performance Management	<p>53. The Council's monitoring of CP priorities by the improvement and performance board is not fully effective</p> <p>54. It often lacks key information about targets</p> <p>55. Actions against ambitions are shown with timescales, responsibility, measures and targets, and progress.</p> <p>56. However, the progress column is not dated and there are no traffic light indicators, so it is impossible to tell whether targets are being met and therefore impossible to identify poorly performing actions.</p> <p>57. Without this information, performance cannot be managed effectively</p>
78	Achievement and Improvement	58. The Council is performing adequately in this area..... However, many of the strategic developments are recent and have not had time to translate into outcomes
79	Achievement and Improvement	<p>59. The Council's performance against BVPI's is mixed</p> <p>60. However, although 39% of BVPI's reflected performance in the best 25% of councils, an almost equal proportion reflected worst performance.</p> <p>61. Poor performance against a number of indicators reflects priority areas for the council, e.g. those relating to waste and recycling which are below average.</p> <p>62. There have been improvements in planning performance, but this is still below average.</p> <p>63. 53% of all PIs are on track to meet their target, but 43% are off target.</p> <p>64. For key PIs – those relating most closely to the Council's priorities – 42% are on track to be achieved, with 55% off target</p>
80	A cleaner, greener place	65. The Council is meeting local targets on recycling, but performance remains below average
81		<p>66. The Council's waste management service was inspected by the Audit Commission in 2006 and judged to be a good service, but with uncertain prospects for improvement</p> <p>67. However, the report also highlighted that the amount of waste collected was increasing above national trends and this remains an area of relatively low performance</p>
82		<p>68. The Council and its partners are committed to reducing carbon emissions, but progress is slow</p> <p>69. The LSP has an environmental action plan in place, but again, this is at an early stage and has not yet made an impact</p>
84	To grow the economy	70. There have been some areas of success and the Council, together with partners, is putting in place a number of ambitious but realistic strategies..... but not all have made an impact to date
87		71. VAT registrations have fallen recently, but figures are still high and close to 1,200 per annum
88		72. The regeneration service was rated as good by Audit Commission in 2007, but with uncertain prospects for improvement

89		<p>73. The performance of the planning service is mixed</p> <p>74. A number of performance indicators are improving and have exceeded their targets.</p> <p>75. However, some targets are not challenging and overall performance remains below average</p> <p>76. Underperformance on planning issues can hamper the ability of the Council and its partners to implement regeneration plans</p>
93	Improve health and well being and safer communities	77. Crime levels in Teesdale are low but fear of crime is high
96		78. Developments in relation to youth forum are at an early stage and have yet to have significant impact on the involvement of young people in decision making

10. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED BY THE AUDIT COMMISSION FOR URGENT ATTENTION

10.1 CPA 2008

Ref. point	Theme	Areas for improvement
<p>P. 8 para 15</p>	<p>To exercise its community leadership role effectively during the transition to a new unitary council for the county of Durham, the Council should:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that it continues to play an appropriate role in the various work streams underway 2. Contribute effectively to Local Government Re-organisation 3. Ensure that it promotes the needs of the district and the interests of local people so that these can be reflected in:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of new local government structures • future delivery of services in the county 4. Ensure that it does not allow the demands of LGR to impact negatively on service quality during the transition period, whilst continuing to actively address areas of relatively poor performance 5. Improve the attendance and contribution of councillors at partnership groups 6. Keep the profile of the district and the needs of its residents as high as possible during the period of transition.

11.0 STAFFING

- 11.1 In the Audit Commission report 'Tomorrow's people: Building a local government workforce for the future' it states – '*Successful councils are characterised by chief executives' and leaders' positive engagement in discussions about future workforce.*'
- 11.2 Attention has been drawn to Overview and Scrutiny, through discussion with employees, that there has been a lack of consultation in this period of 'uncertainty'.
- 11.3 This has resulted in a stressful time for many within our workforce, particularly as many of the employees have had an increased workload as some of their colleagues have chosen to move on to other employment.
- 11.4 Also, concerns over strategic leadership have been recognised by the Audit Commission in the CPA report 2008 and this is one of the areas identified for improvement and needs to be fully tackled with a sense of urgency.
- 11.5 It is for these reasons that this issue was raised at Durham County Overview and Scrutiny Group and within Teesdale Council and also with the Interim Deputy Chief Executive back in January 2008.
- 11.6 It was made clear at the time that meetings needed to be held with the workforce with extreme urgency.
- 11.7 Of all the issues identified in the CPA report, I suggest that staffing issues are the most important.
- 11.8 All of the shortfalls listed can be addressed by Durham County Council as they will have effective practices, policies and procedures in place.
- 11.9 With the information provided by the CPA and within this report the new county councillors are now in a position to ensure that the weaknesses identified are addressed, implemented, and improvements monitored.
- 11.10 We suggest that an immediate investigation be undertaken to determine whether HR resources are adequate to meet the needs of the workforce.
- 11.11 It is crucial that there is an effective consultation process in place such that the staff can have confidence in those that they need to confide in.
- 11.12 At this point in time, recognising the staff issues in respect of strategic leadership, we can find no evidence to suggest the staff have this confidence.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 As we have been waiting for guidance from the Audit Commission on the CPA scoring principles, recommendations from this report could not be developed by the Coordinating group before being issued to the O&S Committee for their examination.**
- 12.2 Therefore it is intended that some recommendations will be presented at the O&S committee meeting for discussion and agreement with others that may be suggested by the committee.**
- 12.3 In addition to these recommendations there is a meeting with the District Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny on the 29 July,**
- 12.4 At this meeting work programmes will be discussed and we may find that Durham County requests our attention to certain areas and we also may glean some ideas from the other councils.**

13.0 ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT

Areas for Improvement identified by the Audit Commission for urgent attention (continued from page 22 CPA 2008)

Ref point	Theme	Areas for improvement
P8 para 16	To continue improving the way in which it functions, the Council should:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Build on recent improvements to its overall approach to promoting equality and diversity by ensuring the pace of this work continues.8. Ensure that all minority groups are given the opportunity to participate in setting local priorities for improvement.9. Ensuring that staff concerns over strategic leadership are fully tackled.10. Ensure that action plans are sufficiently robust so that outcomes are improved.11. Clear, achievable but challenging targets are set.

14. Recommendations

14.1 Members are requested to consider the following recommendations:

1. Human Resources (Paul Wilding/Rachel Bowles)

It is essential that the Council can meet its full obligations in consulting with staff on any of the issues that they may wish to discuss on a personal basis.

This is now more important during this transitional period when staff will be looking for jobs and discussing relocation issues.

It is therefore essential that the HR department has the appropriate resources to meet staff requirements up until March 2009.

A request is made to Paul Wilding or Rachel Bowles to prepare a report for the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group meeting on Monday 11 August and the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 13 August.

2. Newly Elected Durham County Council Members

This report highlights the weaknesses identified by the CPA, some of which Teesdale District Council will not be able to address in the short period up until May 2009. It is therefore essential that the newly elected Council Members are fully aware of the issues raised in the CPA and that they bring these to the attention of the relevant departments in Durham County Council.

That a meeting be held with newly elected county councilors and the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group to address those areas which will be identified at this meeting for discussion with officers at Durham County Council. It is also proposed that these meetings are monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee bi-monthly.

3. Teesdale Listens

The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council have agreed to meet with the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group to simplify the existing protocol of Teesdale Listens following comments raised by members of the Council. However, in light of the Audit Commissions comments on relationships with our community, especially minority groups a discussion needs to take place on whether it is appropriate for Teesdale Listens to include those community issues raised in this report.

4. Areas for Improvement (Lead Members/Overview and Scrutiny Panels/Officers)

Where a lead member is responsible for those activities identified for improvement it is recommended that the appropriate Panels discuss with those lead members activities in which they can work together to develop principles on which they can make improvements as identified in the report.

Once Lead Member/Officer responsibilities have been identified Panel Chairs will be requested to liaise with them to develop a procedure to address the problems raised. If this is approved discussions will commence at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group on Monday, 28 July.

5. Staff Concerns

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny will meet and take part in discusses with lead member for Improvement, Councillor John Salter on developing alternative arrangements to remove concerns over strategic leadership. A meeting will be arranged before the 31 July and an update will be provided on the 11 August and 13 August.

6. Interim Deputy Chief Executive

With all the management issues that will be presented within the next six months it is important the Council continues as we are now to ensure that services are not compromised, staff are well consulted with and appreciated and the reduction in staff and resources is addressed and managed. To ensure that these issues are undertaken effectively it is recommended that Mr Wilding's contract is extended until the resource is no longer required.

7. Panel Chairs/Lead Members

The Panel Chairs and the Lead Members will identify those areas not mentioned above such as action plans, partnerships, and attendance at partnership group meetings and processed for improvement.