

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

14TH JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008/09

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Sub-Committee with an update of the Direction of Travel Improvement Plan that was implemented following publication of the Annual Audit Inspection Letter, by the Audit Commission in April 2008.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the information and progress identified in the Direction of Travel Improvement Plan 2008/09 is considered.
- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee be provided with a quarterly report on progress against the Improvement Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) the Audit Commission undertakes an annual inspection called the Direction of Travel (DoT) assessment. The DoT provides assurance each year about whether a council is complying with its Best Value duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. The DoT assessment asks two questions:
- What evidence is there of the council improving outcomes?
 - How much progress is being made to implement improvement plans to sustain improvement?
- 3.2 Following submission of our self assessment to the Audit Commission (based on the two questions outlined above) and the on site field work at the Council the Audit Commission published their Annual Audit Inspection Letter in April 2008 for the Council.
- 3.3 District councils do not receive an overall scored DoT assessment unlike County Councils and single tier authorities who do receive a scored assessment. District Councils do however receive a score for the Use of Resources assessment which assesses how effectively we use our resources.

Key Issues

- 3.4 As part of the DoT assessment the Audit Commission assesses how effectively the Council uses its resources. It scored us as 3 out of a potential 4 for the use of resources assessment which means that we are performing well and consistently above minimum requirements.
- 3.5 Within the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, the Audit Commission recognised that the Council had made improvement in areas such as environmental services, housing benefits, partnership working and that satisfaction with individual services was high. The Audit Commission highlighted the need for continued improvement and progress in other areas such as strategic housing services, community safety, access to services, equalities and performance management.
- 3.6 The key areas for improvement identified within the Audit and Inspection letter form the basis of this Direction of Travel improvement Plan and are as follows:
- Continue to improve corporate capacity to deliver its improvement agenda, in particular the Council needs to further embed improved performance management arrangements to include a focus on achieving better value for money from key services.
 - Continue to work with partners to step up the pace of improvement in driving down crime in the area and improving community safety.
 - Continue to tackle areas for improvement in strategic housing services and rigorously manage risks associated with the financial challenges it faces in meeting the decent homes standard.
 - Continue to embed improved data quality across the organisation.
- 3.7 A Direction of Travel Improvement Plan has been implemented to ensure that the recommendations from the Inspection are delivered. The monitoring of progress against the plan will be incorporated with that for the Corporate Improvement Plan. The Performance and Partnerships Scrutiny Sub- Committee will receive a quarterly update.
- 3.8 A separate improvement plan has been drawn up to address the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Inspection and the Performance and Partnerships Scrutiny Sub- Committee also receive this improvement plan on a quarterly basis.
- 3.9 This is the last Direction of Travel Assessment under the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime. From the 1st April 2009, Councils will be assessed through the Organisational Assessment component of Comprehensive Area Assessment, which will cover how well the Council manages its finances and delivers value for money, how it governs and commissions services, how it manages resources and finally how it manages performance.

Section 1

Background

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced for single tier and county councils with great success in 2002. Since then the Audit Commission has developed tailored frameworks for district councils and fire and rescue authorities. The essence of a CPA framework is that it draws on a range of information such as performance indicators, assessments of corporate capacity, audit and inspection reports, and stakeholder opinions to reach a single judgement about the performance of a local body.

Under the CPA framework, the Audit Commission undertakes an annual inspection of Council services through the Direction of Travel Assessment.

The Audit Commission published their Audit and Inspection Letter in April 2008. The Audit Commission specified a number of actions needed by the Council to improve including community safety, corporate capacity, customer access, performance management and value for money.

To implement these recommendations effectively a Direction of Travel Improvement Plan has been produced that puts actions in place to improve service delivery. The Improvement Plan will be monitored alongside the corporate improvement plan on a quarterly basis.

This improvement plan marks the end of the Direction of Travel assessment under the CPA framework. From the 1st April 2009, Councils will be assessed under the Organisational Assessment component of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

The National Indicator Set is one key component in the CAA. CAA is the new local performance framework which replaces the former CPA. The National Indicator Set will be used as a key evidence source for both the Area Assessment and the Organisational Assessment which together comprise the CAA.

The Area Assessment looks at how well local public services are delivering better results for local people in local priorities such as health and community safety. The Organisational Assessment will cover how well the Council manages its finances and delivers value for money, how it governs and commissions services, how it manages resources and finally how it manages performance.

In preparation for the new regime, the Council is submitting a self assessment on the 9th Jan 2009 with the on-site inspection commencing on the 26th January 2009.

Section 2

Details of Matters to be Considered

That the Direction of Travel Improvement Plan 2008/09 attached at Annex 1 and the actions and progress contained within it are considered by the Sub-Committee.

Section 3

Contribution to CHASE

The Council's vision and objectives includes the aim of Building an Excellent Council. The continued implementation of the Improvement Plan will improve various aspects of Council performance in line with this vision.

Section 4

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Council as a result of this report; any costs associated with the production of the Direction of Travel Improvement Plan are contained within existing budgets.

Section 5

Human Resource Implications

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Section 6

Legal Implications

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment ('CPA') was introduced by the Local Government Act 2002 and imposed a duty upon local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements. The Comprehensive Area Assessment ('CAA') has been introduced as the successor to the CPA by the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007. The 2007 Act sets out a new local performance framework within which the CAA is a key element.

By the Council improving services and service delivery and in turn its CPA and CAA assessments, it will be better placed to discharge its legal duties, responsibilities and obligations more efficiently and effectively.

Section 7

Section 17 (Crime Prevention) Implications

There are no crime prevention implications arising from this report.

Section 8

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Section 9

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no Data Protection Act implications arising from this report.

Section 10

Risk Management Implications

The risks of not addressing the Audit Commission's recommendations could lead to further triggered inspection activity and significantly reduce the chances of improving the inspection score. These risks are mitigated by the continued monitoring and progress contained within the Improvement Plan.

Section 11

Equality and Diversity Implications

The recommendations made by the Audit Commission contain issues concerning equality and diversity. Meeting these recommendations will ensure a fair and equitable service is being provided.

Section 12

Other Options Considered

The Audit Commission recommended that an Improvement Plan be put in place to deliver the recommendations contained within the Inspection letter

Section 13

List of Background Papers

Audit Commission Audit and Inspection Letter March 2008

**Direction of Travel Improvement Plan for Cannock Chase District
Council**

Annex 1

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
1. Continue to improve corporate capacity to deliver its improvement agenda, in particular to embed improved and systematic performance management arrangements to include a focus on achieving better value for money from key services	1.1 Improve Capacity to Deliver The Council's Improvement Agenda:	Improved capacity in the Council's Performance management function.	Natasha Swan		Done
	1.11 People: Recruitment of a Performance Manager and Officer				
	1.12 Partnerships Undertake review of partnership governance and implement new structure		Natasha Swan		Done
	1.13 Financial Budget setting process for 09/10	Rationalising of Council priorities	Bob Kean		February 2009
	1.14 Employee Support and Development Workforce development strategy Grievance and disciplinary procedure	Enhanced support for employees	Anne Bird Anne Bird	HR	July 2009 April 2009

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ENCLOSURE 6.7

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
	<p>1.15 External Funding Develop an External Funding Strategy</p> <p>Look at shared external funding post with South Staffordshire under Service Level Agreement</p>	<p>Clear framework for bids for external funding linked to Council priorities</p> <p>Increased capacity to seek funding opportunities to deliver Council priorities</p>	<p>Tony McGovern</p> <p>Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Tony McGovern</p> <p>Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>2009</p>
	<p>1.16 Shared Services Undertake discussions with neighbouring authorities to investigate the feasibility of shared services</p>	<p>Reduced cost of service delivery</p>	<p>Stephen Brown</p>		<p>2009</p>
	<p>1.17 Equality and Diversity Produce an equality and diversity action plan</p>	<p>Identify and address diversity issues within the Council</p>	<p>Les Trigg</p>	<p>Jan Turner</p>	<p>Done</p>

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ENCLOSURE 6.8

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
	<p>1.2 Embed Improved and Systematic Performance Management Arrangements</p>				
	<p>Our performance management framework is updated, revised and communicated to officers to reflect changes in the national performance framework and developments in performance management internally.</p> <p>Produce an updated performance reporting timetable which integrates both internal reporting and partnership reporting.</p>	<p>A consistent approach to performance management is applied across the Authority</p>	<p>Katie Cairns</p> <p>Katie Cairns/ Mark Fletcher</p>	<p>PTT</p> <p>Katie Cairns/ PTT</p>	<p>March 2009</p> <p>Done - Refreshed annually</p>
	<p>Performance spreadsheets to be adapted to include red, amber, green rating, exception reporting, trend, etc. in line with best practice.</p>	<p>Effective performance reporting leading to performance management</p>	<p>Katie Cairns/ Mark Fletcher</p>	<p>PTT</p>	<p>April 2009</p>
	<p>Develop standard LSP performance reporting template</p>	<p>Consistent reporting across thematic blocks</p>	<p>Katie Cairns</p>	<p>Katie Cairns/ Mark Fletcher</p>	<p>Done</p>

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ENCLOSURE 6.9

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
	1.3 Focus on Achieving Better Value For Money from Key Services	Efficient use of resources in delivering Council priorities			
	Development of a value for money strategy	Ensure vfm is embedded into key council activities/ processes and the culture of the Council	Judith Aupers	All Senior Managers	To be reported to Cabinet March 2009
	Development of a value for money methodology	Improved value for money in service delivery			Done
	Development of a programme of VFM reviews – all service areas to determine their vfm score, which will be used as part of the assessment of priority for VFM reviews	Improved value for money in service delivery			Programme for reviews to be in place by 1 April 2009

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ENCLOSURE 6.10

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
<p>2. Continue to work with partners to step up the pace of improvement in driving down crime in the area and improving community safety</p>	<p>2.1 The Council and its partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) continue to perform well against the National Indicator for reducing serious acquisitive crime (NI16) however performance has deteriorated in relation to the serious violence indicator (NI15) from the third quarter of 2008-09. In the year to the end of November 2008 overall crime is down by 20% compared to the previous 12 month period. Through the Strategic Assessment process the Council and its partners will identify their priorities and then a Partnership Plan will be agreed setting out how, in partnership, we intend to tackle those crime and community safety issues that pose the greatest threat to the district and drive down levels of crime and disorder.</p>	<p>Achieve the crime reduction targets, particularly in relation to serious violence, set by the LAA.</p>	<p>Nick Hackney</p>	<p>Steve Shilvock Kevin Lawlor</p>	<p>Refreshed annually in March</p>
	<p>2.2 Performance Management Increase analytical capacity to underpin performance management and effective partnership working. Once analytical capacity is expanded, processes will be developed for the more effective collection and sharing of data.</p>	<p>Clear evidence of intelligence led planning and delivery</p>	<p>Nick Hackney</p>	<p>Nick Hackney</p>	<p>April 2009</p>

Direction of Travel Improvement Plan for Cannock Chase District Council

ENCLOSURE 6.11

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
	<p>2.3 Performance Management – Embed systematic and robust performance management arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure district-based disaggregated baselines and targets are set and owned by the appropriate agency • put methodology in place for the collection of quality data to evaluate progress against targets • produce regular performance reports to monitor progress towards targets and outcomes • evaluate projects and the impact of actions to determine effectiveness and value for money 	Robust performance management arrangements leading to improved performance against targets and achievement of outcomes	Nick Hackney	Katie Cairns	April 2009
	<p>2.4 Community Safety Structures – Review the operation of the Joint Operations Group (JOG) to ensure it is intelligence led and contributing to local targets.</p>	Partnership actions that tackle local priorities and make a real impact in reducing levels of crime and disorder	Nick Hackney	Partnership Officer (Community Safety)	Jan 2009
	<p>2.5 Community Safety Structures – Embed methodology for the commissioning, re-commissioning, decommissioning and mainstreaming of partnership projects through robust project management processes.</p>	More effective utility of partnership funding to support priority outcomes and targets	Nick Hackney	Partnership Officer (Community Safety)	March 2009

**Direction of Travel Improvement Plan for Cannock Chase District
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ENCLOSURE 6.12

Recommendation	Actions/Work Areas	Outcome	Lead Officer	Key Delivery Officers	Completed By
	2.6 Driving Down Crime – The Council and its partners in the CDRP are working together on a major project to make our town centres safer places in which to work and visit. The Night Time Economy Management project will reduce crime and disorder, particularly alcohol-fuelled violence, plus make our town centres safer and more attractive places to visit through a multi-faceted and integrated programme of enforcement, prevention, education and promotion.	Lower levels of crime and disorder in the town centres.	Nick Hackney	Steve Shilvock Kevin Lawlor	April 2009
3. Continue to embed improved data quality across the organisation	Develop Data Quality action plan	Set out developments required and corresponding timeline	Mark Fletcher	Mark Fletcher/ PTT	Jan 2009
	Develop a data quality policy across the Authority in conjunction with officers	Ensure a consistent approach to data quality and compliance with CAA requirements	Katie Cairns	Mark Fletcher/ PTT	April 2009
	Formally assign responsibility for data quality at officer, senior officer and member level.	There is awareness and responsibility for Data quality across the Council	Katie Cairns/ Mark Fletcher	PTT/ DMT	Feb 2009