

# ITEM 8



## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 5 DECEMBER 2006

### Report of the Commission

#### **CORPORATE ASSESSMENT/ JOINT AREA REVIEW 2007**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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| 1.1 | Note the timescales for the combined Corporate Assessment / Joint Area Review.  |
| 1.2 | Note the requirement for preparation of two self-assessment documents and the timescales for preparation and submission of these. |
| 1.3 | Note the proposed changes to CPA outlined in the White Paper  |

#### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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| 2.1 | In September 2006, the Audit Commission and Ofsted confirmed that in October 2007, the Council will be subject to a combined Corporate Assessment – CA and Joint Area Review – JAR. In addition, the Children and Young People's Department will still be subject to a full Annual Performance Assessment – APA – in July 2007. |
| 2.2 | On 30 October 2006, the Audit Commission visited the Council to give a presentation on the process and to give some advice and guidance on the preparatory work that will need to be done to prepare the Council for inspection.  |
| 2.3 | Although the joint inspection will not take place until October 2007, a significant amount of work will need to be completed prior to the on-site visit. Work has been on-going since early summer with the Building on Excellence Board as well as some service areas looking at the Key Lines of Enquiry – KLOE's.            |
| 2.4 | A review of the KLOE's that have been submitted is currently underway and the outcomes of this will be reported to the CPA Co-ordinating Group in January 2007.   |

	<p><b>Self Assessments</b></p> <p>2.5 Two self-assessments will be required – one for the CA and one for the JAR. It is expected that preparatory work on the self assessments will start in February 2007 and that these will be signed-off in August 2007 ready for submission to the inspectors at the start of September.</p> <p><b>CA/JAR Process</b></p> <p>2.6 Once the self-assessments have been submitted, the CA/JAR process will take about 18 weeks to complete. A timeline outlining the timescales for the process is included at Appendix 2.</p> <p>2.7 Although the actual numbers of inspectors' onsite for the combined inspection will not be known until nearer the time, it is anticipated that based on the experiences of other Councils, we can expect between 14 and 18 inspectors to be onsite for a two-week period in October.</p> <p><b>CPA Co-ordinating Group</b></p> <p>2.8 The CPA Co-ordinating Group chaired by the Chief Executive will be responsible for overseeing the preparations for the CA/JAR. The Group will meet on a regular basis from January 2007.</p> <p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>2.9 Communication will be a key element of the project. Experiences from other authorities' shows that a robust and comprehensive Communication Plan will need to be developed and delivered covering a wide range of stakeholders both internal and external.</p> <p><b>The future of CPA – Implications for the White Paper</b></p> <p>2.10 It has been known for some time that once the current round of Corporate Assessments and Joint Area Reviews are over in 2008, there will be a new system to replace CPA. The White Paper gives a high level picture of what the new system to be known as Comprehensive Area Assessments, will be. The system will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a risk-assessment judgement to determine to determine when inspection is needed</li> <li>• a scored Direction of Travel judgement – already part of the current CPA system</li> <li>• a scored Use of Resources judgement – also already part of the current CPA system</li> <li>• judgements arising from any inspections that have taken place as a result of the risk-assessment.</li> </ul> <p>These judgements will be reported annually, and will be published alongside authorities' performance against a set of 200 indicators.</p>
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2.11	The introduction of the new system will mean that other assessment systems will end, including corporate assessments, joint area reviews, annual performance assessments – APA and social care star ratings, none of which will continue past March 2009.
2.12	It is clear that although the current system is ending, the replacement to CPA will use previous inspection history – including the outcome of the CA/JAR process to determine the Council’s overall rating in the future.
	<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>
2.13	Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Corporate Assessments and Joint Area Reviews are included at Appendix 3.

**For more information contact:** Gordon Stirling, Head of Change Management and Performance  
01332 258457 e-mail [gordon.stirling@derby.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.stirling@derby.gov.uk)

**Background papers:**

**List of appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Implications  
Appendix 2 – Indicative timings for Corporate Assessments  
Appendix 3 – Frequently Asked Questions

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. None arising from this report.

**Legal**

2. None arising from this report.

**Personnel**

3. None arising from this report.

**Equalities impact**

4. Equalities is a key element of the Key Lines of Enquiry and the assessment process and will be addressed by the groups preparing for the assessment.

**Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities**

5. The CA/JAR assessment will address all of the Council's priorities, objectives and values.



## Indicative timings and process for corporate assessments

The following table provides a summary of the indicative timelines for activities forming the corporate assessment / joint area review process.

Stage	Indicative week number	Comments
Set-up meeting (joint CA and JAR team leaders)	Typically week 1 minus 6	Approximately 6 weeks before return self-assessment.
Self-assessment submitted	Week 1	
Pre-assessment analysis, self-assessment challenge and start of quality assurance process	Weeks 1 to 5	Analysis carried out from receipt of self-assessment to start of on-site period. To include 'challenge' activity in week 3.
Fieldwork	Weeks 6 and 7	Actual days on site to be agreed, proportionate to focus of inspection, but approximately 6 or 7 days over a two-week period, with feedback at the end of each week.
Report writing and consistency checking	Weeks 8 to 11	This includes report editing and revisions including any arising from quality assurance process.
Draft report sent to council	End of week 11	10 working days for council to comment.
Written comments from council received	End of week 13	
Report finalisation and feedback to council	End of week 15	To include revision and any further quality assurance where necessary.
Publication	Week 18	

**Source:** Audit Commission

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are some frequently asked questions about CPA...

#### 1. What is Comprehensive Performance Assessment?

The Audit Commission carries out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of every council in England every year. The assessment brings together evidence from a range of sources to assess the quality of most of each council's core services, how it uses its resources and its capacity to improve.

These assessments are combined into an overall result placing each council in one of five categories: 0 stars to 4 stars.

Derby City Council is currently rated as a 4 star Council.

#### 2. Where did the idea of CPA come from?

CPA was proposed in the Government's White Paper 'Strong Local Leadership: Quality Public Services' published in December 2001. It is linked with other proposals to provide greater freedom to councils, including additional freedoms for councils who perform well, and support for those that need help to improve.

#### 3. How are councils assessed?

CPA brings together judgements about:

- core service performance, drawing on inspection reports, performance indicators and plan assessments by government departments
- use of resources, including an audit judgement
- the Council's overall ability measured through a corporate assessment.

Each council makes its own assessment of its overall ability, which is then challenged and checked through a two-week corporate assessment inspection by a team of five, including a member and an officer peer from another council. This will only happen once in the period 2005-2008.

#### 4. Is corporate assessment the same as CPA?

Not quite. Corporate assessment is just one part of the overall CPA framework. It is the part of the framework that essentially assesses how well the Council is run. (See Q3).

## 5. What is a Joint Area Review?

Over the three years from September 2005, all local authority services for children and young people, and the wide range of services from other agencies and organisations, will be subject to a joint area review (JAR). The review provides a comprehensive report on the five outcomes for children and young people in the local area. It incorporates the inspection of youth services and replaces the separate inspections of local education authorities, local authorities' social services, Connexions services, and the provision for students aged 14–19. Normally the JAR is carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of the council, and is aligned with the inspection of youth offending teams undertaken by HMI Probation.

## 6. What preparation will be done prior to the inspection?

The on-site inspection will be the culmination of process but considerable work will need to be done prior to the inspection visit in October. Self-assessments for both the CA and the JAR will need to be prepared. The self-assessments are the key reference documents for the inspectors when they are visiting the Council. Work on preparing the self-assessments will start early in the new year and they will be completed by August ready for submission to the inspectors at the start of September.

## 7. When will the Inspectors be in Derby?

The corporate assessment inspectors will be onsite for two weeks in October 2007.

## 8. Who are the Inspectors?

For the combined CA/JAR, there will be two inspection teams. The inspection team for the CA is made up of five people in total, including a peer officer and a peer councillor. The inspection team for the JAR will be made up of around 12 people.

## 9. What are the timescales for the inspection?

The Audit Commission has published an outline timetable for combined CA/JARs. – see Appendix 2.

## 10. Will they want to speak to me?

We will not know who the inspection team will want to speak to until a couple of weeks before the inspection. You will be fully briefed beforehand if you are selected to be interviewed by an inspector or asked to attend one of the focus groups they will be holding.

11. Who is co-ordinating the inspection process for the Council?

A Project Team will start work on preparing for the inspection in January 2007. More details on the Project Team will be available in the New Year.

12. When will the results of the inspection be published?

We will receive a draft report at the end of November 2007 and we will then have the opportunity to comment on the report before it is published in January 2008.

13. Where can I get more information about CPA the CA or the JAR?

For more information, contact Gordon Stirling, Head of Change Management and Performance on Ext 25 8457.

The Audit Commission website has all the key documents relating to CPA. Visit [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)