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## **CPA 2005 - THE WAY AHEAD - A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report details proposals put forward by the Audit Commission for changes to the framework for CPA assessments from 2005 and seeks feedback on these proposals.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Audit Commission's proposals, outlined in the consultation, cover changes to the following elements of the CPA process:

- A 'Strategic Regulation' approach to CPA from 2005, which provides an appropriate balance between the assessment of both the service delivery and community leadership roles of councils;
- A revised corporate assessment shaped around councils' achievements against their local community strategy in the light of shared priorities;
- Revisions to the service assessments to focus more on service delivery and the experience of service users, and featuring a stronger assessment of value for money;
- Revisions to the 'use of resources' assessment to provide a stronger judgement of the cost-effectiveness provided by councils and to measure other capacity issues;
- Introduction of a 'rule-driven' approach to categorisation rather than the formula-driven assessment framework as at present;
- Delivery of a rolling programme of corporate assessments on a risk basis from 2005 to 2008;
- The alignment of county council and district council CPA from 2007 onwards with opportunities for re-categorisation beforehand; and
- Continued annual reporting (by the Audit Commission) in December of each year, but with the addition of a 'direction of travel' judgement.

- 2.2 A copy of the consultation document has been placed in the Members' Room for information. The Audit Commission has requested comments by 27 February 2004.

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**3 SPECIFIC CONTENT**

**3.1 Strategic Regulation**

At the heart of the Audit Commission's Strategic Plan is strategic regulation, which embodies four key principles:

- 3.1.1 **It is a force for continuous improvement.** Their role is one of measuring performance, providing challenge, supporting choice, sharing knowledge and supporting public service managers.
- 3.1.2 **It is focused on outcomes for service users.** They will look at organisations from the perspective of those who come into contact with them and how the diversity of service users is reflected in the design of service delivery.
- 3.1.3 **It is proportionate to performance and risk.** They will focus activity where it will have the greatest impact. This will need timely and accurate information to inform decision-making.
- 3.1.4 **It is delivered in partnership.** They will work with partners to develop and deliver a targeted programme for the work of all agencies involved in inspection and improvement.
- 3.1.5 A key feature of the strategic regulation approach is that it includes a strong service element alongside assessment of the share priorities.

**3.2 Lessons from existing CPA**

3.2.1 The Audit Commission has identified additional principles and learning from CPA in 2002, improvement reporting in 2003 and the ongoing CPA for District Councils. These will be incorporated in the new framework from 2005. They are:

- The need to avoid the 'big bang' approach of 2002
- Public reporting of judgements and outcomes
- Reporting improvement from the existing baseline
- Robustness of the component judgements
- More comprehensive coverage
- Independent assessment
- Revised public criteria for judgement
- No increase in the overall regulatory burden
- Respecting inspection 'holidays'
- High level of user and stakeholder engagement
- Generally responding to the weaknesses and building on the strengths of CPA round 1 and District Councils

3.2.2 Key drivers of corporate management have been identified as:

- Leadership
- Financial management
- Performance management
- Equality and diversity
- Successful partnerships

A revised corporate assessment methodology will be introduced to focus around these issues.

### **3.3 Shared priorities**

A key element of CPA is an assessment of performance against shared priorities for local government agreed by the Central Local Partnership. This consultative document provides a full articulation of these shared priorities, an identification of the issues that will be addressed within the inspection process and the overarching outcomes that will be sought. The shared priorities have been identified as:

- 3.3.1 Promoting the economic vitality of localities** – positive economic, cultural and environmental conditions for growth and employment; improved adult skills; more of the hardest to place in employment; extended quality and choice in the housing market.
- 3.3.2 Transforming our local environment** – improved quality, cleanliness and safety of local areas; increased active use of public space; waste minimised and recycling increased.
- 3.3.3 Meeting local transport needs more effectively** – improved access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need; improved public transport and safety; reduced congestion and pollution.
- 3.3.4 Creating safer and stronger communities** – working with the police and other local agencies, reduced crime and antisocial behaviour, more positive activities for young people, strengthened community cohesion and reduced drug abuse.
- 3.3.5 Improving the quality of life of older people** – enabling them to live as independent and active lives as possible and avoiding unnecessary periods in hospital.
- 3.3.6 Promoting healthier communities, narrowing health inequalities** – effective combination of key local services – such as health, education, housing, crime and accident prevention – responding to local need and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- 3.3.7 Raising standards for all children and young people** – all children’s attainment moved towards the excellence of the best; sustained improvement in primary schools; transformed secondary schools; a school workforce with

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the capacity to support this. Improving the quality of life of children, young people and families at risk – reduced child poverty, improved life chances for children in care, or in need; strengthened protection for children at risk of abuse.

**3.4 Development of the community leadership role**

The Audit Commission has undertaken further analysis and development work looking at the community leadership role and has concluded:

3.4.1 CPA should develop a stronger focus on the activities that councils undertake over and above their service delivery roles, which achieves not only more integrated service impact for local people, but contributes to a wider improvement agenda. CPA should be developed to deliver a better and more appropriate balance between the service and community leadership aspects of authorities' activities.

3.4.2 Significant and noticeable improvements in the local quality of life can usually only be delivered through multi-agency working. From 2005/06 the corporate assessment will include a measure of the authority's ability to maximise the contribution of its partners and other stakeholders towards agreeing and achieving key local priorities.

3.4.3 The corporate assessment will be built around delivery against the local community strategy. Consideration will be given to the approach the authority has taken to its community planning, seeking to understand how local contexts and needs have been considered, how the authority has prioritised activity and managed performance and whether it is working successfully with, and through, partners. It will include a view on how well the authority has ensured that the community, including hard-to-reach groups, has been included in these processes.

**3.5 Other changes**

3.5.1 A highly structured approach will be developed to assess achievements and likely future achievements. This will specifically assess an authority's approach to 'sustainable communities' (including transport), 'safer and stronger communities', 'healthier communities', and 'children and young people', using a similar diagnostic approach to that currently used for district councils. It will introduce tests which will assess whether a council is doing all that could reasonably be expected to achieve local objectives delivered through partnerships

3.5.2 With a need to deliver new assessments against the shared priorities the Audit Commission may simplify the existing themes within the corporate assessment.

3.5.3 Cost-effective measures will be developed for service delivery.

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3.5.4 With a requirement for annual service scores, the Audit Commission will look to further develop the use of regular performance assessments for housing, environment and cultural services.

3.5.4 The 'use of resources' judgement will be reported annually and will be developed to become a stronger measure of the cost-effectiveness and value for money provided by councils.

3.5.5 The method of calculating the final rating will change from formula-driven to rule-driven.

#### **4 OFFICER RESPONSE**

4.1 The proposals precede Rochford's CPA inspection. Our feedback cannot therefore take regard of issues that may be identified during the inspection process.

4.2 Officers have considered the details as proposed within the consultation paper and the suggested response is as outlined in Appendix A.

#### **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Strategic Risk**

The authority's failure to adopt a new approach, requiring further development of its community leadership role, and partnership working to deliver shared priorities, would negatively impact on future CPA assessments, and consequent freedoms that could result.

##### **5.2 Resource Risk**

Staff are taken away from service delivery.

##### **5.3 Operational Risk**

None identified.

##### **5.4 Reputation Risk**

The CPA assessment directly affects the authority's reputation.

##### **5.5 Information Risk**

The sharing of information with partners may be limited by data protection restrictions.

##### **5.6 Regulatory Risk**

Failure to adopt a new approach will impact on future CPA assessments.

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**5.7 Third Party Risk**

Failure to develop partnership working to deliver the community strategy will impact on any assessment of partners

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The emphasis on delivering through partnerships will necessitate additional staff time to identify opportunities and to set up workable arrangements. In the short to medium term, this could detract from service delivery.

**7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Changes proposed in this report on the CPA framework would be statutory.

**8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The emphasis on partnership working will impact on delivery of services at parish level.

**9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Member consideration and comments, the responses detailed in appendix A be agreed.

Paul Warren  
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**Background Papers:**

None

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