



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

Executive Board

Date: 11th June 2008

Subject: Corporate Assessment Report 2008

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1..1 In December 2007 the council was subject to a Corporate Assessment (CA) inspection as part of the overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) model. The results of this inspection were published on the 6th May 2008 and the council achieved an overall Corporate Assessment rating of 3 out of 4.
- 1..2 In general, the report is highly positive and says the council is performing well and with its partners has a 'clear and challenging' vision to improve the quality of life for residents and boost economic prosperity. It also says Leeds provides strong leadership, particularly at a regional level.
- 1..3 The report specifically highlights just four areas for improvement; our strategic approach to the over 50s; health inequalities; effectiveness of our Scrutiny function; and consistency of our approach to individual performance management.
- 1..4 Members of Executive Board should note that whilst the Corporate Assessment report has only recently been published, it actually represents the position as at the time of the inspection (December 2007). Therefore, some of the contextual information is now out of date e.g political composition of the Council as shown at paragraph 24 of the Corporate Assessment report.
- 1..5 The impact of our new CA score is that our overall CPA rating has been reconfirmed as **4 Stars and 'improving well', placing Leeds firmly as one of the top performing councils in the country.**

2.0 Purpose Of This Report

2..1 This report gives details of the outcome of the Corporate Assessment inspection; highlights the main findings and identifies the key issues for action.

3.0 Background Information

3..1 The Corporate Assessment is one element of the wider inspection framework for single tier and county councils known as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. **Leeds City Council is rated as a 4 Star council in CPA 2007.**

3..2 A corporate assessment measures how well a council is working to deliver improved services and outcomes for local people. It uses key lines of enquiry to gather evidence for the assessment. They measure how well a council understands its local communities; how this shapes its ambitions and priorities; its capacity to deliver these; and what the council is achieving.

3..3 Each of these areas were scored individually during the inspection and our results are shown in the table below.

Headline questions	Theme	Score*
What is the council, together with its partners trying to achieve?	Ambition	4
	Prioritisation	3
What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	3
	Performance management	3
What has been achieved?	Achievement	3
Overall corporate assessment score*		3
*Key to scores 1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance 2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance 3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well 4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly		

4.0 Main Issues

4..1 The CA report is overwhelmingly positive and highlights many areas of good performance, such as:

- There is a **very clear and ambitious vision** that partner organisations support and local people understand.
- The council is **delivering strong regional leadership** to improve economic prosperity and provide facilities at a regional level which is recognised by the government and regional partners.

- The council's leader, chief executive and managers provide **strong political and managerial leadership** within the council and this instills confidence in our partners that we will deliver on the vision.
- Good support is given to the **regeneration of the city centre and other parts of Leeds** to ensure economic prosperity impacts on all areas of the city.
- Reducing many areas of criminal activity and helping **the residents of the city feel safer**.
- **Educational attainment is improving** particularly at key stage three and GCSE results.
- The council has **improved its performance management** arrangements and political governance.
- Success is demonstrated by **good community outcomes** and performance against national performance indicators compared with other core cities.
- The council **effectively engages with local people and partners** to meet the diverse needs of the whole community.
- The **council is able and willing to make difficult decisions** to achieve a balance between community need and value for money.
- Council service **provide value for money**.
- There is **strong and highly effective partnership working** in most areas.
- The council, with its partners, can **demonstrate consistent and significant achievement** against its own priorities.

- 4..2 The report does however formally identify **four specific areas for improvement**: our strategic approach to the over 50s; health inequalities; effectiveness of our Scrutiny function; and consistency of our approach to individual performance management. There are also a number of other issues, mostly associated with achievement against the four national priority areas which are identified in the body of the report.
- 4..3 All these issues have been collated into the attached table. Rather than duplicating effort by developing another action plan specifically for the CA we have mapped each of the improvement issues against our existing plans and strategies and ensured that accountability is clearly assigned. In this way the improvement activity is embedded within our normal routine work and does not require any additional reporting or action planning. The traffic light system is an assessment of whether arrangements are in place to ensure that the issue will be properly managed and addressed and is not a judgement of current performance. The four main issues identified in the CA report are highlighted in bold for clarity.
- 4..4 Members will note that all of the issues identified link back to either the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11 or the Council Business Plan 2008-11 again illustrating our focus on improvement priorities. Our progress of improving in these areas will

therefore be reported via our normal reporting arrangements thereby avoiding duplication and ensuring timely and robust performance management.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

5..1 The Corporate Assessment is an independent judgement of the capacity and capability of the Council, with our partners, to deliver improved outcomes for the residents of Leeds. As well as being reputationally important it is also an excellent measure of the strength of our corporate policy and corporate management arrangements. The introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment in 2009 will place an increased emphasis on these areas. It is important therefore that we take the learning from this inspection in order to be better prepared for the new and more challenging local government performance framework.

6.0 Legal And Resource Implications

6..1 No direct implications.

7.0 Conclusions

7..1 Following our latest CA the council continues to perform well against other local authorities and is considered a council that is providing strong leadership for the city and wider region. The council, with its partners, can demonstrate consistent and significant achievement against its own priorities and has made particularly good progress against social, economic and environmental agendas. This report suggests that the council is well placed to face the challenge of the new performance framework for local government, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which replaces CPA next year.

8.0 Recommendations

8..1 Members are asked to note;

- the Corporate Assessment report attached at Appendix 1;
- the action plan attached at Appendix 2, and;
- the proposals outlined for monitoring delivery of the action plan.