

Report Title: **Haringey Council's Corporate Assessment 2006**

Report of: **The Chief Executive**

Wards(s) affected: **ALL**

1. Purpose

1.1 To present the findings of the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment Report..

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee note the recommendations in the Audit commission's Corporate Assessment Report.

2.2 That the O&S Committee consider the implications of the report for the Council and for Overview & Scrutiny.

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Audit Commission have produced their final report for Haringey council's Corporate Assessment, 10 October 2006.

3.2 Haringey's Corporate Assessment has been scored 3 out of 4, an improvement from the 2002 score of 2.

3.3 The scores for the individual themes are:

Theme	Score
Ambition	3
Prioritisation	3
Capacity	2
Performance Management	3
Achievement	3
Overall Score	3

4 Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.2 None

5 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.2 None

6 Background

- 6.1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under Section 99 of the Local government Act 2003 to make an assessment and report on the performance of local authorities. Corporate assessment is one element in the overall assessment that leads to a CPA score and category.
- 6.2 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities.
- 6.3 The corporate assessment was aligned with a Joint Area Review (JAR) of services for children and young people. The results of the JAR have not yet been made public, however arrangements are in hand to ensure they are reported to O&S Committee at its meeting on 18th December 2006.

SUMMARY

7. Areas of strength

- Haringey Council is performing well
- Competing demands effectively prioritised
- Priorities address concerns of local people
- Strong 3-year medium term financial strategy with resources shifted to support priorities
- Community cohesion, user focus, diversity and neighbourhood management are strengths for the council.
- Haringey is good at community leadership and works well with partners.
- Members are very active in their communities championing residents' concerns. Political leadership is strong.
- Scrutiny works well overall.
- Managerial leadership is one of drive and openness.
- Financial management is sound and is developing an approach to VFM.
- Performance management is a strength and is at the heart of decision making.
- The council is performing well in terms of achievement with strengths in the areas of community safety, the environment, older people and children and young people.
- Better Haringey is successful in delivering outcomes.
- The council works with partners to increase housing supply and to create job opportunities.

8. Areas for improvement

- Not all plans are supported by outcome focused targets
- There is scope for Scrutiny to increase its involvement in areas such as Value for Money
- Recruitment and retention pose real challenges in areas such as social care, planning and the Youth Service.
- VFM is not systematically applied throughout the council.
- Achievements in housing and regeneration are mixed.
- Levels of homelessness and worklessness continue to pose a challenge for the council.
- The council lacks an overarching strategy for improving health in the locality and needs to develop a strategy which informs the development of the new community strategy.
- Scope to further improve how the council works with others to achieve its ambitions. Improvements would help improve the council's capacity.
- The council lacks an overarching approach to regeneration in the borough and needs a coherent way of agreeing quantifiable outcomes.
- The council needs to make better use of the investment made in ICT and customer services.
- There is no overall strategic approach to Knowledge Management.

9. Corporate Assessment: Executive Summary

9.1 Attached is Appendix 1 which contains the Executive Summary of Haringey's Corporate Assessment Report (Audit Commission, October 2006).

9.2 The full report is available on Haringey's website and from the Audit Commission : [Haringey's Corporate Assessment Report](#)

10. Recommendation

10.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the recommendations contained in the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment Report.

Haringey's Corporate Assessment 10 October 2006

Executive summary

1. Haringey Council is performing well. Rapid progress has been made in improving services over the past five years. This has been delivered within a complex and challenging borough where competing demands have been prioritised effectively. The Council is now starting to reap the awards of its hard work with achievements in areas such as anti-social behaviour being recognised nationally. It has worked well with partners and the locality to set an ambition and priorities that are stretching and challenging as well as addressing local needs. Well founded plans add substance to the ambition.

2 The top five priorities give a focus to the overall ambition which is to: 'Measurably improve the quality of life for the people of Haringey by tackling some of our biggest problems and making it a borough we can all be proud of'. The priorities address the most pressing concerns for local people, namely, crime, litter, children and young people and educational attainment. These also reflect national priorities. The Council prioritises well, is focused and does not become distracted. This is further enhanced by a strong three-year medium term financial strategy (MTFS). Resources are shifted to support priorities and there has been a clear move away from back office functions to frontline services. However, not all plans to deliver on priorities are sufficiently supported by outcome-focused targets.

3 Community cohesion, user focus and diversity are significant strengths for the Council. They are at the heart of decision-making and are successfully threaded through its ambitions, priorities, culture and working practices. The Council is leading the way locally on these themes in areas such as domestic violence. The People's Network, area assemblies (which include the police and health representatives) and neighbourhood management play a key role in the Council's work and add value. The complex nature of the community is understood, and services are able to respond proactively to meet the needs presented. The differences in the community are celebrated, and the cohesion of the community is good. Seventy-six per cent of residents agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Access to services is good overall, but performance in customer services has deteriorated in recent months, making it less easy for residents to make contact with the Council. ICT resources are not yet fully exploited, thereby limiting the added value they currently bring.

4 Haringey is a good community leader and works well in partnership across a range of sectors. It is respected by partners and is seen as an ambitious Council. It works especially well with the Police on community safety issues and the local Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) on for example, children's services. It is acknowledged by the Council and its partners that partnership working could be further exploited and this is being progressed. Members are very active in their communities championing residents' concerns.

5 Political leadership at the Council is strong. Members are broadly representative of their diverse communities. Executive members have a good understanding of their portfolios and have used the time effectively since the May 2006 elections to gain a good understanding of their areas. Scrutiny works well overall but there is further scope to increase its involvement in areas such as value for money (VFM).

6 The Council's managerial leadership style is one of drive and openness, with a people and user focused approach. The Chief Executive and Leader work well together. There is a clear focus on improvement led from the top and performance management is a key part of this. Officer/member relationships work well. The Council's capacity to deliver its ambition is adequate overall. The Council benefits from having a motivated and committed workforce, however, recruitment and retention continue to pose real challenges in areas such as social care, planning and the youth service. The Council recognises that the current structure needs to be reviewed.

7 Financial management is sound. The Council is developing its approach to VFM, and has taken steps to implement consistent processes across all directorates. Assessments of the costs, performance and perception of each service have been undertaken, resulting in efficiency reviews in some areas which are high spending. There is an increasingly systematic approach with VFM being built into the business planning process, but this is not yet embedded. VFM is not comprehensively applied throughout the Council as a matter of routine.

8 Performance management is a strength for the Council and is at the heart of the decision-making process. The Council has been successful in instilling the right culture and values so that performance management is at the heart of decision-making. This has resulted in tangible improvements in key priority areas. Residents recognise the improvements made to services with 64 per cent saying that the Council is doing a good job, above the London average. Performance management in partnerships continues to develop.

9 In terms of achievement the Council is performing well, with particular strengths in community safety, the environment, older people and children and young people. The Council has a track record of improvement often from a low base. The Better Haringey programme has been successful in delivering real outcomes such as increased recycling and more effective removal of abandoned vehicles and graffiti. The Council works well with partners to improve the safety of the locality and it has been innovative in its approach to domestic violence engaging both the private and public sector in delivery. Older People feel empowered and have shaped the services they receive. Partnerships with health are good and there are a number of healthy living initiatives in place. Services provided by the Council and its partners for children and young people in Haringey are good. Children and young people are generally safe and those most at risk are well protected. Outcomes for children and young people have improved significantly over the last five years. The youth service, however, is inadequate, though actions to improve management and strengthen resources have recently been put in place.

10 Achievements in housing and regeneration are mixed. The Council continues to work with partners to increase housing supply in the borough and with the private sector to help create job opportunities for local people. However, levels of homelessness and worklessness continue to present a challenge for the Council. The lack of an overall strategy for health has not prevented the Council from starting to tackle the health of the community with partners however a clear strategy would further enhance this work.

Areas for improvement

11 There is scope to further improve how the Council works with others to achieve its ambitions. The Local Area Agreement will be a useful catalyst to strengthen partnership working. Opportunities could be exploited through joint service provision, joint problem solving in areas such as recruitment and retention, joined-up consultation and enhancing knowledge sharing and performance management. These improvements should help improve the Council's capacity.

12 The Council lacks an overarching approach to regeneration in the borough and this is limiting the Council's ability to make progress in dealing with some of the most challenging issues such as worklessness. The Council needs to define its overall approach clearly, including bringing together regeneration activity in a more coherent way and agreeing key quantifiable outcomes to enable the Council and its partners to measure progress.

13 The Council lacks an overarching strategy for improving the health of the locality that would bring together the various initiatives taking place. The Council needs to develop a strategy and ensure that the health and well-being agenda, in particular health inequalities, informs the development of the new community strategy.

14 The Council needs to make better use of the investment made in customer services and ICT to date. Customer service performance needs to improve and issues of consistency of use of IT need to be rectified. These improvements should help improve the Council's capacity.