

REPORT TO: Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Commission

DATE: 13th June 2007

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Policy and Improvement

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Policy Officer
Mike Simpson

SUBJECT:
CPA: Re-categorisation Bid
Self-assessment of the improvement evidence

WARD/S AFFECTED:

FORWARD PLAN REF:

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In 2005/2006, the Council adopted an organisational goal of “to be a GOOD performing Council by 2007 and EXCELLENT by 2010”.
- 1.2 This report sets out a self-assessment of the evidence of improvement (see Appendix 1) which would be used to support the Council’s bid to be re-categorised under the District Council CPA Framework from a “fair” performing Council in the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment to a “good” Council in 2007.
- 1.3 Part of the evidence is based on the Council’s 2005/2006 audited PI performance data as required by the Framework and set out in the Audit Commission’s Re-Categorisation published in May 2007 (see Appendix 2 for the summary).
- 1.4 Appendix 1 is not the re-categorisation bid itself. If it is decided to go ahead with a bid, the bid will be put together in July/August 2007. The bid will be in the form of a short statement which will be no longer than three side of A4 in line with the guidance (See Appendix 3).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Commission considers the proposal to submit to the Audit Commission, by the 1st October 2007 deadline, a Council bid for re-categorisation from “fair” to “good” based on the assessment of the evidence of improvement set out in outline in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Commission makes any comments on the proposal to the Cabinet at its meeting on the 27th June 2007.
- 2.3 That the Commission includes in its comments to the Cabinet its views on the proposal to ask the Council, on the 19th July 2007, to approve in principle the re-categorisation bid and to give delegated authority to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to prepare and approve the re-categorisation bid in line with the timetable in paragraph 5.8 of the report.
- 2.4 That the Commission includes in its comments to the Cabinet its views on the proposal that the Leader and the Chief Executive are also given delegated authority by the Council to decide whether or not to submit the re-categorisation bid to the Audit Commission by the October 2007 deadline, taking into account the outcome of the County Council’s unitary bid.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASON/S FOR DECISION/S

- 3.1 This self-assessment confirms that there is evidence of sufficient improvement in the Council since the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment to support a bid for re-categorisation from “fair” to “good”.
- 3.2 Because of the uncertainty caused by the County Council’s unitary bid and in order for the Council to meet the 1st October 2007 deadline for the submission to the Audit Commission, the Council is asked to approve the bid in principle and to delegate approval of the detailed bid and its submission to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive so that the Government’s decision on unitary Councils (expected July 2007) can be taken into account.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

- 4.1 The option not to submit a bid for re-categorisation was rejected because the option would not enable the Council to achieve its organisational goal of being a good performing Council by 2007.
- 4.2 If the Council misses the 1st October 2007 deadline, the audited PI data used in any future re-categorisation bid is on the Council’s 2006/2007 performance (not 2005/2006) and the next submission deadline is 1st February 2008.

5.0 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The guidance on preparing and submitting a bid for re-categorisation is set out in the Audit Commission’s “CPA – district Council framework from 2006”

which was published in July 2006. The document is also available on the Commission's website.

- 5.2 The purpose of a re-categorisation bid is to outline the improvement made since the Council's 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment and to signpost the supporting evidence. The 3-page Statement must demonstrate that the Council has made a "step change" in performance against local improvement plans, explain how the improvement actions have addressed key weaknesses in the 2004 Corporate Assessment, the impact of these actions and the supporting evidence.
- 5.3 Under the CPA Framework, the Commission has set up Regional Panels to approve or reject the re-categorisation bids from Councils. The Regional Panel will also decide the date of the CPA Corporate Assessment should the re-categorisation bid be approved.
- 5.4 It is also a requirement of the framework that the Council's Relationship Manager (at the Audit Commission) must support the Council's bid for re-categorisation before it is submitted to the Commission.
- 5.5 Appendix 1 sets out the outcomes of the self-assessment of the evidence of improvement in the Council's performance on use of resource/value for money, direction of travel, service delivery and corporate working since 2004.
- 5.6 Appendix 2 is a summary of the Audit Commission's Re-Categorisation Tool on the Council's 2005/2006 PI performance. Three of the PIs in the published Re-Categorisation Tool have still to be updated by the Audit Commission from their 2003/2004 performance. These are BV111 (planning satisfaction) and BV74a and BV75a (both housing tenant satisfaction). The Commission will provide the updated data shortly. A full copy of the Re-Categorisation Tool has been placed in the Members Room for information. The Tool provides the Commission's analysis of the extent of the Council's improvement in performance, the strength of that improvement and the areas of improvement. That analysis has been included in the self-assessment of the improvement evidence (Appendix 1).
- 5.7 The proposed submission date of the Council's re-categorisation bid to the Audit Commission will be 1st October 2007 (see Appendix 3). This Appendix also sets out the membership of the Commission's Regional Panel which will assess the Council's bid together with the sources of evidence the Panel will take into account.
- 5.8 The proposed timetable to develop the re-categorisation bid is:-
- | | | | |
|------|--|-----------|----------------------------|
| (i) | Approval in principle | - CMT | 17 th May 2007 |
| | | - Cabinet | 30 th May 2007 |
| | | - Council | 19 th July 2007 |
| (ii) | Approval in principle by the Audit Commission's Relationship Manager | | July 2007 |

- (iii) Work up the detailed bid July/August 2007
- (iv) Approval of the detailed bid by the Leader and Chief Executive September 2007
- (v) Submit the bid to the Audit Commission 1st October 2007 (deadline)

5.9 It is proposed that the Council awaits the Government's decision on the County Council's unitary bid before finally deciding whether or not to prepare and submit a re-categorisation bid to the Audit Commission by the 1st October 2007 deadline.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The self-assessment confirms that there is evidence of sufficient improvement by the Council since 2004 to support a bid for re-categorisation under CPA (see Appendices 1 and 2).

6.2 It would be prudent to wait for the Government's decision on the County Council's unitary bid before finally deciding whether or not to submit a bid to the Audit Commission for re-categorisation under CPA.

Background Papers -

OFFICER CONTACT: Please contact Mike Simpson if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at the Council Offices, Crescent Gardens, Harrogate HG1 2SG by telephone on 01423 556065 or by Email – mike.simpson@harrogate.gov.uk

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

		Implications are		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
A	Economy			
B	Environment			
C	Social Equity			
i)	General			
ii)	Customer Care / People with Disabilities			
iii)	Health Implications			
D	Crime and Disorder Implications			

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable.