

## CPA: District Council Framework from 2006

### Re-categorisation Bid

#### Self-assessment of the Improvement Evidence

The Council's CPA re-categorisation bid needs to show significant improvement in the areas of weakness in the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment and a "step change" in the Council's performance since 2004 using evidence from the latest audits and assessments of our Use of Resources, Direction of Travel, Service Delivery and Corporate Working. The evidence on improvement which the Council will put forward in the bid is assessed below:-

(A) **Use of Resources:** The 2006 assessment by the Audit Commission was:

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
Financial reporting	3	3
Financial management	3	3
Financial standing	2	2
Internal control	2	2
Value for Money	3	2
<b>Overall score</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

The Audit Commission's assessment was: "The Council's arrangements on this agenda are generally "fit for purpose" and your overall Use of Resources score improved year-on-year from a "2" (adequate performance) in 2005 to a "3" (performing well) in 2006."

The main areas of improvement in the Council's Use of Resources in the last 12 months were Value for Money and Internal Control. These were highlighted as areas of "weaknesses" in the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment.

**Case study:** Use the improved performance on procurement and the impact of this performance on the Council's Value for Money agenda as an example of how the Council has addressed this area of previous weakness.

(D) **Direction of Travel Statement:** The main evidence of improvement in the 2006/2007 Direction of Travel Statement is:-

- **The Council has continued to improve service performance in the past year.** 69% of the key Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) improved between 2004/05 and 2005/06 which is above the District Council average of 58%.
- There were **significant improvements** in three local priority services in 2005/2006:
  - waste collection
  - planning
  - safer communities

The Council would need to evidence in its bid that these improvements are sustainable over the long-term. The improvement in planning services is a "step change" in performance and would be highlighted as such in the bid.

- The Direction of Travel Statement explains why the Council has not made **significant improvements** in three further local priority services in 2005/2006:
  - decent homes agenda
  - homelessness
  - diversity and equality

The Council would need to evidence in its bid that these services have improved since 2005/2006.

- **Service improvements** in the Council's core services such as planning, benefits, etc, together with **community improvements** (eg Concessionary Fares Scheme, Royal Hall restoration, Business Conference Venue of the Year (HIC), Floral Town successes, etc) were all achieved within the Council's agreed budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy and in line with the Council's vision, ambitions and corporate priorities.
- **Organisational improvements** included enhanced procurement, governance and efficiency arrangements, the outcomes from the Council's Staff Survey and a new focus on diversity and equality. All of these improvements address the issues raised by the 2004 CPA corporate assessment.

#### **Case Study:**

Use the Planning Services as an example of a "step change" in the Council's performance on this core service as part of its service ethos. Also, use the "affordable housing Golden Triangle Partnership" as an example of how the Council has worked with others to address the performance locally on another of its corporate priorities since 2005/2006.

- (C) **Service Improvement:** The Audit Commission's Re-Categorisation Tool (published in May 2007 and summarised in Appendix 2) uses 31 PIs to assess the improvements in the Council's performance since 2004 compared to the performance of District Councils nationally. The tool also includes the comparative 2006 BVPI Customer Survey results.

Since 2002/2003, the Re-Categorisation Tool confirms that the Council has improved its services in line with its vision and corporate priorities in the Strategic Plan 2005-2008 as follows:-

Assessment Criteria	2004/2005	2005/2006
<p>(1) <b>Extent of Improvement</b></p> <p>[District Council average performance = 57%]</p>	<p><b>57%</b> of the PIs were above the national average performance ie: <b>Above average improvement</b></p> <p>Culture and Housing Management improved "above the District average performance" since 2002/2003</p>	<p><b>62%</b> of the PIs were above the national average performance ie: <b>Above average improvement</b></p> <p>Culture and Housing Management both maintained their "above average" improvement rating year-on-year.</p>
<p>(2) <b>Strength of Improvement</b></p> <p>[Fair = 28% Good = 33% Excellent = 36%]</p>	<p><b>32%</b> of the PIs were in the best quartile which was <b>above average</b> improvement for a "fair" Council but <b>below</b> the 33% threshold of a "good" Council.</p>	<p><b>48%</b> of the PIs were in the best quartile which was <b>above average</b> improvement and above the 33% threshold of "good" District Councils.</p>
<p>(3) <b>Areas of Improvement</b></p>	<p><b>Significant improvements were achieved on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- processing minor planning applications</li> <li>- parks and open space satisfaction level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Significant improvements were achieved on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parks and Open Spaces satisfaction level</li> <li>- Museums and Galleries satisfaction level</li> <li>- sports and leisure satisfaction level</li> </ul>

**Service performance issues:** The re-categorisation tool signposts cost and performance issues for the Council to address on recycling, litter and housing.

#### Case Study:

Use "Sport and Leisure" as one example of significant improvement in service performance since 2000/2001 (BVPI satisfaction level up from 58% in 2000/2001 to 69% in 2006/2007) and explain how the Council has achieved this improved performance with this key customer group who use this core Council service.

**Corporate Improvement.** The Council's corporate planning agenda, since 2005, has concentrated on:-

- Corporate plans and resource strategies to ensure the Council has the capacity and corporate focus to act as one organisation to continue to improve services;
- A renewed focus on the diversity and equality agenda both within the workforce and within the local community;
- Worked with other councils to improve the provision of affordable housing in the Harrogate District and the sub-region;
- Allocated resources to support improvements in the Council's priorities, especially recycling, planning and access to services. An example is the Environmental Initiatives Fund (EIF).

On corporate improvement, the CPA District Council Framework from 2006 onwards requires all Councils to evidence and demonstrate in their re-categorisation bid that they have effective arrangements in place on the following **CPA corporate assessment themes**:-

- |  |     |                             |
|--|-----|-----------------------------|
| <b>(1) What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?</b>   | 1.1 | Ambition for the community  |
|  | 1.2 | Prioritisation              |
| <b>(2) What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?</b> | 2.1 | Capacity                    |
|  | 2.2 | Performance management      |
| <b>(3) What has been achieved?</b>   | 3.0 | Achievement and improvement |

Since the last CPA Corporate Assessment in 2004 the Council has improved its performance significantly on a number of these Corporate Assessment themes such as performance management, achievement and improvement. Progress has also been made on the other themes but there is still scope for further improvement on ambition, prioritisation and capacity together with the key CPA national agenda of working with partners and diversity/equality.

### **Case Study:**

Use the Covalent Performance Management System as an example of the improvements in the Council's corporate arrangements on performance management which have enhanced the Council's corporate planning and monitoring agenda since 2004.

### Overall conclusion on the Council's Outline Re-Categorisation Evidence:

The evidence self-assessment set out above confirms that sufficient improvement has been made on the Council's performance since 2004 and that there is sufficient evidence in the recent audits and assessments of the Council's Use of Resources, Direction of Travel, Service Improvement and the Council's corporate agenda to support a bid for re-categorisation from "fair" to "good".

**The key conclusion** is that the evidence clearly demonstrates not only "step change" improvements in services and the way the Council works but that, in line with the Council's corporate priorities and resources, the improvements address a significant number of the weaknesses identified in the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment as follows:-

<u>CPA Corporate Assessment Theme</u>	<u>Extent of the Improvement since 2004</u>	
	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>
- Ambition for the community [2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	40%
- Prioritisation [2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	40%
- Capacity [2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	40%
- Performance management [2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	80%
- Achievement and improvement [7]	<input type="checkbox"/>	80%

[ ] = Current CPA Corporate Assessment weighting

### **Case Study:**

Use the 2007/2008 Strategic Plan and Corporate Improvement Plan to evidence that as well as making significant improvements in the Performance Management and Achievement/Improvement CPA themes (see above chart) the remaining areas of weakness in the CPA Corporate Assessment themes – Ambition (Leadership Development and Member Training), Prioritisation (a Resource Strategy), Capacity (Partnership Working and Shared Services) – are all being addressed by the Council in its future plans.

Self-assessment by:  
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**30<sup>th</sup> April 2007**