

Table 1 Submission dates for consideration by regional panels

Submission date	Audited PI data set to be used	Annual audit and inspection letter
2 October 2006	2004/05	2005/06
1 February 2007	2005/06	2005/06
1 June 2007	2005/06	2006/07
1 October 2007	2005/06	2006/07
1 February 2008	2006/07	2006/07
1 June 2008	2006/07	2007/08
1 October 2008	2006/07	2007/08

Membership and role of panels

- 10 Panels will include the following:
 - a member of the Audit Commission's regional management team such as Head of Operations (Chair);
 - an Audit Commission member of staff from outside the region; and
 - a council peer.
- 11 The role of the panel is to assess the evidence of improvement or deterioration, in order to decide whether or not this is sufficient to indicate a potential category change.
- 12 The RM will be central to providing evidence for the panel. In particular, the RM is critical to putting evidence into a wider perspective. It is not the role of the RM to advocate on behalf of (or against) the council.

Sources of evidence

- 13 In deciding whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment, the Commission will take into account both quantitative and qualitative evidence of improvement or deterioration since the last corporate assessment. Councils have been asked to submit a short statement which should be no longer than three sides of A4. This statement should clearly and concisely highlight significant changes in performance in the council's priority areas and previously identified areas of weakness since their last CPA categorisation. It is not a self-assessment against the corporate assessment key lines of enquiry (KLOE) and should not detail the sort of incremental improvements in performance that would normally be expected in any council. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the council has made a step change in performance. Where relevant, councils should cross-refer to material that they have produced for other purposes, such as direction of travel or use of resources (UoR) assessments. However, the evidence should show clear progress against the council's improvement plan and cover areas such as:
- action which has been undertaken to address key weaknesses identified at the last corporate assessment;
 - the impact of this action; and
 - signposting supporting evidence.
- 14 It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the sources of evidence that councils may want to signpost to demonstrate improvement. The panels will need to make the decision about whether or not the evidence is sufficiently reliable, valid and robust. Examples of the evidence that panels may want to take into account include:
- robust local PIs; or
 - recent progress assessments.
- 15 As well as any evidence supplied by the council, key sources of evidence will include:
- a UoR assessment (scored);
 - a direction of travel statement; and
 - service performance information summarised to show any changes in performance since 2002/03, current performance¹², service inspection scores (if any) and Benefits Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) information.
- 16 RMs will gather evidence from relevant Commission staff including the lead housing inspector. In addition, written evidence will be requested from a limited number of key stakeholders including:
- government office/lead official;
 - BFI; and

1 CPA – District Council Framework from 2006: service performance information

2 Note Table 1 sets out the audited PI information which the council can use in its submission