

MATTERS FOR REPORT

6/07 - **CPA: RE-CATEGORISATION BID – SELF ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPROVEMENT EVIDENCE:** The Strategic Policy Officer submitted a written report which set out a self assessment of the evidence of improvements made by the Council since the CPA Corporate Assessment in 2004 which would be used to support a bid for re-categorisation under the Council's CPA framework from a "fair" performing Council to a "good" performing Council.

It was confirmed that this report was initially considered by the Cabinet on 23 May 2007 and the final decision upon whether to pursue the re-categorisation bid would be taken by Council at its meeting to be held on 19 July 2007.

The Strategic Policy Officer referred to Appendix 1 of the report that set out the evidence collated through the audit and inspection processes. The Strategic Policy Officer advised that this evidence was considered to be sufficient, in terms of improvement, to submit as part of a bid for re-categorisation. It was acknowledged that the submission of a bid did not in itself automatically guarantee re-categorisation. However, the evidence on improvement did mean that the Council met and indeed exceeded the required criteria for making a submission to the Audit Commission.

The Strategic Policy Officer referred to recommendation 2.4 of the report, which linked the decision to submit the re-categorisation bid to the Government's decision on the County Council's unitary bid.

The Strategic Policy Officer invited Members' questions in relation to the report and appendices attached thereto. In response to a question from Councillor Webber, the Strategic Policy Officer advised that the bid would allow the Council to set the record straight after the 2004 CPA Corporate Assessment, and gain the recognition that it is now a "good" performing authority. Councillor Broadbank then queried the benefits in pursuing the Council's target of becoming an excellent authority by 2010 and it was confirmed that local authorities categorised as "excellent" were afforded more freedom to act and were subject to less inspection as a result.

Councillor Lockhart queried the Council's position in relation to other authorities nationally, and whether that was taken into account during the re-categorisation process. In response, the Strategic Policy Officer referred to the Audit Commission's requirement for a "good" Council to be able to demonstrate that at least 33% of its performance indicators were in the top or best quartile nationally. Harrogate Borough Council was able to demonstrate that 48% of its performance indicators were in the top or best quartile in 2005/2006 and therefore exceeded the criteria required for it to be assessed under CPA as a "good performing" Council.

In response to Members' questions, it was also confirmed that the 1 October 2007 deadline for the re-categorisation bid was based on the Council's 2005/2006

performance and that the next submission deadline of the 1 February 2008 would use data based on the Council's 2006/2007 performance.

Members were then invited to comment on the report and recommendations set out therein. The Commission discussed recommendation 2.4 in relation to the impact of the County Council's Unitary Bid on the decision to submit a re-categorisation bid, and it was apparent that a majority of the Commission did not support recommendation 2.4 to Council to provide delegated authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to decide whether or not to submit the re-categorisation bid once the outcome of the County's unitary bid was known. The Commission considered that any proposal not to submit a re-categorisation bid, if the County Council's unitary bid was successful, would weaken the Council's case in terms of its opposition to a County unitary authority. The Strategic Policy officer advised that recommendation 2.4 was intended to address practical issues i.e. the potential situation where there might not be a Council to assess in 2008, however the Commission favoured the submission of a re-categorisation bid under recommendation 2.3 regardless of the outcome of the County Council's unitary bid. It was therefore moved and seconded that the Commission support recommendations 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. On a vote being taken, seven Members voted for the motion and there were two abstentions.

(5.33 pm – 5.55 pm)