

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 11th September 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: CPA Corporate Assessment Report
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Corporate Assessment conducted by the Audit Commission in April 2008 found that the Council is “performing strongly” and this report summarises key findings and considers the action required to ensure continued improvement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To welcome the findings of the Corporate Assessment.**
- (2) That the Chief Executive prepares an Organisational Development Plan to ensure further improvement in Council services.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Corporate Assessment is an in-depth inspection of the Council’s services. It looks at:

- What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?
- What is the capacity of the Council including its work with partners to deliver what it is trying to achieve?
- What has been achieved?

The assessment forms part of the overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment and has a major influence on the annual star rating. It was conducted simultaneously with the Joint Area Review (JAR) of services for Children and Young People.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 The Corporate Assessment report was published on 22nd July 2008. It is available on both the Audit Commission and the Council websites.
([Link to Audit Commission Corporate Assessment report](#))

Overall the assessment found that **the Council is performing strongly** (this is the highest of the four possible scores).

The scores (from 1 to 4 where 4 is best) for individual themes were:

Ambition	4
Prioritisation	4
Capacity	3
Performance Management	3
Achievement	3
OVERALL	<hr/> 4

The report found that:

“Halton Borough Council is performing strongly in tackling the Borough’s significant local challenges. Visionary leadership, strong partnership working and a track record of delivering major projects has led to good outcomes for local people.”

- The Council has provided strong community leadership and effective leadership to the Halton Strategic Partnership.
- User and community engagement is good and there is a robust framework to support equality and diversity.
- Political and managerial leadership is strong and inspiring.
- There is good overall capacity to meet the Council's ambitions.
- Performance management within the Council is good.
- Together with partners, the Council is achieving real outcomes for local people.

The assessment also identified areas for improvement. It recommends that the Council:

- Ensure a co-ordinated Council wide approach to human resource management, asset management, and procurement.
- Improve the performance management arrangements of the Halton Strategic Partnership, clarifying key accountabilities and responsibilities and action being taken to manage under-performance.
- Review formal scrutiny arrangements. Consideration should be given to greater consistency of scrutiny’s role in the development of policy and forward planning, and to support in challenging under-performance more robustly.

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to services for older people to help over 50's to stay healthy and active.
- With our partners, concentrate efforts on narrowing health inequalities, targeting the most disadvantaged.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 The Comprehensive Assessment and JAR reports, together with the findings of other inspections, provide a platform for developing improvement priorities for the Council. A number of other changes need to be made arising from recent legislation and government guidance. It is therefore recommended that a Single Organisational Development Plan be prepared to address all these issues, taking into account existing commitments and future resources.

6.0 FUTURE INSPECTIONS

6.1 This is the last year of the CPA regime and the last corporate assessment of this type. From April 2009, the CPA will be replaced by a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which will look at public services in Halton as a whole. The CAA is likely to comprise an annual area assessment (progress in delivering our community strategy and LAA targets); and organisational assessments of the Council, PCT, Fire and Police. The Council's annual organisational assessment will consist of a performance assessment of Council services and a use of resources assessment.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Corporate Assessment considered arrangements to deliver all six of the corporate plan priorities.

8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Implementing the improvement recommendations will have resource implications (financial and human) but should lead to improved outcomes (improved value for money). This will be given further consideration as the organisational development plan is prepared.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The assessment looks at plans capacity and achievements in respect of all of the Council's priority areas. The recommendations for improvement make particular reference to aspects of the Health priority.

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The principal risk is that if the Council does not continue to deliver excellent services, and does not improve efficiency, it will be unable to meet its objectives. Establishing an organisational development programme and monitoring its progress will provide a suitable risk control measure.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Corporate Assessment Report July 2008)) 2 nd Floor) Municipal Building	Rob MacKenzie 0151 471 7416
Consultation on Comprehensive Area Assessment proposals Summer 2008))	