

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
CABINET
15th December 2009**

AGENDA ITEM 11a

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
9th December 2009**

Cabinet member: Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council

Comprehensive Area Assessment December 2009

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides information about the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) judgements made by external inspectorates about Wiltshire. The CAA results are embargoed until the 9th December 2009 and so must be kept confidential until that date.

Background

2. This year the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which brings together the judgements of a number of inspectorates:
 - The Audit Commission;
 - The Care Quality Commission (CQC);
 - The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted);
 - HMI Probation; HMI Constabulary and HMI Prisons
3. CAA is in two parts:
 - An **Area Assessment** that looks at how public services work together in an area, and
 - **Organisational Assessments** of Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police, NHS Wiltshire, and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue. Organisational assessments consider how well organisations 'use resources' and 'manage performance' and are scored 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

For December 2009, the Council will receive a written organisational assessment but this will not be scored because the Audit Commission decided not to score 'reorganising authorities' for 'managing performance' in the first year. The Council will be scored in 2010.
4. Area Assessments are not scored. These look at how well priorities express community needs and aspirations; the results (outcomes) against priorities; and the Prospects for improvement, including
 - Green flags for exceptional performance/outstanding improvement

- Red flags for significant concerns which are not being tackled adequately

Main Considerations for the Council

5. Both CAA reports are attached. Results for all areas in England will be published on 9th December and we will then be able to see how Wiltshire compares and also identify interesting practice elsewhere in the country.
6. The CAA **Area Assessment** includes the following section:

Wiltshire, at a glance

This assessment sets out how your local public services are working together to tackle the major issues facing the people of Wiltshire. Where we use a red flag, this is to highlight where something more or different needs to happen to ensure that the most important challenges in Wiltshire are addressed. Where we use a green flag, this means that public bodies are achieving exceptional outcomes in priority areas, or something innovative, and that others can learn from.

Green flags major achievements and innovation

- *Green flag: Involving people in decisions that affect their local community*

Red flags where action is needed

- *No red flags have been identified for Wiltshire*

7. As explained above, the Council will not receive a score for its organisational assessment this year. The CAA **Organisational Assessment** summary is:

The Council has managed the transition from five councils to one well. Leadership during the process has been strong. The Council is keen to change the way that it works so that local people are more involved in decisions and delivering services. It has set up 18 area boards covering the whole of Wiltshire to help make this happen. People in Wiltshire are happy with their ability to influence decisions and the way that public services treat them.

The Council is working well to support local people and businesses through the recession. Most children make a good start in life, enjoy good health and achieve well in education and training.

The gap between the majority and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is closing in some areas, but the picture is inconsistent for different groups. The Council is transforming its adult care services to respond to increasing demand and provide better services. The Council's waste management arrangements are strong. Wiltshire Council works well with partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime in the county. This is reflected in people feeling that antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse are not big concerns in their local area.

Wiltshire is very well kept. But the Council has only started work on dealing with climate change fairly recently. Planning performance in some parts of the county has been poor but are starting to improve.

More needs to be done to tackle inequality in Wiltshire. The Council and other public services have a good understanding of where inequality occurs. They are working together to meet the needs of people such as gypsies and travellers who do not find it as easy to get the services they need.

The Council's housing plans are currently incomplete. It has inherited a range of plans and information from the previous four district councils that it is working to consolidate into a single countywide plan by 2010. The Council's approach to private sector housing and management of its own houses is a concern.

Impact of the proposal - Environmental, Equalities, Financial and Legal

8. This report is for information so there are no direct implications.

Risk Assessment

9. This report is for information so there are no immediate decisions to be made. Inspection judgements can impact on reputation and public confidence.

Options Considered

10. This report is for information so there are no options to consider.

Conclusions

11. The results of the CAA judgements were published on 9th December 2009. These will feed into action planning for the Council and its work with partners.

Proposal

12. That the Audit Committee considers matters from the CAA report that are relevant to the work programme of the Committee.
13. That Cabinet notes the results of CAA and asks officers to consider these in action planning and in the Council's work with partners.

Reason for Proposal

14. To inform the Audit Committee and the Cabinet of Wiltshire's inspection results.

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Background Papers The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: This report is based on the pre-publication versions of the CAA reports which are expected to be the same as the versions to be published on 9th December 2009.