

Governance Matters



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Issue 9

February 2007

In Governance Matters this month our regular in-depth feature 'Spotlight on...' focuses on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). We will provide an overview of the CPA and also show how it links to Corporate Governance and the work of the Council's two governance Committees.

We will also take a look at what the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and the Standards Committee considered at their last meetings, and at the work they have scheduled for their next meetings.

We hope you find the information helpful and interesting.

As always, you can play your part by emailing suggestions for articles to cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk

Front Page News...

Delivering Successful Change

Delivering Successful Change (DSC) is the corporate project developing a consistent approach to project and programme management for the whole Council. A full suite of project management tools are available on the Council's intranet site and can be accessed by [following this link](#). These tools are available to all for immediate use, although this is work-in-progress. They are presented with the intention that users can feed back their experiences and comments to the project team. The approach will be formally launched in March 2007.

Amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members

The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' said that the Government would put in place a clearer, simpler and fairer Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has now published the consultation paper detailing the amendments needed to put the new Code into effect. Leeds City Council will be responding to the consultation paper. You can find the consultation paper on the [DCLG website](#).

Constitution amendments

A number of amendments to the Constitution, all of which are related to the Gambling Act 2005, were approved by the full Council on 17th January 2007. These have been published on the Council's website and dispatched in hard copy. See the [Constitution](#) page on the intranet for further details.

Spotlight on...

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced in 2002 to provide a rounded picture of local councils' performance. It allows local residents, councils themselves and central government to gauge the level of service delivery by a council and also compare performance relative to other councils.

The Audit Commission, an independent body, is responsible for developing and implementing CPA.

Under the framework councils are awarded a star rating based on their performance. The five categories are **4 stars** (reflecting the highest category of performance), **3 stars**, **2 stars**, **1 star**, and **0 stars**. Alongside the star rating, the Commission also publishes a direction of travel statement indicating progress being made by the local authority in achieving improvement. To make progress clear to local people there are four direction of travel labels "improving strongly", "improving well", "improving adequately", and "not improving adequately".

A council's overall CPA star category and its direction of travel judgement is reached through the assessment of 3 separate elements. These are:

Use of Resources – this assessment covers financial reporting, financial management, financial standing, internal control

and value for money. Our Auditors have just reported to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee that Leeds has scored 3 for its Use of Resources.

Corporate Assessment – Each Council is assessed once between 2005-08. Leeds are scheduled to have their assessment in December 2007. The Corporate Assessment will cover the areas of Ambition, Prioritisation, Capacity, Performance Management and Achievement in: sustainable communities; safer and stronger communities; healthier communities; older people; and children and young people. There will be a strong emphasis on user consultation and involvement and equality and diversity issues. Our current score is 3.

Service Assessment Blocks – these are divided into two areas: Level 1 (Children and Young People and Social Care for Adults) and Level 2 (Housing, Environment, Culture, Benefits and where applicable fire). Level 1 services are more important and poor performance in these areas impacts more on the overall score. In future CPA will concentrate less on service scores.

CPA AND GOVERNANCE

'Use of Resources' assesses governance and standards which means the work of the Committees can make a difference to the CPA score. For example, the Council has to demonstrate that it "is proactive in raising the standards of ethical conduct among members and staff" in order to achieve level 3.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

31st January 2007

Among the issues the Committee considered were an update report on risk management and the annual report of the external auditors.

UPDATE REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is an important element of the Council's Corporate Governance Framework. Risk Management is defined as the effective management of threats and opportunities in order to enhance the delivery of Council Services. Good risk management practices enable the Council to make better decisions and enhance its ability to achieve its objectives.

A risk management policy, strategy and toolkit, which provide more detail about the Council's risk management framework can be found on the intranet, and by following this link

[Risk Management Documents.](#)

Specific Issues that the Committee were updated on included:

- the maintenance of risk registers;
- the Corporate Risk Management Group;
- risk assessment workshops;
- risk management training; and
- **Business Continuity Management**

ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Each year the Council's external auditors produce a report summarising their work that year. This year's report included information about the audit of the Council's accounts (see Governance Matters issue 7 for more information on the accounts), an audit of data quality and the outcome of the CPA Use of Resources assessment.

JARGON BUSTER

Business Continuity Management seeks to ensure that an organisation can continue to deliver its key services in the face of any disruptions, for example disruptions due to severe weather or loss of IT systems.

7th March 2007

Items to be considered in March include:

- A report regarding the Council's governance arrangements for the partnerships it is involved in.
- An update on the development of an information governance strategy and framework.
- The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter from the relationship manager at the Audit Commission.
- Any external audit reports which have been received by the Council.

Standards Committee

21st December 2006

Among the issues considered were the preliminary results of the ethical audit questionnaire and a report on the recent training offered to Parish and Town Councils in Leeds.

ETHICAL AUDIT

The Committee considered a report outlining the preliminary results of the ethical audit questionnaire. In particular the Committee discussed how they could best contribute to the action plan currently being developed to deal with the issues raised by the Audit.

The Standards Committee decided to conduct two workshops in February which will be attended by various key officers to discuss the results of the ethical audit and the contents of the action plan.

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING

The Committee considered a report regarding the training that Parish and Town Councils have been offered so far in this municipal year and the number of Parish and Town Councillors who have received training.

The Committee discussed what could be done to raise awareness of the training, and the Chair and Parish representatives agreed to meet informally by the end of January to discuss what they could do to help Parish and Town Councils meet their training needs.

14th February 2007

Items to be considered in February include:

- A report on the results of the Use of Resources section of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment;
- A report on some amendments to be made to the Protocol on Member/officer Relations;
- A report on a proposed Plain English guide to the local codes and protocols;
- A report on some proposed amendments to the Standards Committee Procedure Rules;
- The first draft of the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2006/07; and
- A report on the proposed amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF GOVERNANCE MATTERS

We hope you have found this issue of Governance Matters useful.

In the next issue we will focus on governance and standards issues in the run up to the local elections.

If you have any ideas for our 'Spotlight On...' feature or any questions you would like answering, please contact the Corporate Governance Team on 0113 39 51632 / 0113 39 50261 or email us at cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk