

APPENDIX A

Extracts from Audit Commission letter to Leicestershire County Council

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

This letter sets out the activity associated with the first stage of activity in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework.

The Audit Commission has introduced a self assessment element into the overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework. The self assessment element is a key part of the overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework. It provides you with the opportunity to set out the context in which your Council operates and describe the factors that influence your priorities and approaches in delivering services to your communities.

We will use the questionnaire in a variety of ways:

- To understand your Council and the local priorities and choices that shape the way you do things.
- To recognise the improvement agenda the Council has set itself and the plans in place to deliver those priorities
- To understand the opportunities and barriers to delivering your objectives
- To recognise agreement and/or differences in the way that you see yourself and your performance compared to the way others do
- As the basis of a formal discussion between your authority and the Commission, and its partner Inspectorates, about the nature and focus of the corporate inspection.
- To agree the key issues that will be explored as part of the inspection
- As a reference document as we progress the inspection and reach the final score on your corporate assessment
- To understand your initial thinking about action planning – the key outcome from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework.

The Audit Commission has to report on all Councils by the end of 2002. For your Council there are a number of key dates for CPA work:

Key dates	Activity
29 th May	Self assessment completed
17 th June	Corporate inspection fieldwork begins
During period: 1 st – 8 th July	Corporate inspection feedback, challenge and reporting
Winter 2002	CPA judgement released for all Councils

Who else is involved?

The Inspection Forum is working closely together to develop and deliver the CPA framework. The Audit Commission is also working with a range of other partners, including the LGA, to develop the methodology. Other inspectorates will be involved in evaluating the self assessment submission, as well as joining some of the inspection teams as they conduct the corporate inspections.

What do you need to do:

We are looking for a maximum of:

Four sides of A4 setting out the context in which the authority operates and four sides (as a maximum) answering each of the following questions:

- What is the council trying to achieve?
- How has the Council set about delivering its priorities **for improvement**?*
- What has the Council achieved/not achieved to date?
- In the light of what the Council has learnt to date, what does it plan to do next?

*amendment to question in response to feedback

These are the four key questions that we will continue to explore with you when we conduct the corporate inspection fieldwork in June. They have been designed to allow us to reach one inspection judgement about the **Council's proven capacity for improvement**.

The final element of the self assessment is an outline of a three year action plan you would set in place, based on the submission you have assembled. We are not looking for a detailed plan, but a high level summary of the key elements of an action plan that would secure continuous improvement in your priority areas. This should be in tabular form on one side of A4 paper, in a format that best illustrates your desired outcomes. We hope this can be drawn from existing performance plans that already exist.

We ask you to be honest and balanced in completing your self assessment and, wherever possible, to build on work that has already been carried out by or for the authority. Submissions will be evaluated against information already held by the Commission and will feed into inspection and action planning activities. It is our expectation that the self assessment will be approved or agreed in a public forum prior to submission to the Audit Commission.

The key message is about ensuring that the submission is a true reflection of the current priorities and issues you face in delivering services and the outcomes you have achieved for customers. We need evidence of your proven capacity for improvement and that should be the influencing factor in assembling your submission.
