



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 3 MARCH 2010

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT RESULTS 2009 AND IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Commission of the outcomes of the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and to seek comments on the improvement action plan (Appendix A) developed by the County Council and Leicestershire Together (Local Strategic Partnership) partners to further accelerate and improve delivery.
2. The improvement plan also includes key actions from the Ofsted assessment of Children and Young People's services and Care Quality Commission assessment of Adult Social Care services.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. Services provided by Leicestershire Together partners were subject to multi inspectorate assessment focusing largely on progress in delivery of Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) outcomes and Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. The SCS sets out the priority outcomes for improvement in Leicestershire over the five years from 2008 to 2013. The CAA area assessment considers how all the public, private and voluntary sector partners work together to deliver the agreed improvement outcomes for the people of Leicestershire. Local authorities and some partners also receive separate but related organisational assessments.
4. The CAA assessments were published in December 2009 on the national 'Oneplace' website together with organisational scores and judgements for some individual partners. The lead Audit Commission Inspector for Leicestershire presented a summary of the CAA findings at a Leicestershire Together Conference on 10th December 2009 and to the Leicestershire Together Board on 14th December 2009.
5. The area assessment and other assessments identify much positive progress and excellent practice but also a small number of other issues that need further attention or acceleration – many by partnership activity.

Background

6. The new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection regime was launched on 1st April 2009 with the aim of providing a snap shot of how effectively local partnerships are working together to deliver local people's priorities. For the first time public services are held to account collectively for their impact on better outcomes. CAA looks across councils, health bodies, police forces, fire and rescue services and others responsible for local public services and highlights barriers to improvement as well as successes and innovation from which others can learn.
7. The CAA replaced the previous Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for individual public services and is based on a composite of assessments from six different inspectorates and surveys undertaken by a number of agencies on a range of issues.
8. The first round of CAA focused largely on the delivery of LAA outcomes and priorities and the results have been set out in relation to the local SCS themes. The 2009 judgement involved identification of key issues for discussion through analysis of a shared inspectorate evidence base, monthly discussion meetings, and submission of a range of performance information, plans and evidence on agreed areas. There have also been a number of bespoke discussion meetings on issues such as economic delivery and housing.

CAA 2009 – Positive Progress

9. The CAA Area Assessment 2009 produced one 'Green' flag for innovative highways procurement and highlighted positive progress being made by Leicestershire Together partners including:

Improved life chances for vulnerable people

- More disabled and older people and their carers are getting well-coordinated support to live independently at home, instead of going into hospital or care homes;
- Public services are helping improve the lives of many vulnerable people;
- Re-offending is lower in Leicestershire than most areas and falling further.

Stronger, more cohesive communities

- More residents think that people of different backgrounds get on well together in Leicestershire than in similar areas;
- Local volunteering schemes are helping communities and neighbourhoods get a stronger sense of identity and influence decisions that affect them;
- Libraries are very good and improving;
- Children and young people are encouraged to play a positive role in society and offending by young people has reduced considerably.

A safe and attractive place to live and work

- Leicestershire is a relatively safe and attractive place to live compared to average;
- Partners are successfully reducing the number of young people re-offending;
- The Fire Service and partners are working well together to protect people at greatest risk.

A more effective response to climate change

- Partners are responding well to climate change;
- Air quality is improving, road congestion is being tackled and councils, businesses and residents are becoming more energy efficient;
- Recycling rates are high and more is being done to reduce waste going to landfill;
- More green areas and woodlands are being developed.

A prosperous, innovative and dynamic economy

- A speedy partnership response to the recession has helped people and businesses including positive joint work with the City Council and business community;
- School results are above average at all ages and improving quicker than elsewhere;
- A variety of skills training for adults is provided in different places, some with childcare on-site.

A healthier Leicestershire

- People's health is generally better and improving faster than the averages for England and people tend to live longer;
- Leicestershire has better results on average than England for a range of issues that affect health, for example drug misuse and children in poverty;
- Fewer people die from smoking related illnesses than the average for England.

More effective and efficient service delivery

- Partners are jointly buying some of the services and achieving savings;
- People generally have good access to services;
- Residents are satisfied with how easy it is to contact their GPs.

The full CAA report is available on the One Place website please see link below:

<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/pages/default.aspx?gclid=CMnL3OnhiqACFZBb4wod0V2Adg>

Improvement Areas

10. The CAA assessment together with other local assessments identified a number of areas where further improvement or accelerated activity is required. All the areas identified as requiring improvement have been brought together into one Leicestershire Together partnership wide improvement plan (Appendix A).
11. The main areas identified in the CAA as requiring improvement relate to housing services including provision of affordable housing, health inequalities, streamlining public access to services and more sharing of back office functions between agencies. A new county housing board has been established to oversee the implementation of housing related improvement areas. Progress on the improvement areas is likely to form the focus of the CAA assessment for 2010.

Organisational Assessments

12. The separate organisational assessment component of CAA (including a judgement on organisational use of resources) concluded that Leicestershire County Council is performing excellently and provides good value for money. Under the assessment Leicestershire is one of only 10 County or Unitary Authorities to get the top score of 4 out of 150 nationally. The judgement concludes that the Council runs services consistently well, with services continuing to get better and significantly improving the quality of life for local people.
13. The Ofsted report on Leicestershire's Children and Young People's Service concludes that services are performing well. The Care Quality Commission assessment for Adult Social Care Service concludes that the service is performing excellently to support people to improve their quality of life; making a positive contribution and offering increase choice and control. The service is performing well to provide people with economic well-being; improved health and emotional well-being; freedom from discrimination and harassment and personal dignity and respect. The two reports identified a few areas for improvement. These have been incorporated in the improvement plan (Appendix A)

Consultations

14. The Audit Commission has had regular meetings with representatives of Leicestershire Together partners throughout 2009 to discuss initial findings of inspections and to seek further information on a range of topics.
15. Leicestershire Together partners have been consulted on draft findings of the CAA and have contributed in the production of the improvement plan set out in Appendix A.

Resources Implications

16. There may be some additional resource implications for Leicestershire Together partners to fully implement the action plan. Some Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) resources have already been made available for improvement and there may be potential to access further RIEP resources or any further reward grant achieved from LAA1, when this has been finally audited. A number of actions are funded through existing Local Area Agreement (LAA) delivery plans and organisational service plans.

Timetable for Decisions

17. The CAA action plan is being considered by:

- Leicestershire Together Board on 8th March 2010
- Cabinet on 9th March 2010

18. The CAA action plan will also be presented to district/ borough Local Strategic Partnerships.

Conclusions

19. The Leicestershire CAA assessment shows generally good progress and improvement by the County Council and partners, with a 'Green' flag issued for the County Council led Highways Alliance resulting in efficiency savings and no 'Red' flags issued for any areas of concern. The assessment also indicates some areas that need attention and in response a single partnership improvement action plan has been developed.

20. The action plan sets out the actions that the County Council and all Leicestershire Together partners will take to improve the issues identified.

21. The implementation of the improvement action plan will be assessed by various inspectorates during 2010 to inform the production of the 2010 CAA area assessment judgement.

Background Papers

Cabinet 7th April 2009 – Comprehensive Performance Assessment Results 2008

Leicestershire Area Assessment

Leicestershire County Council Organisational Assessment

Annual Performance Assessment – Leicestershire County Council

Annual rating of council's children's services for 2009

Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedures

None.

Officers to Contact:

Tom Purnell, Acting Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)

Tel: 0116 305 7019

Email tom.purnell@leics.gov.uk

Andy Brown, Team Leader, Performance & Improvement

Tel: 0116 3056096

Email andy.brown@leics.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix - CAA Improvement Action Plan 2009

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equal Opportunities Implications

22. The CAA improvement action plan has set out actions to be taken in Leicestershire in relation to equality and diversity issues identified in the CAA area assessment.

Crime and Disorder Implications

23. The CAA improvement action plan has set out actions to be taken in Leicestershire in relation to Crime and Disorder issues identified in the CAA area assessment.

Environmental Impact

24. The CAA improvement action plan has set out actions to be taken in Leicestershire in relation to Environmental issues identified in the CAA area assessment.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

25. The CAA improvement plan can only be achieved through positive partnership activity. The 2010 CAA assessment will focus on how well the Leicestershire Together partnership has come together to improve service delivery for the people of Leicestershire and identified efficiency savings through shared services.

Risk Assessment

26. There is risk to delivery of some priority outcomes if the CAA improvement action plan is not effectively implemented. Progress on the implementation of the CAA improvement action plan will be reported regularly to the Cabinet and Leicestershire Together.