

Corporate Assessment Report

October 2006



# Corporate Assessment

**Peterborough City Council**

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## Introduction

- 1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003 to make an assessment, and report on the performance, of local authorities. Corporate assessment is one element in the overall assessment that leads to a CPA score and category.
- 2 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities. It seeks to answer three headline questions which are underpinned by five specific themes.

What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

- Ambition
- Prioritisation

What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

- Capacity
- Performance management

What has been achieved?

- Achievement

Considered against the shared priorities of:

- sustainable communities and transport;
- safer and stronger communities;
- healthier communities;
- older people; and
- children and young people.

- 3 Corporate assessments are normally aligned with a joint area review of services for children and young people (JAR). In practice this means that the Council's achievements in relation to children and young people are assessed using the evidence provided from the JAR. In addition, examples of outcomes and activity, which are relevant to the other themes and which are identified through the JAR, are considered within the corporate assessment.

- 4 The JAR covers all services for children and young people that are directly managed or commissioned by the Council, as well as health and youth justice services provided by other bodies. It focuses on the contributions made by services to improving outcomes. The separate JAR report covers the leadership and management of services for children and young people and, in particular, the way that such services work together to improve outcomes. The description and judgement in respect of children and young people in this report is summarised from the JAR report.

## Executive summary

- 5 The Council is performing well. It has undergone a significant change of culture in the last three years and adopted a well-known vision of '*Growing the right way for a bigger, better Peterborough*'. It has challenging ambitions, shared by partners and integrated into their plans. Ambitions are underpinned by clear supporting priorities. Overall, the public are satisfied with the services they receive. Political and managerial leadership are driving improvements. Enhanced capacity, internally and through partnership, is leading to service improvement and is beginning to have a positive impact on the delivery of the Council's key ambitions.
- 6 There are clear long-term ambitions for Peterborough, which the Council and its partners jointly developed in consultation with the community. Partners, staff and the community all recognise the overarching ambition as growth for Peterborough. Underpinning the growth agenda the Council has ambitions to improve health in the community, reduce crime and the levels of deprivation, improve environmental sustainability and educational standards, and address the needs of its suburban and rural areas.
- 7 Priorities clearly support delivery of the Council's ambitions with targets identified in the corporate strategy, the local area agreement (LAA) and partners' plans. Shared working and joint delivery feature highly. Priorities reflect the overall needs of the community and there is good focus on diversity. Money follows priorities and there are examples of disinvestment in low priority areas. The new budget setting process strengthens further the link between budgets and priorities. The Council recognises its need to improve its communication and consultation arrangements to ensure some residents and partners feel better able to influence the Council's decision-making and service delivery arrangements.
- 8 The Council is maximising its capacity through its service delivery and procurement arrangements. It has developed an impressive and innovative range of integrated partnerships such as with health and the police. It has transferred its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord and its adult social care services to the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (GPPCP). It has developed the new strategic growth and development service to provide an integrated approach for planning the delivery of the growth agenda. This has brought together strategic planning, strategic housing and regeneration.
- 9 There is good corporate leadership supported by councillors. The Council has addressed key capacity issues in senior and operational management in the last two years resulting in a delivery focused senior management team and an effective group of heads of service. The councillor leadership role is adequate and developing with councillors having an increasing if inconsistent visibility as community leaders. Democratic support for councillors is inconsistent, for example, scrutiny receives reports of variable quality, although the Council is taking steps to address such issues.

- 10 There are sufficient resources for the Council to deliver its priorities. There is a good level of external funding, some aligned partnership budgets, good reserves, significant investments in IT and people systems and strengthened management capacity across the organisation. Procurement processes have realised several efficiency savings and improved service delivery. However, while the Council maps funding to service priorities as part of the annual business planning process it has not mapped funding to priorities in its medium term financial strategy (MTFS), although a revised approach is now being embedded.
- 11 A corporate performance management framework has been established which includes business plans but this is not fully embedded. For example, target setting in some areas is weak. However, there are many examples of effective performance management leading to service improvement. For example, in community safety, waste management and leisure, there is improving comparable performance and good delivery against target.
- 12 Peterborough City Council has had variable success delivering its national and shared priorities. There are many achievements against its priorities to improve the safety and feel of the city, strengthen and diversify the economy, and improve educational attainment. Satisfaction with overall services is above the median. Nevertheless, progress has been more mixed in areas of housing, older people and children and young people. For example, the safety of all children and young people is inadequate and support for vulnerable groups, particularly children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inconsistent. Corporate parenting arrangements are not effective.
- 13 Overall performance has significantly improved. Unaudited outturn figures for 2005/06 shows 71 per cent of performance indicators have improved (up from 50 per cent compared to last year) with 57 per cent of targets met and 43 per cent not met. Targeted improvements were made in planning and educational attainment. Adult social care is now serving most people well and has promising prospects for improvement. There is regular monitoring of the cross-cutting achievements in the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) and LAA.
- 14 The Council is delivering value for money relative to all authorities for most of its services with low to average costs and above median performance. In December 2005, the Council was adjudged 'adequate' in its use of resources judgement. Since then the majority of performance indicators have improved and service reviews have been undertaken in high cost areas. As a result, it is closing some facilities and ceasing some services, with some service provision being redirected to the private sector. However, value for money (VFM) is not being optimised in all areas and reporting mechanisms do not rigorously link costs to service quality.
- 15 The Council is improving its approach to its public. Developments such as the new one-stop shop and customer service standards, with user analysis of services and business process re-engineering are being developed to ensure full account is taken of diversity and user needs in service design and delivery.

- 16 The Council recognises and celebrates the diversity of its population. It is making good progress in addressing community cohesion issues and building strong, safe and confident communities. A cohesion framework outlines specific issues faced and builds on strengths of different communities, experiences and faiths. Initiatives, like the Unity Project and New Link, are addressing needs with success. Nevertheless, more work is required to develop civic leadership, track progress, engage all communities and examine cohesion across all service areas.

## Areas for improvement

- 17 The Council has established a performance management framework. It now needs to establish clear links between the new corporate strategy's targets and business plans to drive improvements in all priority areas for local people. Target setting and delivery should continue to improve as part of the 2007/08 business planning process. However, while the Council uses its annual business planning process to map funding to service priorities, it has not mapped funding to priorities in its MTFS although the revised approach is being embedded.
- 18 The Council has recognised that it has a financial gap in 2007/08 and is aware the procurement function while delivering efficiencies is not fully effective. It now needs to establish overt links between the MTFS and business plans as part of its 'prioritisation matrix' rollout. It also needs to introduce mechanisms for enhancing the corporate procurement role, and reporting cost with analysis of service quality, to help it provide better value for money.
- 19 Councillors need to develop further their community leadership role and receive better support and improved democratic structures. Councillors need information in a timely manner and the scrutiny structure needs to be improved so that it is clear who is holding whom to account and when. Councillors also need to scrutinise the overarching success of cross-cutting issues such as the health agenda.
- 20 The Council has improved its approach to community cohesion and diversity. It now needs to ensure it delivers its cohesion strategy with the GPP, examine cohesion issues across all service areas, complete its equality impact assessment programme and monitor its success in these areas.

## Summary of assessment scores

Headline questions	Theme	Score*
What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	Ambition	3
	Prioritisation	3
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	3
	Performance management	2
What has been achieved?	Achievement	2
<b>Overall corporate assessment score**</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>*Key to scores</b>		
1 – below minimum requirements – <b>inadequate performance</b>		
2 – at only minimum requirements – <b>adequate performance</b>		
3 – consistently above minimum requirements – <b>performing well</b>		
4 – well above minimum requirements – <b>performing strongly</b>		

### \*\*Rules for determining the overall corporate assessment score

Scores on 5 themes	Overall corporate assessment score
Two or more themes with a score of 4 None less than score of 3	4
Three or more themes with a score of 3 or more None less than score of 2	3
Three or more themes with a score of 2 or more	2
Any other combination	1

# Context

## The locality

- 21 Peterborough City Council is a unitary authority located mid-way between the East Anglian coast and the Midlands and has been designated as being in the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth area. Peterborough was designated a 'New Town' in 1968 and the Peterborough Development Corporation was established to double the city's population in close partnership with the City Council. The plan was to concentrate development in four new residential townships. Orton, Bretton and Werrington were the first three new townships. The last of these residential townships is Hampton, which aims to continue Peterborough's growth in the 21st century with the development of over 5,000 houses and industry and commercial space for 12,000 jobs. In April 1998, Peterborough achieved unitary status; it is now responsible for all local government services in the district.
- 22 The population is 159,100 of which 14.3 per cent are from minority ethnic communities, which is higher than the regional or national average. The largest non-white ethnic group is the Pakistani community (4.5 per cent) but the city is also home to significant numbers of people from other ethnic minority groups from India, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Poland and the Caribbean. 14.1 per cent are over the age of 65, which is less than the national average. Eighty-eight per cent of residents live in urban areas and the remaining 12 per cent live in the 28 villages outside the city. Contained within these numbers are increasing numbers of migrant workers in Peterborough.
- 23 Parts of Peterborough are deprived. Twenty-two of Peterborough's 104 super output areas (local recognised areas which are smaller than Wards) are in the 20 per cent most deprived with one in the worst 3 per cent. In contrast, six areas are within ten per cent of the least deprived with the West area being within the top 5 per cent.
- 24 Life expectancy in Peterborough is significantly below the national average for both men and women. Men can expect to live for nine months less than the national average and for four years less than their counterparts in South Cambridgeshire. The figures for women are one year less and 3.5 years respectively.
- 25 Unemployment in Peterborough has been higher than the national rate since July 2004 and higher than both the East of England and East Midlands rates. It reached 2.7 per cent in July 2005 then fell to 2.6 per cent in October 2005. Average gross weekly earnings are below the regional and national averages. The average gross household income in Peterborough (including Income Support and Welfare) was £23,968 in 2004 and this increased to £25,009 in 2005. The national average was £29,400.

- 26 Actual crime in Peterborough is high but falling. The fear of crime is relatively high and reported crime is above the national average. There is a predominance of young offenders; offenders under 21 commit 81 per cent of all crimes in Peterborough.

## The Council

- 27 The Council currently has 57 elected councillors - 35 Conservative, 4 Labour, 5 Liberal Democrat, 7 Independent Group, 5 Minority Parties Group and 1 vacancy. It operates a Leader and Cabinet executive system. Portfolio holders do have some individual delegated responsibility.
- 28 The Council meets six times a year and the Cabinet meets monthly. The Council has seven overview and scrutiny committees consisting of a Scrutiny Committee and a Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and five Policy Overview Committees (POCs) consisting of:
- Adult Services Policy Overview Committee;
  - Best Value and Corporate Resources Policy Overview Committee;
  - Community Wellbeing Policy Overview Committee;
  - Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee; and
  - Environment Policy Overview Committee.
- 29 The Council works closely with the GPP, its Local Strategic Partnership. The seven key partnerships within the GPP each focus on a separate area of activity:
- Children and Young People;
  - Community Safety (including community cohesion);
  - Culture, Leisure and Tourism;
  - Education and Learning;
  - Environment and Transport;
  - Health; and
  - Peterborough Regional Economic.
- 30 The Council has worked with partners to establish the LAA. The structure of the GPP is being adapted to align with the LAA delivery blocks and establishing performance management arrangements.
- 31 The Council works closely with the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (GPPCP). The two Peterborough Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) have integrated with the Council's adult social care services to form the GPPCP.

- 32 The Council employs more than 5,500 staff and has an overall budget for the year 2006/07 of £217 million. The Council Tax for an average Band D property in Peterborough is £1,207.00, which is below the English Unitary Authority average. There are approximately 71,000 dwellings in the authority with over 6 per cent rented through registered social landlords (RSLs). In 2004, the Council transferred its housing stock of over 10,000 homes to Cross Keys Homes. The average house price in Peterborough now stands at £149,805, lower than the national average although house prices have doubled over the last five years.

## What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

### Ambition

- 33 The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. The Council has clear and challenging long-term ambitions for Peterborough which all key partners share. The Council and its partners developed the shared vision in consultation with the community. This is set out in the community strategy, the corporate plan and more recently in the LAA. Partners, staff and the community all recognise the vision and its series of complementary ambitions.
- 34 The Council has a clear and established ambition of growth, which is integrated with partners' plans and is based on the underlying needs of the community. The shared vision is '*Growing the right way for a bigger and better Peterborough*'. This vision is clearly articulated in the community strategy, corporate plan and more recently the LAA. The Council's ambition is underpinned by a shared vision and set of ambitions with partners. The GPP identified its key underpinning ambitions as:
- improving health and well-being of the people of Peterborough;
  - building strong and supportive communities and reducing crime;
  - raising levels of educational attainment; and
  - sustainable economic growth and development.

However whilst the ambitions for educational attainment are clear, it is less explicit for children's safety.

- 35 The Council has a good understanding of local needs and a clear vision for Peterborough over the next 20 years. The Council sees substantial and sustainable growth as key to improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of its residents. The community strategy, corporate strategy, city centre master plan, sub-regional economic development strategy, statutory development plan and local area agreement (called '*Growing the Right Way*'), provide an interlinking, well researched vision for the city, which is based on extensive consultation and shared by partners. Targets, for example, relating to job creation, establishing a university and reducing deprivation, underpin this.

- 36 The economic vision for Peterborough is founded on work undertaken with the Peterborough Regional Economic Partnership (PREP). The agreed ambitions are challenging. There is a shared, well-researched, vision for the city, which is interlinked across community, sub-regional, corporate and some service-based strategies. These ambitions are underpinned by targets which include; an additional 21,000 houses; 17,300 jobs (by 2021); the ongoing improvement in health of the community (with targets for cessation of smoking and increased breast-feeding) and ensuring no area in Peterborough is among the 10 per cent most deprived. Community cohesion and quality of life in Peterborough should improve as the Council also addresses the need for economic growth, improving low life expectancy and reducing deprivation.
- 37 The vision and ambitions for Peterborough are based on extensive consultation and good research that underpins the Council's approach to addressing local and national priorities. The vision, ambitions and priorities were established following a range of activities for community engagement, including open days, visiting local communities which would not otherwise attend or respond to consultations and attending other events, to identify community need. The Council's vision and priorities were also informed by other consultation and work such as the Director of Health's report, the city centre master plan, the transport survey and the crime audit. For example, as life expectancy is below average, the Council reviewed contributory factors and included targets for improvement in the community strategy and LAA, including projects to reduce obesity and coronary heart disease.
- 38 The Council is working productively with partners to ensure the most effective structure is in place to deliver its ambitions. The GPP was originally structured around seven key partnerships for delivery of the ambitions; however, this is being realigned into four partnerships to reflect the LAA. Ambitions are supported by structures, plans and strategies including developing Peterborough Direct (the customer access centre), setting up an Urban Regeneration Company and creating a strategic growth plan.
- 39 Its partners, residents and staff understand the Council's ambitions for Peterborough. There are regular and varied forms of communication with staff including senior officer roadshows, team meetings and one to ones all of which include information about ambitions and priorities. Survey results show strong partner, resident and staff recognition and support for the Council's ambitions and priorities.
- 40 There is a strong and improving culture of partnership working with respective roles outlined in terms of ambitions and an effective method of planning and sharing information. For example, falls in crime were achieved by improving local information sharing and responding to changing crime patterns.
- 41 However, some partners are not clear of the specific contribution they play in the delivery of some plans or projects. The Council and GPP recognise some plans underpinning strategies need to identify the specific role of individual partners in delivery of plans. The GPP is identifying plans that support delivery of individual projects and the role respective partners need to play.

## 16 Corporate Assessment | What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

- 42 The Council is willing to take difficult decisions to achieve its objectives. A recent example is the rolling out of the fortnightly bin collection, which despite being initially unpopular, the Council carried out to improve recycling rates.
- 43 The Council with its partners displays a good and improving lead on community cohesion. The Council commissioned a report that identified several community cohesion issues. As a result, the Council and GPP set up a Cohesion Board and action plan that is integrated within the LAA. The Council works closely with the police when there have been significant tensions in the community to ensure that community unrest is minimised. The police and community leaders felt that this partnership approach has led to effective community cohesion when otherwise unrest could have developed.
- 44 Councillors have an increasing visibility in community leadership. Among partners, there is mixed levels of recognition of the roles councillors' play, with some portfolio holders developing a higher profile and some local councillors proactively leading on community development.
- 45 While the Council's approach to consultation is good, it is still developing. There has been an extensive range of consultation that has not all been co-ordinated; however, plans to introduce a formal corporate approach, such as a central register and a new engagement and consultation strategy, are in place.

## Prioritisation

- 46 The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. There are clear and established priorities for Peterborough, which are articulated in the community strategy, corporate strategy, business plans and are shared with partners. Priorities are linked for co-ordinated delivery with partners and are underpinned by targets set out in the community and corporate strategies and the LAA. There is sustained focus with extra resources assigned to areas of high priority. Priorities reflect the needs of the community and there is good focus on diversity.
- 47 The Council clearly explains its priorities in external and internal strategies, with mutually defined targets, which are well understood and informed by local needs. It clearly defines its priorities in its own strategies, which are supported by actions and measures for success. There is a clear integration of ambitions and targets in partners' plans, such as the GPPCP's strategy (for example the improvement in life expectancy) and the police plan for local delivery (such as reducing the fear of crime). The Council's three-year corporate strategy supports delivery of the overarching growth ambition. The 2006 strategy reaffirms the ambition and the underpinning priorities supporting delivery, these are:
  - improve the safety and feel of the city;
  - plan and deliver an attractive and environmentally friendly city;
  - strengthen and diversify the economy;
  - achieve the best possible public health, housing and well-being;

- provide high quality opportunities for learning and ensure children are safe; and
  - provide an efficient, effective and accessible council.
- 48** Priorities clearly link to the community strategy. The GPP has set a series of 'breakthrough' goals to focus attention on priority areas. These targets align to the Council's priorities; for example, one breakthrough target is to increase life expectancy to at least the national average. This maps to the Council's priority of achieving the best possible public health and is contained in plans of the GPPCP.
- 49** There are clear and recognised priorities within the ambitions. Service users and stakeholders are clear about priorities and contribute to action planning. In a recent survey, 80 per cent of staff who responded said the goals and objectives of 'my job' are clear. The citizens' panel of 2006 identified that 90 per cent of respondents felt that Council priorities were fairly or very important.
- 50** The Council is clearly linking priorities to deliver co-ordinated outcomes. For example, the Council has required a focus on the green agenda and sustainability in developing growth and regeneration plans, including strong and sustained focus on transport such as cycle routes.
- 51** Senior management maintains focus on priorities and the Council moves resources to address priorities. Examples include funding for environmental services of £1 million to support the introduction of the three-bin waste collection service and recycling plant, which helped the Council to reach its recycling target in 2005/06 and achieve Beacon Status for its waste and recycling service. It secured this funding in part from cuts in street scene budgets and the rest from the sale of an asset that it will repay with savings from reduced landfill costs. The Council has also directed extra funding to education with £4.8 million assigned to supporting the schools reorganisation and improving educational attainment.
- 52** The Council has clearly geared its capital strategy to deliver corporate priorities. There is capital investment through planned expenditure of £50.6 million on schools, highways, facilities to support older people to live independently and housing, all of which support the growth agenda.
- 53** There are clear links between budget and service planning and priorities. The Council is developing its approach to medium term financial planning. Historically there has been a medium term financial planning process, which has now been developed into a comprehensive prioritisation matrix. This includes consideration of ten key factors including national and local priorities, value for money, performance and satisfaction. However, while the Council maps its funding to service priorities, as part of the annual business planning process, it has not mapped funding to priorities in its MTFs, although the revised approach is now being embedded.

## 18 Corporate Assessment | What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

- 54 Robust strategies support priorities. There is an evolving infrastructure strategy to support the growth agenda. The corporate strategy clearly prioritises recognised local needs and community issues. For example, effective initiatives to address equality and diversity issues are in place. There are two Sure Start developments in Central and East Ward and a New Link Centre initiative, which have had a demonstrable impact. These help address needs of asylum seekers, migrant workers and refugees, help Pakistani women suffering from mental distress, ease racial tensions, and promote social cohesion.
- 55 The Council recognises and responds with effect to the needs of its rural and suburban areas. For example, to provide a more responsive service to parish areas the Council introduced the 'fix it' van. This allows parish councillors and residents a one-stop call to address local issues such as fly-tipping, damaged play and street furniture and litter. This responds to local environment issues identified by the parishes as priorities for improvement. The Council has developed two neighbourhood plans and some parish plans to address local suburban needs, although plans do not yet cover the whole city. It has also developed a ward budget of £10,000 a year, used to fund community schemes. This contributes to good community leadership and councillors' involvement in community projects.
- 56 Council priorities have regard for local and national priorities but delivery against priorities has been mixed in a few areas. It is successfully addressing the need for sub-regional growth, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the environment such as recycling. However, delivering affordable housing has been slower although the Council is taking action by obtaining funding for schemes and increasing the number required in developments from 10 per cent to 40 per cent. While the Council's priority for educational attainment is clear and has led to improved outcomes, its priorities for safeguarding vulnerable children and corporate parenting are less effective.
- 57 The Council takes effective action to prioritise diversity in service delivery. It has developed a range of initiatives and a corporate framework. For example, specialist advocacy and support groups' expertise has been enlisted in order to involve some hard-to-reach groups and individual team members attend advocacy groups for travellers and those with learning disabilities. The Council set a priority target (in the corporate strategy) to achieve level four of five of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Equalities Standard and is implementing an action plan. However, it is not consistently deploying equality impact assessments to ensure services adequately reflect the diverse needs of all its communities.
- 58 Some business plans do not have clear outcome related targets to deliver against priorities or clearly identify where the action plans for delivery are. While business plans identify a link to priorities, some do not recognise the integrated role they play and, in some cases, where they may contribute to more than one corporate objective. The new corporate strategy identifies targets for each priority; however whilst priorities are identified, the targets are yet to be translated into business plans as the revised strategy was only recently agreed.

## What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

### Capacity

- 59 The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. Good corporate leadership supported by councillors recognises the Council can be a facilitator or deliverer of priorities and services. This is leading to improved outcomes for local people. An impressive range of integrated partnerships is in place supporting delivery of most community ambitions and priorities. There are sufficient resources for the Council to deliver its priorities. There is a good level of external funding, aligned partnership budgets, a high level of reserves, significant investments in IT and people systems and strengthened management capacity across the organisation. However, some democratic processes are not keeping pace with the changing structure of the Council.
- 60 There is good and visible leadership of the Council supporting delivery of priorities. Senior management is driving the organisational changes needed to deliver the changing culture, including a stronger emphasis on operational management. The councillor leadership role is adequate and developing, with councillors having an increasing if inconsistent visibility as community leaders. Councillors have actively supported the changing culture of the organisation; in particular enhancing community leadership and engaging with partners. Councillor training is developing, with a good programme of generic councillor training. However, bespoke training is not yet in place.
- 61 The cabinet structure is effective with delegated decision-making to cabinet councillors. Decision-making is clear and transparent leading to swifter decisions. The standards committee, which is chaired by an external person, is effective. It meets regularly, discusses councillor development and standards issues.
- 62 Scrutiny is contributing to service improvement. For example, scrutiny reviewed the local transport plan in January 2006 and monitored implementation of the key actions arising. As a result, government office's progress assessment showed substantial improvement from 52 per cent to 77 per cent within six months. An innovative approach to scrutiny has been developed entitled 'Scrutiny in a Day'. One such review looked at anti-social behaviour, resulting in an action plan and improved information exchange with partners. However, the scrutiny structure is not effective, mainly due to it being based on an historic officer structure. This is currently being reviewed.

**20 Corporate Assessment | What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?**

- 63** Democratic support for Councillors is variable. Some Councillors felt that support for scrutiny at a senior level was not effective and that officers did not recognise it as being important. Reports are of variable quality and at some meetings verbal reports are presented or late reports circulated which Councillors found unacceptable. The Council is taking steps to resolve these issues.
- 64** The Council works effectively with partners to enhance its capacity and focus on delivering its ambitions and priorities. As a result, it is achieving clear outcomes. For example, crime figures have reduced through working effectively with the police on a range of projects and establishing good information exchange mechanisms.
- 65** A good range of partners is in place to deliver the growth agenda. For example, the Council contributed to the planning of the proposed new hospital in Peterborough. This support included work with the planning service and development of discrete mental health facilities including specialist services for older people. This close interaction has also ensured that the new facility has the capacity to expand services in line with population projections.
- 66** The Council is working well with external providers to enhance capacity and deliver services. For example, the integration of the two local PCTs and the Council's adult social care services into the GPPCP. Resources have been combined and the GPPCP is working as one organisation creating stronger working relationships between health and social services professionals and improved outcomes for local people, as demonstrated by 14/20 performance indicators improving in 2005/06. Through transfer of its 10,000 houses to Cross Keys Housing Association, the Council expects to achieve the decent homes standard before 2010.
- 67** The GPP provides effective support to develop of partners' capacity. For example, it provides a forum for public service providers and the voluntary sector to meet quarterly. The voluntary sector forum is used for training and information sharing, with an opportunity for two-way communication.
- 68** The Council has increased its capacity in key corporate support areas. It is investing £4.5 million in a comprehensive business change management project, which has resulted in the introduction of business managers in all departments, an improved approach to workforce planning and a new strategy for workforce and councillor development. Financial management capacity has been enhanced with targeted development and the introduction of comprehensive new financial systems. The new structure is already achieving improvements such as the quicker payments of invoices.

- 69 The Council has addressed key capacity issues in senior and operational management over the last two years with the establishment of a delivery focused senior management team and many new heads of service. Elements of a workforce development plan and a number of new HR strategies are being developed. Heads of service now fulfil a range of competencies reflecting the changing organisation. Appraisals are driving service improvement and training is used effectively to extend the capacity of staff. For example in benefits, payment of benefits is quicker, there is a better approach to customer care with reduced waiting times and targeted take up campaigns for older people. However, some hard to fill vacancies remain such as social workers.
- 70 The Council has strengthened its capacity to deliver its growth agenda. The new strategic growth and development service brought together the strategic elements for planning delivery of the growth agenda, including strategic planning, strategic housing and regeneration. This new unit works closely with the Opportunity Peterborough, the urban regeneration company, to enhance capacity and deliver a co-ordinated growth agenda.
- 71 The Council is making good use of project and programme management in support of delivery of key projects. Project management is helping councillors, staff and services to challenge more effectively. Programme boards oversee projects such as customer access, growth and schools renewal, using PRINCE 2 methodology, with targeted training as required.
- 72 Capacity is enhanced by a range of external funding and aligning budgets with partners in delivery of priorities. For example, it has significant funding from the housing corporation (£20 million), along with £22 million from a registered social landlord to meet its target to deliver 600 homes by 2008. There are a number of short-term funded initiatives supporting priorities but the Council is developing how services can be evolved and continued where appropriate, such as in the New Link exit strategy. However, some exit strategies are not effectively communicated to partners thus risking the loss of key workers due to uncertainty.
- 73 The Council is delivering value for money with the majority of its services having low to average costs and above median performance. In December 2005, the Council was adjudged 'adequate' in its use of resources judgement. Since then the majority of performance indicators have improved and service reviews have been undertaken in high cost areas. For example, £1.3 million was saved through contract renegotiation for waste collection services that was subsequently reinvested in the service. Nevertheless, the Council is aware that VFM is not optimised in some areas such as older people's services where the average gross cost of providing residential and nursing care for adults and older people remains high.

## 22 Corporate Assessment | What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

- 74 Procurement is improving and delivering cost savings however use of the procurement strategy is not consistent across the organisation. Challenging efficiency targets are set and achieved. Savings have been generated from areas such as gas and electricity purchase, consumables and printing. There are examples of joint procurement with partners such as out-of-area placements for looked after children.
- 75 The Council has the financial resources to deliver its priorities. It has identified a budget gap for 2007/08, which it is addressing through modernising and improving its financial management, enhanced financial staff capacity and integrating budget prioritisation within the medium term financial strategy. As a result, the Council is already taking some difficult decisions to reduce costs such as the closure of some facilities. There is a good level of reserves (£33 million) with a proportion in ear marked reserves, which are being reviewed and prioritised as part of the budget setting process. Although there is not a fully funded plan for delivery of the £50 million maintenance backlog, key issues such as Disability Discrimination Act are funded separately from the capital programme.
- 76 The Council has robust project plans in place to meet e-government targets and weaknesses in IT infrastructure that are now delivering outcomes for local people. Progress was initially slow due to the Council seeking a strategic partner, which did not proceed due to concerns over value for money of the partnership. A £1.3 million IT programme was approved in August 2005 and progress is on track. This investment is delivering outcomes for local people. The public now benefit from 24-hour access for payments on line with more than 3,500 payments having been made since March 2006. Improved sundry debtor systems have also resulted in recovery of approximately £170,000 which can be redirected back into public services.
- 77 The Council is developing and championing a strategic approach to equality and diversity but users are not always able to access services that meet their diverse needs. A new Head of Diversity is engaging with the community such as on open days, with local schools attending, to understand the roles of the council and job opportunities. Equality objectives for employment, pay and service delivery have been set based on an impact and needs assessment, and consultation. The Council has translated its equality objectives into action plans with specific targets. However, take up of services by older people from BME communities following an assessment of need is low and the roll out of equality impact assessments of service design and delivery is incomplete.

## Performance management

- 78 The Council is performing adequately in this area. The formalised performance management framework is not embedded, and has a mixed impact across services. Performance management does not co-ordinate cost to performance analysis or routinely report the VFM services provide. The realism of target setting, in some areas, is inconsistent. The new corporate strategy has targets for each priority; however whilst priorities are identified, the targets have yet to be translated into business plans. Local performance management at service level is leading to improvements with the number of performance indicators improving from 50 per cent in 2004/05 to 71 per cent for 2005/06 (unaudited date).
- 79 Corporate performance management systems, while improving, are not fully embedded. The departmental approach to business planning is inconsistent. The Council has established a corporate approach to performance management with all departments producing business plans but there is no corporate requirement for service plans, despite this being recognised as good practice by the Council. Whilst all services recognise the role they play in delivering corporate priorities, this is not fully reflected in all business plans, as actions are not comprehensively mapped to corporate priorities.
- 80 The approach to target setting has been inconsistent and not all targets have been realistic leading to variable delivery against targets. Overall, the Council met 57 per cent of its targets during 2005/06 but delivery against target in children's social care and adult social care was weak. For example, adult social care missed 17 of its 23 targets for 2005/06, however, overall performance has improved with 14/20 PIs showing improvement. The Children and Young People's Plan lacks measurable and specific targets against some objectives. The Council plans to improve target setting in its 2007/08 business plans.
- 81 The Council does not formally track cost to performance analysis; councillors do not receive information about relative costs or benchmarking information about service costs or expenditure on priorities.
- 82 The management of partnership performance is mixed. The GPP identified it needed to use performance information more effectively to manage the LAA and introduced a new performance monitoring system. The GPP monitors the LAA on a three-tier process. Tier one is top-level targets, reported to the GPP executive board, tier two with key targets for the four delivery blocks and tier three with specific operational targets, reported to the boards for each block. It is too early to demonstrate the impact of the new system.
- 83 The Council has improved service level agreements (SLAs) with many funded organisations having clear monitoring processes. For example, Sure Start performance is monitored as part of the Early Years and Child Care Report. This fulfils funding requirements and ensures integration of service performance. However, SLA monitoring, while improving, is inconsistent across voluntary and community sector organisations.

**24 Corporate Assessment | What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?**

- 84** At operational level, there is largely good performance monitoring and management that is improving most services. Managers and staff use information to ensure effective service delivery. For example, targets relating to sport and health development are clearly identified at team and departmental level. When the waiting list for referrals was increasing, remedial action was taken and funding re-allocated to reduce waiting lists. Performance in the benefits service has also improved because of local performance management and local reporting to the portfolio holder. However, this is not consistent in all areas. For example, the Council has allowed weak performance in speed of payment of invoices for a number of years, and the weight of waste collected per household remains high.
- 85** There is a corporate complaints process which is well publicised; however this is not consistently used by all departments and therefore lessens the impact of corporate reporting. Information from the corporate complaints system is reported to scrutiny. However, there is confusion across departments as to what are the differing levels of complaints and variable use of complaints to improve service delivery, such as in waste collection.
- 86** Risk management processes are improving. The directors' group reviews the strategic risk register every six months. This ensures ongoing corporate responsibility and a strategic approach. Links between service and business planning are developing and form part of the new framework for business plans and performance management.
- 87** There is a clear positive change in the culture to support performance management. The Council uses targeted improvement plans to address areas of under-performance identified by its monitoring processes or raised by external reviews and inspections. Examples include, educational attainment, recycling and the determination of planning applications. Local targets are embedded (if set somewhat unrealistically in a few places) and the appraisal system valued.
- 88** Priority areas for improvement are generally well managed and monitored on a monthly basis with reports that are clear and accessible. For example, the Council's planning service (designated as a planning standards authority in 2005/06 because of slow determination of planning applications) has improved following departmental, corporate and councillor attention. Local action is taken with relevant cabinet portfolio holders to monitor performance on a monthly basis and respond to issues. Quarterly performance reports on progress against objectives and statutory performance indicators are co-ordinated centrally. Reports highlight progress against business plan objectives, together with statutory performance reports showing trend and comparison data.
- 89** The Council is taking effective action to assure data quality. In 2005/06, it undertook a review of high risk PIs, as there has been a lack of robust baseline data to underpin effective business planning and performance management. The report identified sound practice in most areas and plans are in place to improve.
- 90** The Council's financial standing is sound and it manages its budgets within available resources although capital budgets are not being spent within defined timescales. There is a predicted slippage of £7,983,000 carried forward into 2006/07.

## What has been achieved?

- 91** The Council is performing adequately overall. Local priorities are consistent with national objectives. There is a focus on delivery of priority areas through effective partnership working, leading to some good progress against ambitions. The Council has enhanced its capacity and is improving its management of performance, which is starting to deliver an increased rate of improvement, but it is too early to demonstrate how sustainable this improvement is.
- 92** There are clear achievements linked to national and local priorities. The Council's overarching ambition is growth, which links to the identified need for housing in the South East and economic make up of the city. The Council is focusing and delivering on the development of new housing and economic growth. It is taking action to increase affordable housing such as the Alma Road development, which includes provision for people with mental health needs and dementia. National priorities for health improvement, reflected in the Council's and partners' plans, are leading to improvements in the health of people in Peterborough.
- 93** Delivery of the Council's ambitions and most priorities is underpinned by effective prioritisation and mechanisms for delivery. Council ambitions are well-known and integrated as part of partners' plans. The Council has prioritised key improvement areas and is developing capacity to support delivery. It has strengthened its capacity in terms of supporting structures and mechanisms and appropriately skilled staff.
- 94** As a result, there has been some good delivery against priorities. For example, rates of crime are reducing, educational attainment improving, 861 new homes were built last year, and 4,100 new jobs and 106 new businesses created since 2002. There has also been an impressive range of environmental improvements including improved recycling, more people using buses, and cleaner and tidier streets. Satisfaction with services overall is above the median.
- 95** However, progress in some areas is slow and some comparable performance remains below average. For example: a high level of household waste; affordable housing is not meeting identified need; there are 6,500 people on the housing waiting list; crime rates and the fear of crime are still high; youth re-offending is increasing; and there is an above average rate of accidents on the roads. Life expectancy remains significantly below average, insufficient numbers of older people are supported to live at home, and safeguarding of children is judged as inadequate.
- 96** The Council has improved its performance against many key PIs, although this is variable for some priorities. As highlighted earlier the majority of performance indicators have improved during 2005/06; 57 per cent of overall targets were met; 43 per cent not met. Targeted action resulted in performance improvements in the planning service and educational attainment. Adult social care is now serving most people well and has promising prospects for improvement. Nevertheless, performance against most children's health and social care PIs deteriorated, teenage pregnancies remain high, and the payment of invoices while improving remains comparably slow.

- 97 The Council recognises and celebrates the diversity of its population. It is making good progress to address community cohesion issues and build strong, safe and confident communities. A cohesion framework outlines specific issues faced and builds on strengths of different communities, experiences and faiths. Initiatives, like the Unity Project and New Link, are addressing needs with success. Nevertheless, more work is required to develop civic leadership, track progress, engage all communities and examine cohesion across all service areas.

## Sustainable communities and transport

- 98 The Council and its partners have a strong and shared commitment to deliver a sustainable economy and labour market. They express this through partnership plans and strategies, which link the provision of jobs and wealth to transport and housing priorities such as the emerging infrastructure strategy and the sub-regional economic strategy, which also takes account of cross boundary impacts.
- 99 The Council and its partners are delivering against its key growth targets, identified in the community strategy and regeneration plans. It has supported the creation of 4,100 jobs since 2002 including 1,600 in 2005/06 (target is 900 jobs a year). If this four-year average rate of job creation is sustained, the target of 17,300 jobs by 2021 will be met. The Council supported and encouraged the development of a financial institutions' business park that attracted a range of companies to the park to establish administrative centres. This resulted in new jobs at above average wage rates. The rate of new company formation increased in 2005/06 with 73 new VAT registrations compared to 40 in the previous year.
- 100 The Council continues to invest in the delivery of its growth priority. The adopted local plan provides for continued growth, with allocations for land sufficient for an additional 12,477 homes and further land for business development. The plan is up to date, having been adopted in July 2005, and has an end date of 2006 (to coincide with the end date of the structure plan). The Council has quickened the determination of planning applications and current performance is exceeding its targets for 2006/07. Work with Opportunity Peterborough to market and promote the City, deliver the city centre framework and form a business plan for growth is underway. These provide a basis for a step change to help reduce deprivation in existing neighbourhoods.
- 101 The Council has made good progress in delivering its local housing market ambitions. It effectively transferred its 10,000 unit housing stock, through LSVT, to Cross Keys Housing Association, and expects to achieve the decent homes standard before 2010. Satisfaction with the maintenance services provided under contract is good. Most new homes are built on previously developed land and the condition of unfit homes is improving quickly. In the last year, the Council met its target and brought 75 empty homes back into use and made 400 grants for help with housing repairs and disabled facilities. There has been innovative community cohesion work through housing, for example, in Gladstone and Central wards; the Council is also working well with asylum seekers and economic migrants.

- 102** However, while homelessness has decreased, bed and breakfast accommodation remains in use, including for families with children and vulnerable young people. Demand for housing still outstrips supply. Despite the successful introduction of choice based lettings, there are over 6,500 households on the 'waiting list' for social housing. In the past, the Council and its partners have not delivered enough affordable housing. Only 64 units were completed in 2005/06 compared to an estimated need of 793. However, the recent approval of nearly £42 million of external funding and a new s106 policy to increase the percentage of affordable housing, provide a firm foundation for a significant improvement over the next few years.
- 103** The Council has invested in and made good progress in delivering its ambitions for the local environment. An inspection of 'Environment and Streetscene', published in April 2006, found a good, two-star service with promising prospects for improvement. The waste and recycling service has now gained beacon status. The Council has one of the highest recycling and composting rates in the country, with high satisfaction levels. Refuse collection and disposal costs are among the lowest in the country. Services are accessible and address diversity issues. Graffiti, fly-tipping, fly-posting and abandoned vehicles are quickly removed. It works effectively in partnership with other agencies such as the police and fire service on enviro-crime issues. There are some effective innovative local initiatives. For example, the electrical appliance recycling programme in association with community-based charity (COMPASS) is a holistic view to waste minimisation - emphasising collection, reprocessing and sustainability.
- 104** However, the amount of waste collected per head is among the highest in the country, and complaints are not used effectively to drive improvements. Service standards and targets are not yet in place to allow the public to know what it can expect and enable it to hold the Council to account.
- 105** The Council and its partners understand the importance of transport to achieving the ambition of sustainable growth. The growth plans are at the heart of the development of the second local transport plan (LTP2). Modelling has informed funding bids to the growth areas fund and LTP funding. Proposals include real-time passenger transport information to encourage use of sustainable transport, urban traffic management control systems to reduce congestion and improvements to the road network.
- 106** Some notable improvements in transport have been delivered in line with the transport strategy. Examples include, increasing use of public transport (up eight per cent), reducing road casualties (down 30 per cent), and more accessible rural bus services (78 per cent of rural households now within 13-minute walk of an hourly or better service). Partnership working is good. For example, temporary traffic management arrangements, required to enable improvement works to Town Bridge, were radically altered to meet the needs of bus operators. The Council is successfully promoting safe and sustainable forms of transport to specific user groups, including disadvantaged and diverse communities.

- 107 However, the Council has further challenges such as the deterioration of the highway network, the need to improve street lighting, further reduce the numbers killed, seriously or slightly injured in road traffic collisions; and increase the percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.

## Safer and stronger communities

- 108 The Council plays a significant role in improving community cohesion and reducing crime. Partners value the leadership the Council has brought to community safety, reducing anti-social behaviour and its support to a wide range of initiatives. There is effective information sharing which has led to crime reduction and dealing with issues early. The Council is delivering its corporate objective to *'improve the safety and feel of Peterborough'*.
- 109 The Council works well with partners to reduce crime and is achieving its challenging targets for this priority, such as reducing crime by 15 per cent by 2007/08. The number of crimes is high, but reducing. There were 3,778 fewer victims of crime with a 13.1 per cent reduction in overall crime in 2005/06, compared to a 4.5 per cent reduction the year before (according to police statistics). The biggest reduction was in violent crime; vehicle crime, robbery, rape, arson and criminal damage also reduced.
- 110 The Council has a number of effective partnerships, which has led to effective community safety initiatives. The Arson Action Group has made progress in reducing vehicle fires (and abandoned vehicles) by joint initiatives between the fire service, police and environmental services to remove cars from the streets. As a result, vehicle fires have reduced from 32 per month to as low as seven in target areas.
- 111 Peterborough's approach to emergency planning is good. Peterborough works closely with Cambridgeshire County Council and other partner agencies to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act. It has a strong internal team in place that is well resourced. The Council's strategy has been tested effectively through real situations such as the need to set up rest centres.
- 112 The Council is proactively addressing anti-social behaviour using ASBOs and support work. The Council is working closely with both the police and registered social landlords and has an effective anti-social behaviour team using both enforcement measures and proactive initiatives to stop the behaviour. The team has a dedicated family officer who works effectively with individuals and families.
- 113 The Council has had success in reducing the high fear of crime. Central Park is a large park in the older part of the city and has been part of the city's amenities for many years. Over recent years, crime and anti-social behaviour reduced the public's confidence in using this park and usage had fallen. A range of successful measures was implemented, such as CCTV being installed and street lighting improved. As a result annual surveys demonstrate that fear of crime of users of the park has reduced. It has also contributed to community safety such as introducing vandal proof bus shelters, rapid removal of abandoned vehicles and working with probation teams repairing vandalised walls.

- 114** The Council has a clear policy of tackling the significant number of drug abusers to decrease drug dependency and crimes known to fund drug use. There is joint working with the GPPCP, which includes a new Drug and Alcohol Service for young people. It has prioritised increasing the numbers of drug users being placed into treatment from 407 to 700, and expanded the drug intervention programme. This has also contributed to the reduction in burglary.
- 115** The Council successfully uses preventative work to reduce crime. The Peterborough Evening Partnership is delivering cross service working, resulting in better service delivery such as reducing under age drinking. There are several projects under the 'Unity' banner which work to create peer leaders among young people at risk of offending, and improve understanding between different races and cultures. Opportunity to reinforce progress made is, however, limited due to insufficient feedback on action on shared pledges.
- 116** The numbers killed and seriously injured on the roads are reducing albeit from a high base. The local performance service agreement (LPSA) stretch target was successfully achieved. Partnership working with the police has included both safety cameras, and more recently a return to higher profile policing. There is close working with schools to promote road safety. A well-regarded campaign has been run to improve driving behaviour amongst new residents, working with New Link, and involving leaflets in several languages with a strong graphic content.
- 117** The Council is making good progress on its challenging community cohesion issues. There have been some good local achievements with New Link and the Sakoon project, which is providing support to parents and children from black and ethnic communities. The Council is now more effectively co-ordinating these. A cohesion strategy and cohesion board are in place, with clear roles, remits and split of responsibilities. A cohesion manager has also recently been appointed to work with partners and co-ordinate the delivery of the cohesion strategy.

## Healthier communities

- 118** The Council works well in partnership to improve health and reduce health inequalities. There is good partnership working in health with shared accommodation with the Council and GPPCP, joint management teams and integrated plans. The Council has effectively transferred the management of the adult social care service to the GPPCP; consequently, the public is benefiting from integrated delivery. The Council is delivering against some of its health priorities and targets, however teenage pregnancy rates remains high and life expectancy in Peterborough remains comparably poor. The Council works across services to address health issues; however, councillor engagement with the strategic public health agenda is not yet fully developed.

- 119 The Council is effectively ensuring developers and planning developments are meeting local health needs. This is reflected in the corporate plan objective: '*as we plan how our city will grow we provide for the health needs of our population.*' The Alma Road development has responded to health needs in the community. In response to health scrutiny, the development includes flats for older people and sufferers of dementia. The complex is also based around a new health centre. The Greater Dogsthorpe partnership is seeking to provide a longer-term solution to health issues in the area by developing John Mansfield School as an integrated service centre. Plans are in place for GPPCP to co-locate three GP practices, treatment rooms, and physiotherapy services, a team of district nurses and adult social care staff, and potentially dentistry and pharmacy services. This should have a major impact on the availability and quality of primary health care provision in the neighbourhood.
- 120 The Council has clearly identified health as a priority, recognising that in Peterborough people's life expectancy is below average. The community strategy identifies '*helping the people of Peterborough to live longer, healthier lives.*' Targets in the LAA and corporate plan support the delivery of this priority. A number of initiatives have been established in support of delivery such as The Healthy Living Partnership, which has resulted in thirty women in Peterborough receiving training to run sports and exercise classes in their local communities. As a result local participation in physical activity increased, particularly among women from ethnic minority communities who had previously struggled to find culturally sensitive forms of exercise.
- 121 The Council is taking effective action to increase participation in sport and exercise in order to reduce adult and child obesity, a target identified in the corporate and community strategies. The New Start Exercise Referral Scheme has been an effective partnership between the GPPCP and the Council. The scheme includes 26 out of 33 GP surgeries with approximately ten new referrals a month and 80 per cent of participants completing the 12-session course and 60 per cent of participants continuing some form of adherence after the scheme ends. The Walking for Health initiative has been successful with over 1,000 people on database as having done at least one walk and over 100 who regularly walk. Specific health gains reported from surveys include 58 per cent feeling fitter and 20 per cent having long-term weight loss.
- 122 The Council's performance on addressing health for vulnerable groups is good, which supports the Council's targets for '*providing health needs of all our population.*' For example, the Council has a target for stopping the year on year rise of obesity in children; as a result, it has developed projects such as 'Phat to be fit'. This has resulted in weight loss in children who took part and improved self-esteem. It is also raising diabetes awareness of young people. This work won the 2004 Health Service Journal Award for Reducing Health Inequalities. The health of most looked after children is good. A health forum for looked after children actively encourages them to have regular health checks. Other notable initiatives include the Age Concern led home check service, which has enabled quicker assessment and provision of minor equipment and adaptations for people at risk of injury or fall; and the older people readers group who seek to ensure GPPCP strategies, publications and leaflets are readable.

- 123** The Council is taking effective action to address the health needs of diverse groups. For example, it is taking a proactive role in assisting people arriving in Peterborough from other countries such as migrant workers and asylum seekers. The Council has established a centre that gives people new to the city details of medical care and support advice. This is assisting community cohesion and integration of vulnerable members of society. It is also addressing the recognised health needs of some migrant workers.
- 124** The Council is working well with the GPPCP to improve the health of older people, in support of its priority target '*help older people remain fit and healthy for longer*'. The Council has improved extra-care sheltered housing, such as for older people with dementia, is making more use of assistive technology and has introduced handyperson schemes. The Council with the GPPCP has reconfigured a primary care-run centre to offer a dedicated setting for older people with mental health needs. The Council has also focused on reducing the number of emergency hospital admissions of older people by improving adaptations and reducing falls.
- 125** Traffic accidents remain high although the Council is investing in initiatives to improve performance. The road safety team includes a school travel plan co-ordinator who works in conjunction with the engineering team to deliver the safer journeys to school programme that focuses on children's journeys to and from school.
- 126** The Council has identified areas of health management that need greater focus. These include further actions to reduce high rates of teenage pregnancy and improve sexual health. The Council is now launching new initiatives such as 'Sex in the City' with CCard (free condoms with health check), CASH (sexual health assessments) and Chlamydia screening.
- 127** Councillors are not sufficiently involved in the management of the public health agenda. The Council uses the Director of Public Health's report to shape health projects, corporate priorities and inform needs but undertakes no overall monitoring of impact on the Annual Public Health Report. The Director of Public Health does, when requested, go to health scrutiny meetings but these tend to look at specific needs rather than the wider perspective of health.

## Older people

- 128** Services for older people are improving. The Council and its partners are addressing the corporate priorities to help older people remain fit and healthy for longer; and to promote independence by providing an improving and better range of choices to allow them to continue to live in their own homes as they become frailer. Innovative projects are delivering improvements. The Age Concern service which provides equipment to people, who would otherwise have been referred to the occupational therapy service, has resulted in shorter waiting times for equipment provision, reduced falls and recurring falls and fewer hospital admissions. The Council recognises there are many ongoing challenges such as helping more over 65s to live at home, and engaging with older people, their carers and service providers. Services need to fully reflect the needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities meet needs, and provide a well signposted, comprehensive and co-ordinated range of locality based services.
- 129** Older people are benefiting from service integration. Integration is in transition but improvements are recognisable. Older people now benefit from single and timelier assessments, with performance in some areas such as falls, emergency admissions to hospitals, delivery of minor equipment adaptations and occupational therapist wait times significantly improving. Adult social care now serves most people well (two stars) and has promising prospects for improvement.
- 130** However, the general trend of improvement masks a mixed set of older people related performance indicators. For example, while intensive home care has improved and met target the numbers of older people helped to live at home declined during 2005/06 and remains comparably low. The ratio of older people from BME communities taking up services following an assessment, whilst improving, has been low; signposting of services is inadequate and there is a lack of effective engagement with partners to address this significant shortfall. Single rooms in care settings are scarce. The wait for major adaptations remains long. Services for carers also suffer from limited provision, low levels of assessments and uptake of service after an assessment. Costs for home care are rising (and are now more than residential care) and recruitment of home care staff remains problematic.

- 131** The Council's approach to older people is based on a strong health, social care and housing focus that is reflected in the older people's block of the LAA. Recent improvements to help people live at home include, establishing an assistive technology show house, and the hospital at home scheme. The Council and its partners are developing older people's outcomes and accommodation strategies. This work addresses national and local studies of what older people need, and with some effective engagement of older people, has helped shape a vision that touches on many dimensions of independence. These strategies also complement actions underway to address weaknesses highlighted in the Supporting People inspection report (2005, 'fair' with uncertain prospects for improvement). This includes action to improve extra-care sheltered housing, the need for more use of assistive technology, handyperson schemes and better take up of housing related support services by BME older people.
- 132** GPPCP is beginning to tackle recognised weaknesses in mental health care for older people, through a strategy (subject to funding) expanding access to community support services. The Health and Social Care Advisory Service is independently reviewing the GPPCP's intermediate care service and that provided by the Mental Health Trust. The partnership has recently reconfigured a primary care-run centre to offer a dedicated setting for older people with mental health needs. It is also seeking funding to explore the mental health needs of minority elders.
- 133** The Council and its partners provide a wide array of services to help older people remain independent and keep fit and healthy for longer. For example, Age Concern provides advice for home support workers and befriending schemes. Its Peace of Mind scheme, that is part funded by the Council, offers energy efficiency and home safety advice. Many Council services successfully consider the needs and wishes of older people to shape services, examples include, the dial a ride scheme, housebound library service, fitness classes and benefit take up work. Nevertheless, this is not consistent across the business planning process and therefore does not result in all services reflecting the full role they could play in the emerging Older People's Outcomes Strategy.
- 134** The Council uses a diverse and improving selection of methods and frameworks to consult with older people. Older people organisations feel listened to and some felt they have helped shape service design and delivery, such as transport and the older people's accommodation strategy. Nevertheless, there is still a widely held view, particularly in the community and voluntary sector, that local people's ability to influence local decision-making is weak. Some groups felt that they were not given the opportunity to initiate service developments. Whilst they felt listened to during consultation exercises, they either felt that this was late in the process or did not significantly change the formulation of plans and therefore the level of impact of their involvement was not maximised. Engagement of people with a learning disability, BME communities and isolated older people, while improving is underdeveloped and is insufficiently shaping service planning and commissioning.

- 135 The Council and its partners have launched several successful preventive services that have improved the quality of life of older people. The community falls team reduced emergency admissions and trips to accident and emergency, and the Later Life Benefits gained £20 in income for older people for every £1 spent. The Home from Home scheme enables BME communities to benefit from volunteer hosts providing day support for groups of people with common interests.
- 136 Older people lack a comprehensive database of well signposted services that are shaped by detailed understanding of locality based need. Some service providers were not aware of the range of differing services available for older people or able to identify clear signposting to these services. However, good progress is being made to address this. For example work has begun on identifying the needs of geographic communities through the public health team and a GIS database is planned for purchase during the current financial year. Visioning work by the Council, supported Greater Dogsthorpe Neighbourhood Management Initiative provides a solid foundation on which to shape services around the needs of a specific locality.

## Children and young people

- 137 The council is performing adequately overall. Clear political commitment to improving educational attainment, effective partnerships and an increasing range of good multi-agency work result in adequate outcomes for most children and young people. However, the safety of all children and young people is inadequate and provision to support vulnerable groups, particularly children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inconsistent. The youth offending service is adequate overall but inadequate for management.
- 138 The Council identified raising educational attainment as its most pressing priority and has concentrated most of its effort on this with good effect. It acknowledges that insufficient priority was afforded to maintaining robust safeguarding arrangements and is taking action to remedy this at corporate and departmental levels. Recent achievements of improving education outcomes and partnership working provide a sound basis for improving safeguarding arrangements.

- 139** Strategic, corporate and community plans put children and young people at the centre of the city's growth agenda. Ambitions are adequate but are not consistently articulated for the health and safety of children and young people. Priorities in the 2006-2009 Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) are comprehensive and reflect the Every Child Matters agenda. Structures to support effective delivery of the plan are in place. A Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) has strong and integrated strategic leadership and appropriate representation from public and voluntary agencies. Management of services for children and young people is adequate and improving. Financial management and the delivery of value for money are adequate. However, systems to further improve value for money are not yet fully embedded. Performance management is adequate. Senior officers and elected members are committed to improving services, but the knowledge of some elected members is insufficient, and the corporate parenting function is under developed, particularly in its scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements.
- 140** The combined work of all local services to secure the health of children and young people is adequate. A good range of multi-agency services support most children and young people well. However, outcomes for some vulnerable groups are less satisfactory, with high levels of teenage pregnancies, substance misuse and low levels of breastfeeding. Mental health services for children and young people are inadequate overall.
- 141** The combined work of all local services to keep children and young people safe is inadequate. Although arrangements for responding to new referrals and to immediate children protection concerns are now robust, safeguarding arrangements for all children and young people are less secure. The reporting and investigating of child concerns is often delayed and the quality of assessment and care management is inconsistent. Increasing provision of family support services is beginning to impact positively on the high numbers of looked after children and to increase support to vulnerable children. Looked after children receive good quality care in safe placements, but local placements are insufficient. Children and young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to good services. However, those with moderate levels of disability and/or learning difficulty have limited choice and support.
- 142** The combined work of all local services to help children and young people enjoy their education and recreation and achieve well is good. The council contributes well to a good integrated strategy for childcare and early years' education. Joint working with schools has improved. Education attainment levels are improving rapidly and are within striking distance of national averages at most levels. Behaviour in schools is generally good. Levels of permanent exclusions are low. However, not all excluded pupils receive sufficient full-time education. The council promotes inclusive practice, but services are insufficient to ensure that the needs of more vulnerable groups are met consistently.

- 143 The combined work of all local services to help children and young people contribute to society is adequate. Some good innovative opportunities are developing to enable children and young people to take part in making decisions about local services. However, these are often initiated by young people themselves rather than through proactive engagement by agencies. Activities to reduce anti-social behaviour by young people and youth crime have yet to be effectively co-ordinated or achieve consistent results. Children and young people from vulnerable groups are insufficiently involved in all elements of consultation.
- 144 The combined work of all local services to help children and young people achieve economic well-being is adequate. The council's strategy for growth and regeneration has a strong emphasis on raising aspirations and increasing employable skills of young people. The council has been successful in engaging with a wide range of partners to plan and develop a coherent 14-19 strategy. However, the proportion of young people continuing in education and training beyond the age of 16 is too low. Arrangements for helping young people to leave care are insufficient. Provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good for those with severe needs, but less well established for those with moderate levels of need.

## Appendix 1 - Framework for Corporate Assessment

- 1 This corporate assessment was carried out under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, under which the Audit Commission has power to inspect local authorities' arrangements for securing continuous improvement. The results of the corporate assessment contribute to the determination of the overall CPA category for an authority, which the Audit Commission is required to assess and report on under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2 The Council's self-assessment provided a key resource in focusing the assessment activity which included consideration of:
  - key documentation, including the Council's improvement plan;
  - updated performance indicators and performance data; and
  - interviews and meetings attended.
- 3 The assessment for Peterborough City Council was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from March to October 2006.
- 4 This report has been discussed with the Council, which has been given the opportunity to examine the Audit Commission's assessment. This report will be used as the basis for improvement planning by the Council.