

CPA 2005 – the new approach

Single tier and county council and district council
comprehensive performance assessment from 2005

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1. Background – comprehensive performance assessment

- 1 We published our proposals for the future of comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) from 2005 for both single tier and county councils, and for district councils, in January 2004.^I This built upon the earlier consultation on the future of CPA at the beginning of April 2003,^{II} and the follow-up statement in June 2003.^{III}
- 2 The purpose of the *CPA 2005 – the Way Ahead* consultation document was to set out our proposals for meeting the objectives as set out in the Commission's (at that time draft) *Strategic Plan*, and in previous CPA documents. It did so in terms of setting out the proposed 'architecture' for CPA – in other words, the main components of the assessment framework and the way in which those components would be brought together to arrive at a categorisation.
- 3 This document outlines the main responses to the consultation and sets out the Commission's way ahead on CPA from 2005 in light of those responses. In setting out our intended approach we aim to retain some flexibility so as to implement learning from the piloting of the revised corporate assessment and other development work around the service blocks and the 'Use of resources' judgement.
- 4 These areas will be subject to further specific consultation later this year looking at the content and scoring of the corporate assessment (CA) and the service assessments (including the 'Use of resources' judgement). We have deliberately adopted this staged development process for CPA so as to maximise opportunities for detailed consultation, and to allow time for full consideration of the options available.
- 5 For example, the consultation on the details of the revised CA will build, at least in part, on the piloting that will take place during June and July, while the consultation on the detail of the service assessments will build on the revised CA so as to minimise the potential for inadvertent overlap and duplication.
- 6 This document, and later consultation documents, have also been deliberately timed to coincide with the development of proposals for the integrated inspection of services for children and young people, and in particular the development of annual assessments and Joint Area Reviews of these. It is important that these two major regulatory developments, revisions to CPA and the Children and Young People agenda, are fully co-ordinated and reflective of one another to ensure coherence and help reduce the assessment burden upon local government and related agencies. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) are leading on the proposals in this area and readers are referred to their recently launched discussion document^{IV} for further details.

^I *CPA 2005 – the Way Ahead*, Audit Commission, January 2004.

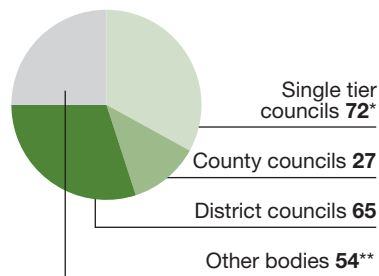
^{II} *CPA – the Next Steps*, Audit Commission, April 2003.

^{III} *CPA – the Way Forward*, Audit Commission, June 2003.

^{IV} *Inspecting services for children and young people – A discussion paper*, Ofsted, May 2004.

Exhibit 1**Responses to the CPA 2005 – the Way Ahead consultation**

Over 200 responses were received.

**Notes:**

*Metropolitan district councils = 27; unitary authorities = 20; London borough councils = 25.

**Local government networks, central government departments and offices, other stakeholders, for example, firms, agencies and interest groups, and some individuals.

Source: Audit Commission

2. Analysis of responses

- 7 The Commission received in excess of 200 responses to the consultation, made up as follows (**Exhibit 1**).
- 8 The headline message from the consultation exercise is that the responses show an overwhelming support for the proposals as set out in the consultation document. For example, respondents agreed by a factor of ten to one that the ‘Strategic Regulation’ architecture was the right option to go forward with.
- 9 Despite the overwhelming support, understandably a number of responses suggested that their unequivocal support depended on seeing the detailed proposals around, for example, the service components. As indicated above, the Commission will be working hard, alongside colleagues from other inspectorates, to engage local government and its stakeholders in further consultation on the detail of the proposals as development progresses.
- 10 The following sections deal in more detail with the responses to the consultation and make clear, in light of those consultation responses, the Commission’s intended approach.

3. The architecture of CPA from 2005

- 11 The majority support for the direction of CPA from 2005 that the consultation document proposed is reflected most clearly in the ‘Strategic Regulation’ architecture (**Exhibit 2**). Overall, the strategic regulation approach is supported by the majority of respondents because it is regarded as:
 - pragmatic, providing continuity with CPA 2002;
 - user focused;
 - reflective of local priorities, partnership working and councils’ community leadership role;
 - flexible enough to accommodate local government restructuring; and
 - aligned with the Commission’s *Strategic Plan*¹ and the principles of Strategic Regulation.

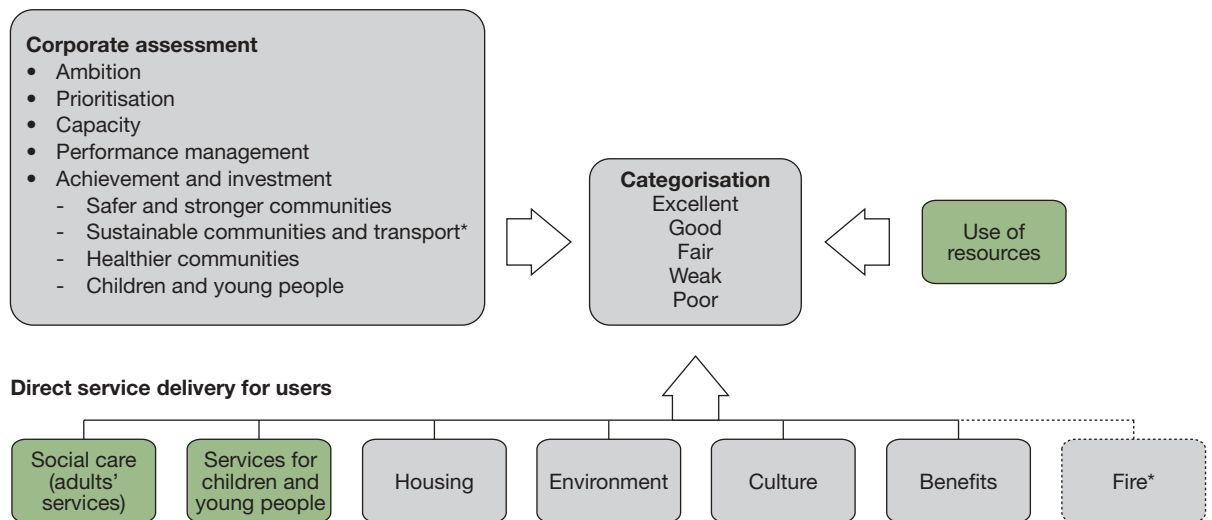
¹ *Strategic Plan 2004-07 – Minimising Bureaucracy, Maximising Impact on Public Services*, Audit Commission, April 2004.

Exhibit 2

Strategic Regulation approach

Respondees agreed by a factor of ten to one that the Strategic Regulation architecture was the right option to go forward with.

Focus on citizens and community leadership



* For those counties with fire services responsibilities.

■ These are level 1 services (see Table 1, page 8).

Source: Audit Commission

- 12 A relatively small number of responses indicated that a faster move towards a 'shared-priority only' model would be preferred on the grounds that this might assist the move to a more 'strategic' use of inspection resources; while some other responses argued that the apparent dilution of the strong element of service delivery in the 2002 approach was equally the wrong direction to take as local service delivery was of 'vital importance', and more closely aligned to public perceptions of councils.
- 13 Overall, given the strong and positive consultation response, the Commission will be proceeding with the Strategic Regulation 'architecture' as proposed.
- 14 There were a significant number of responses which commented on the balance between local and national priorities, especially in relation to the shared priorities as articulated in the consultation document. The Commission is aiming to adopt an approach whereby the shared priorities are treated as 'domains' within which local authorities will be asked to set out what are and what are not local priorities. In this way, our approach will be focused upon issues which are important locally and

councils will not be penalised for not attempting to excel at everything – indeed our experience of CPA shows us that excellence is achieved through being as clear about what are not priorities locally (and why) as what are.

- 15 A smaller number of responses discussed the ‘conceptual split’ between ‘strategic’ issues and ‘service’ delivery. Some suggested that this was not possible, or not desirable even if possible, partly because of the need to link service delivery to strategic planning, but also to avoid the potential for duplication of coverage and double counting, especially in the areas of transport and the Children and Young People agenda.
- 16 The Commission has recognised these issues and will proceed carefully on the development of both the shared priority assessments and the service blocks so as to minimise the potential for inadvertent overlap of assessments. Even so, given that the service judgements are delivered annually, while the CAs are delivered on a less frequent basis under the proposal for a rolling programme, the Commission believes that the potential for overlap and duplication should not be overstated.
- 17 Some responses commented upon missing issues or services, for example neighbourhood renewal, trading standards and sustainability issues. The Commission is confident that these areas will be picked up within the shared priority assessments where they are important in meeting the needs of local people.

4. The corporate assessment

- 18 In line with the general support for the Strategic Regulation architecture, there was strong support in the consultation responses for the idea that the CA should be used to deliver judgements of local achievement in light of the local community strategy, looking at how well authorities are responding to the needs of their local communities. However, many responses correctly pointed out that the Community Strategy is not the strategy of the council but of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 19 However, there were a number of practical concerns voiced in respect of the difficulty of making such assessment – for example, in two-tier areas, across partnerships, and measuring impact or achievement on issues which only show change over long periods of time, for example, air quality and life expectancy.
- 20 The Commission is committed to building assessments at least in part around local needs and priorities, and where these are well articulated through the community strategy this will form an important evidence base for understanding what the authority, along with its partners, is trying to achieve and why.

- 21 We also consulted on views in relation to the rationalisation of the current set of themes¹ contained within the corporate assessment. There were many responses to this issue, and in the light of these we will be deleting as separate, scored themes:
- ‘Focus’, the ‘key lines of enquiry’ (KLOEs) for which will be picked up in ‘Prioritisation’ and ‘Performance management’;
 - ‘Learning’, the KLOEs for which would be picked up mainly in ‘Performance management’; and
 - ‘Future plans’, the KLOEs for which would be picked up mainly in ‘Ambition’.
- 22 A major feature of the CA will be the measurement of progress on meeting local community needs within the shared priority ‘domains’. This will be separated into ‘Achievement’, where there is evidence that the activity of the authority and its partners has demonstrably improved the quality of life for local people; and into ‘Investment’ where work is in progress but has not yet delivered such real and measurable improvements.
- 23 A number of responses also raised the issue of the distinction between the ‘Capacity’ theme and the assessment of ‘Use of resources’. The revised ‘Capacity’ theme will focus on the extent to which the authority has maximised its capacity to deliver on its ambitions and priorities, including financial resources, human resources, information and communications technology and contributions through partnership working. Overall, this judgement will reflect the way in which the authority has maximised its impact, not least through developing innovative approaches to augmenting its capacity to deliver still further. This judgement will be delivered whenever a CA takes place.
- 24 In contrast, the revised ‘Use of resources’ judgement will mainly focus on financial management and value for money issues, and will be delivered as part of the annual audit of accounts. Updates on the other aspects of ‘Capacity’, for example around human resources, will take place through the implementation of an annual ‘Direction of travel’ judgement.
- 25 In terms of possible additional new themes, there was strong support for ‘Partnership working’ to be assessed, but not necessarily as a separate, scored theme. We will therefore incorporate the assessment of partnership working as a stronger section within the ‘Capacity’ judgement.
- 26 There was also strong support for ‘Diversity’ (with an emphasis on social inclusion and community cohesion) and ‘User focus’ to be more thoroughly assessed within the CPA arrangements. Many respondents suggested that such issues should be ‘mainstreamed’ across the themes and throughout the KLOEs rather than stand alone as scored themes in their own right.
- 27 However, the Commission’s view is that such an approach runs the risk that diversity and user focus issues are ‘everywhere but nowhere’ and are never drawn together to provide an holistic picture of the authority’s success in this area. Inserting an identifiable, and potentially scored, joint ‘Diversity and user focus’ theme would send a strong signal to local government of the importance the Commission attaches to this agenda, in line with our *Strategic Plan*.

¹ Ambition, Prioritisation, Focus, Capacity, Performance management, Achievement, Investment, Learning and Future plans.

- 28 We will be piloting the introduction of such a theme in some of the summer pathfinder work¹ and will review this approach in time to establish a position for inclusion in the consultation paper on the CA theme scoring and weighting due out later this year.
- 29 The Commission is in discussions with other inspectorates, through the auspices of the Local Services Inspectorate Forum, regarding moving towards a common 'language' for corporate themes. Given these discussions, any decisions on the rationalisation of existing, or addition of new, themes will be subject to the wider interest of the 'joining up' of inspectorates, which must start from the use of a common language and conception of what drives improvement.
- 30 In terms of undertaking the CAs, there was again overwhelming support for the proposed way forward as a means of ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of the CAs and the way in which they can add value to the effective working of the authority.
- 31 There was also strong feedback in favour of moving away from the subsidised 'Peer challenge' approach in district council CPA, with a preference for having peers (both member and officer) directly involved on the CA teams as per the approach to single tier and county councils. The Commission will therefore no longer be supporting subsidised Peer challenge and we will reshape the district council CPA process to have peer involvement directly in the teams. We continue, however, to support the principle of Peer review as a tool which can be of great value in driving improvement in local authority services and their other activities.

5. Revisions to the service assessments

- 32 The proposals in terms of the future direction of the service assessments were again strongly supported in principle, and for CPA to recognise innovation in service delivery, although this support was often and understandably subject to seeing the detailed consultations on the service blocks due out later in the year. There was a strong desire to see coherence and shared approaches to the service blocks across inspectorates.
- 33 There were a number of concerns that came through in the responses, for example regarding potential overlap between the service assessments and the shared priority assessments, detail around how value for money would be assessed, and particular concern that service block score changes should not be determined by changes in performance on single performance indicators, especially within the Environment block. These concerns have been recognised by the Commission, and we will take full account of them in developing our proposals for consultation later in the year.

¹ See section 11 for further details on the pathfinders.

- 34 In particular, we will be examining the way in which the service blocks for which the Commission has responsibility are assessed, and the data upon which they are built. In developing our proposals for consultation we will look towards the use of non-BVPI data as a means of introducing further stability, and the possibility of introducing sub-rules within one or more of the blocks to eliminate the arguments for further ‘Levels’ within the CPA architecture.

6. Revisions to the Use of resources assessment

- 35 Once more, the majority of respondents agreed with our proposals in respect of the Use of resources block. Value for money was recognized by respondents as being of fundamental importance to a rounded judgement of the effectiveness of councils, especially in light of current debates regarding council tax increases. There was also strong support for the block to remain annually delivered through the work of the local auditor, and therefore linked to the revisions to the *Code of Audit Practice*¹.
- 36 There was a specific concern raised regarding the relationship between the Use of resources judgement and the ‘Capacity’ theme within the CA, which we have already dealt with in paragraphs 23 and 24 of this report.
- 37 A further issue raised by respondees was the availability of ‘sound’ data to support the judgement. The Commission is intending to assess value for money using a range of evidence including, but not limited to, financial data. We will use existing sources of information, most likely to be government returns (RO/RA forms) and CIPFA data, to identify areas for further investigation and to prompt questions, rather than to provide direct answers.
- 38 We are, however, aware that some of this data is not necessarily complete or fully consistent. All these issues will be addressed in more detail in the ‘Use of resources’ consultation document scheduled for publication in November 2004.

¹ *Revising the Audit Commission’s Code of Audit Practice – issues for stakeholders*, Audit Commission, February 2004.

7. Bringing the judgements together

39 We consulted on proposals to move away from the current, mostly mathematical assessment framework towards a system built around rules. The majority of respondents believed that the rule-based approach outlined in the consultation document (**Table 1**) was preferable because it was seen as:

- a more transparent method of showing how the elements of assessment link together to provide the final category;
- reducing the possibility of skewing results;
- removing perverse incentives and incentivising authorities to improve the poorest performing services;
- requiring authorities to provide a consistent level of service across the board; and
- allowing future flexibility.

Table 1
The preferred ‘deterministic’ rule-driven model

Corporate Assessment	Level 1 services*	Level 2 services**	Category
4	All more than 2	All more than 1	Excellent
4	All more than 1	No more than one as low as 1	Good
4	Any other combination		Fair
3	All more than 2	All more than 2	Excellent
3	All more than 1	All more than 1	Good
3	All more than 1	No more than one as low as 1	Fair
3	Any other combination		Weak
2	All more than 2	All more than 1	Good
2	All more than 1	All more than 1	Fair
2	All more than 1	No more than one as low as 1	Weak
2	Any other combination		Poor
1	All more than 2	All more than 1	Fair
1	All more than 1	All more than 1	Weak
1	Any other combination		Poor

Note: * Social care (adults’ services), children and young people, use of resources ‘service’ assessments. One or more of the shared priority judgements may also be candidates for inclusion here.

** Housing, environment, benefits, culture, fire (for counties with fire responsibilities).

■ See Exhibit 2, page 3.

Source: Audit Commission

- 40 Legitimately, some responses pointed out that this approach does not of itself take away the complexity of scoring within the service blocks themselves. Again, this particular issue will be taken full account of in developing our proposals for consultation in the service blocks later in the year.
- 41 We also consulted in particular on whether we should adopt a ‘deterministic’ rules model, whereby the categorisation is wholly determined by the rules structure, or a ‘discretionary’ rules structure, in which the Commission allows itself some constrained choice over the final categorisation of an authority.
- 42 The majority of responses preferred the concept of a deterministic set of rules. This was regarded as a more robust and transparent approach that would avoid potential inconsistency in judgements. The idea of using discretionary rules was seen as lacking transparency, open to question and leading to more volatility in their application, thus lending themselves to inequality and inconsistency.
- 43 The minority which preferred an element of discretion applied to a category produced by a deterministic set of rules were generally arguing this because it could be used to eliminate the phenomenon of re-categorisation on the basis of a single performance indicator. However, the Commission believes that this issue is best addressed through revisions to the way in which the service judgements are arrived at rather than through a discretionary approach to the way in which the judgements are brought together.

8. A rolling programme of corporate assessments

- 44 The consultation included proposals for a rolling programme of CAs. The majority of respondents agreed with these proposals, considering it to be risk-based and proportionate, fitting well within the Strategic Regulation approach, relieving the burden of inspection on most councils, and allowing the Commission to spread its resources more evenly. The alternatives, of either annual updating, or absolute flexibility in timing, such that councils may request a CA when they want one, are not considered to be viable options.
- 45 The Commission also recognises, as some respondees suggested, that this approach would result in two generations of CA judgements existing simultaneously within the same scoring system. This is an inevitable consequence of building a rolling programme which reduces the burden of inspection on local government. On balance, the Commission believes that this is preferred to an approach which attempted to undertake CAs in all councils in any given year, especially in light of the need to respect the inspection holiday for councils categorized as ‘Excellent’.

- 46 Moreover, the Commission wishes to emphasise that a rolling programme approach to the undertaking of CAs will still retain sufficient flexibility for the recognition of progress, and in some cases recategorisation of councils, outside of any pre-set sequence, including:
- (i) the retention of the service blocks, which are rescored on an annual basis, allowing ample opportunity for recategorisation in the years when a CA does not take place;
 - (ii) the carrying out of 'proportionate' CAs for authorities eligible to move into 'Excellent' status where a full CA was not carried out in the same year;
 - (iii) in the case of 'engaged' authorities, ie, those that are 'poor' or 'weak' and which have an ODPM Lead Official, the timing of their CA (and in the case where a new CA does not result in recategorisation, the need for further CAs) will be entirely flexible, to be determined through agreement with their Monitoring Board;
 - (iv) in the case of authorities causing concern, the Commission retains the right to undertake 'ad hoc' CAs where there are clear signs of performance regression or organisational and financial failure; and
 - (v) the development of the 'Direction of travel' judgement will, on an annual basis, recognise improvement (or regression) where it has taken place.
- 47 Given the positive reaction to our consultation, we remain committed to the principle of a risk-based rolling programme of the revised CA. However, it has become clear that there needs to be strong co-ordination between the timing of the undertaking of the revised CA and the undertaking of Joint Area Reviews (JARs) under the Children and Young People agenda. This is to:
- secure best impact and minimum burden and disruption to councils' work;
 - reflect the immediate needs for inspection; and
 - ensure the best use of inspection resources.
- 48 We therefore intend to review our original sequencing proposals pending the outcome of current discussions which Ofsted is leading as part of the JAR development.¹ Four options have been put forward for discussion, as set out in Appendix I. The precise nature of the sequence of revised CAs will be determined in light of responses to this question.
- 49 Respondees to the consultation asked for further clarity on two items. Firstly, when the CAs undertaken during the year would be published. We are proposing that these assessments will be published when they have been completed during the year, but that recategorisation, if applicable, only takes place at the end of the year once all the service scores and Use of resources judgement become available.

¹ *Inspecting services for children and young people – A discussion paper*, OFSTED, May 2004.

- 50 Secondly, there were requests for further details regarding our proposals for councils affected by (and created by) the arrangements following a ‘Yes’ vote in a referendum to establish an elected regional assembly. We are currently working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the other inspectorates to agree appropriate arrangements for CPA in such circumstances, in the light of respective statutory duties.
- 51 These arrangements will consider the benefits of undertaking inspections and/or reporting CPA categories both prior to and following the establishment of new bodies. Similarly, the arrangements will consider the benefits of undertaking inspections and/or reporting CPA categories, where the changes in responsibility and/or boundaries of existing bodies have been substantial. Final details will be published in due course.

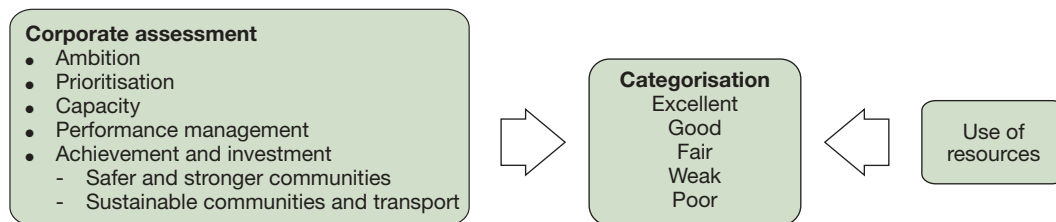
9. Proposals for district councils

- 52 The consultation document described our proposals for the short-term approach to re-categorisation for district councils (DCs). Development of this approach is proceeding and will be the subject of further consultation by the Commission.
- 53 The focus of the proposals in the consultation document was around the longer term approach to DCs, in which we argued for the alignment of DC CPA with that for single tier and especially county councils (**Exhibit 3, overleaf**). The majority of respondents agreed that the arguments for this alignment were persuasive as:
- it was in line with the overall approach of judging partnership working and achievement of outcomes for citizens flowing from the Community Strategy;
 - it would reduce duplication, administration, and rationalise inspections and therefore would be far more cost-effective;
 - alignment recognises the need for co-ordination and joint working in two-tier areas; and
 - it was a logical move to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision, and the area focus was an important step towards providing the public with a ‘co-ordinated face’ to front-line services.

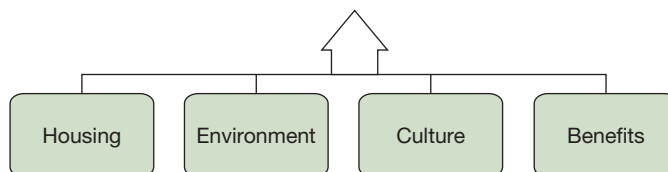
Exhibit 3 District council CPA from 2007

This approach to district council CPA will align it with the arrangements for single tier and county councils.

Focus on citizens and community leadership



Direct service delivery for users



Source: Audit Commission

54 In terms of the proposed assessment framework for DCs, again the majority of responses thought the approach a rational one, with the choice of the two shared priorities (Sustainable communities and Safer and stronger communities) being most appropriate for DCs.

55 This was not to say that DCs do not have a role around Healthier communities, and some respondees wished to have the contribution of DCs in delivering against this shared priority recognised within CPA. However, most accepted that if one assessment had to be dropped in the interests of proportionality for DCs then this was the right one to eliminate.

56 There were some particular issues raised which are worth clarifying. Firstly, some responses raised the issue of missing services, for example, regeneration activity. We are confident that the majority of any missing services can be picked up through delivery of judgements against the two included shared priorities. For example, regeneration activity, where it is a local priority, is assessed under the 'Promoting the economic vitality of local communities' section of the Sustainable communities 'domain'.

57 Secondly, there was a perception that the consultation was suggesting 'joint judgements' across counties and their districts, and some respondees were concerned that poor performance in one authority should not be reflected in the assessment of others. The Commission is clear that while we will be evaluating effective joint working, we are not suggesting 'joint' judgements, where the

performance of one authority is in any way contingent on the performance of another. We are instead proposing that judgements are made simultaneously, but in a way that can pick up the various separate contributions of authorities in an area towards services which require strong local co-ordination, such as waste collection and disposal and land use planning.

- 58 Lastly, some DCs, and counties, pointed out that it was not clear how the risk-based programming approach would be applied to DCs. To clarify, we will be building a forward programme for counties and DCs from 2007 which reflect insofar as possible, the principles of a rolling programme as previously described. However, the freedoms and flexibilities for 'Excellent' county councils preclude the undertaking of all inspections, including CAs, within the inspection holiday, except in exceptional circumstances. On the other hand, the freedoms and flexibilities for 'Excellent' district councils only relate to service inspections and exclude CAs.
- 59 These conditions together mean that we are limited in building the joint CA programme for county councils and their district councils from 2007 around the inspection holidays that are in place for 'Excellent' county councils at that time. However, this programme cannot be finalised until the outcome of the consultation on the desired relationship in timing between CAs and JARs is known (see paras 47 and 48). Further details on this will be developed and shared in due course.

10. Reporting performance

- 60 The Commission consulted upon the continuation of annual reporting, and the introduction of a 'Direction of travel' judgement. The majority of the responses agreed with the concept of reporting in December of each year. There was overwhelming agreement with the proposal for the introduction of a 'Direction of travel' judgement. This was seen as:
- important to users and councils;
 - giving an up-to-date perspective on council performance;
 - an incentive for councils (and their staff) to improve further; and
 - an encouragement to authorities that are close to re-categorisation.
- 61 In terms of the way this was to be arrived at, the majority of respondents saw it as joining up with the Qualitative Assessment of Continuous Improvement (QACI) and/or Annual Audit Letter. Although it would be informed by the calculation of a points increase (or decrease) over time, respondees generally did not want it to be arrived at entirely formulaically in this way.
- 62 We will, therefore, further enhance the QACI for December 2004 reporting, with a view towards the development of a methodology for a 'Direction of travel' judgement on this basis from December 2005.

11. Additional issues

Deprivation

- 63 The consultation document stated that we had commissioned research into the approaches taken to allow for deprivation and other local circumstances in service inspections, performance indicators, overall service scores, and CAs, and invited authorities that were interested in participating in this work to contact us.
- 64 A number of authorities did contact us and, alongside other authorities and other stakeholders already involved, work on this project has progressed well and is now nearing completion. The early results from the work are already informing the development and intended treatment of best value performance indicators, inspection methodologies and guidance for inspectors. A final report will be available in July.

Pathfinders for the revised corporate assessment

- 65 In light of our proposals to revise the CA, and to publish a more detailed consultation document specifically in respect of this important component of the CPA strategic regulation architecture, we will be piloting the new approach in nine voluntary pathfinder authorities during June and July.
- 66 The authorities involved are Bristol City Council, Calderdale Council, Essex County Council, London Borough of Greenwich, London Borough of Haringey, Manchester City Council, Salford City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Council and Thurrock Council.
- 67 Learning from the pilots will inform further consultation on the scoring of the revised CA later this year, especially in respect of the delivery of a 'Diversity and user focus' judgement.

12. Timetable

- 68 The timetable for the development of CPA from 2005 remains for the most part the same as that in the consultation document, with one exception (**Table 2**). We wish to learn as much as possible from the piloting of the revised CA, reporting for which will not be completed until September of this year. Moreover, consultation has made clear the need to tie further development of the CA to that of the service assessments (including the 'Use of resources' judgement). In light of these factors we have decided to delay full consultation on this element of the CPA architecture until later in the year, alongside the service assessments in November

Table 2
Timetable for CPA development

Activity	Timing
Pathfinder corporate assessments on site	June/July 2004
Deprivation report	July 2004
Pathfinder corporate assessments report	September 2004
Consultation on service assessment revisions (including Use of resources)	November 2004
Consultation on corporate assessment theme weightings and associated rules	November 2004
Self-assessments for those receiving corporate assessments early in 2005 sent out	November 2004 once indicative data for December categorisation is known
Final statements on approach to service assessments (including Use of resources)	February 2005
Final methodology revisions including corporate assessment theme weightings and rules complete and published	February 2005
Revised corporate assessments on site	From February 2005
Improvement reporting and recategorisation	December 2005

Source: Audit Commission

Appendix 1: Joint Area Review and corporate assessment sequencing options

In order to ensure clarity about the coverage of inspection activity and the expectations for local councils and communities, we intend to develop a coordinated three-year indicative programme for Corporate Assessments (CAs) and Joint Area Reviews (JARs). The programme will be subject to change, perhaps as a result of a critical event, which may give rise to the need for a CA or JAR to be conducted at short notice.

Option 1

The JAR followed after a six- to nine-month interval by the CA.

Some benefits

- Near contemporary judgements on both corporate governance and service outcomes and the potential for common team membership.
- CAs will be informed by a major and recent review on one of the four shared priority areas in the achievement section which will significantly contribute to reduction in the need to revisit these issues.

Option 2

The CA followed after a six- to nine-month interval by the JAR.

Some benefits

- Near contemporary judgements on corporate governance issues and the potential for common team membership.
- Less need to spend time during the JAR to consider issues of corporate framework, management and governance.

Option 3

The CA and JAR run concurrently.

Some benefits

- Contemporary and immediately complementary activity and judgement.
- Joint teams and a single visit for councils through the design of a concentrated inspection activity.
- Reduction in direct costs.

Option 4

The CA and JAR are timetabled to be as far apart as possible.

Some benefits

- Spreading of inspection activity.
- Enabling significant developments to be reflected in major reports more frequently.

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