

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

06 JANUARY 2010

ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To formally report the Audit Commission's Organisational Assessment of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that:-
- i. Cabinet consider the Audit Commission's report, in particular, the areas for improvement.
 - ii. Note that the areas identified will be built into the 2010/2013 Council Plan and 2010/11 Improvement Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Organisational Assessment is part of the new performance regime for local government, which came into force on the 01 April 2009. The overall framework is Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and replaces Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). CAA is more complex, involving new National Indicators, a statutory Place Survey, an area (non-organisation specific) assessment for Worcestershire and an Organisational Assessment, made up of Managing Performance and the Use of Resources. CAA places more emphasis on outcomes, rather than the previous focus on process and output measures. Good examples of outcomes might include: lower carbon emissions, improved resident satisfaction, improved health etc.
- 3.2 This report is the most positive report from the Audit Commission the Council has received. The Council is described as "performing adequately" overall i.e. 2 out of 4, which is really the same as being "Fair" under CPA; however, it is interesting to note that the County Council, Malvern and Wychavon councils have scored 3 out of 4 "performing well" and not 4 out of 4 "performing excellently".

3.3 There is much positive commentary in the report, but clearly we need to concentrate on the identified areas for improvement. Areas to note are:-

- That it is judged more difficult to regenerate the town centre because of the recession;
- Similarly plans to regenerate the Longbridge site are at a “temporary” standstill” because of the recession;
- That the Council needs to improve its understanding of its costs in order to deliver value for money; and
- That older people are a significant demographic factor for the District.

3.4 Actions are in place to respond to all of these points.

3.5 The report also highlighted that, in the Audit Commission’s opinion, the Council should have accounted for aspects of the spatial project differently. The Council does not accept this as we have accounted for it in the same way as others who have undertaken similar projects. We are currently in discussions with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on this issue.

3.6 The release of the report, although given positive coverage in the press, also raised the issue of the wording in the report around the Foyer Scheme. The Council has issued a press statement correcting the position and is in discussions with the Audit Commission about re-wording this aspect of the report. Similarly, a point has been raised by a ward councillor about the accuracy of a statement regarding allotments. Officers intend to review how we ensure the accuracy of reports when they are embargoed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council is in discussions with the DCLG about the spatial project and is seeking a capitalisation directive.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal matters arising.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 This report relates to all the Council’s objectives and priorities. It is interesting to note that both Value for Money and Older People have been identified by the Audit Commission, both of which are now reflected in the Council’s priorities and key deliverables.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- DCLG decision not to capitalise spatial spend.
- Council not building areas for improvement into future plans and therefore less likely to deliver excellence.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- DGLG decision not to capitalise spatial spend.

This is a new risk and will need to be added to the Financial Services risk register.

- Council not building areas for improvement into future plans and therefore less likely to deliver excellence.

Risk Register: CCPP

Key Objective Ref No: 5

Key Objective: Drive delivery of improvement plan and prepare for CAA.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The main customer implication arising from the report is the need to respond to the changing demographics of the District.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 See previous point about older people.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The report highlights the need to get better at understanding our costs as a way of improving our value for money.

11. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report is positive about the Council's response to climate change and Worcestershire as a whole is "green flagged" i.e. identified as an area of best practice and innovation; however, we should guard against complacency. The task of reducing emissions at 2% per annum is considerable.

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues: None.
Personnel: None.
Governance/Performance Management: None.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: None.
Policy: None.
Biodiversity: None.

13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No.
Joint Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No.
Executive Director - Services	No.
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes.
Head of Service	No.
Head of Financial Services	No.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No.
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No.
Corporate Procurement Team	No.

14. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards.

15. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 BDC Organisational Assessment, Audit Commission, Dec. 2009.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not applicable.

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