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## COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

### Summary

In November 2007 a consultation document was released by the relevant inspectorate bodies on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), due to replace the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2009.

### Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

- A. Note the attached covering letter and draft response.
- B. Agree to submit the documents as Shropshire County Council's response to the Audit Commission.

### REPORT

#### Background

1. A key part of the proposals of the White Paper published in October 2006 is a new performance assessment framework, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) that will take effect from 1 April 2009. The Audit Commission has carried out a number of consultation exercises on their proposals including a publication in April 2007 of a high level vision for CAA in *The Evolution of Regulation*. Shropshire County Council responded to the consultation at that time. In November 2007, a further consultation paper was published. The attached papers form Shropshire County Council's response to this consultation, the deadline for which is 15 February 2008.

#### Key Points

2. The key components are that the CAA will be an assessment of public service delivery within an area, based on the question "what does it feel like to live here?" This has changed from the current framework, i.e. it is not on the performance of individual organisations, and means an enhanced role for Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and Sustainable Community Strategies. CAA will gather some intelligence via the proposed new place based survey of the area, the replacement for the three yearly individual authority BVPI customer satisfaction surveys.

3. This means:

For Areas

- a joint inspectorate annual area risk assessment (ARA) based on the LAA priorities and outcomes
- reporting of comparative performance on the new national indicator set, including results from the proposed new place based survey;

For Councils:

- an annual joint inspectorate direction of travel assessment. This will report on the council's contributions to the partnership and its achievements in relation to its own services.
  - a scored use of resources judgement from the Audit Commission
4. Council CPA ratings, corporate assessments, joint area reviews, annual performance assessments of children's services, and social care star ratings will all cease. They will be replaced by the area risk assessment, an individual authority direction of travel assessment and a proposed enhanced use of resources judgment. Part of the consultation is around the proposed scoring mechanisms for these assessments and the communication methods.
5. Whilst we have historically been positive on external assessments, in our response we raise some key concerns on the proposals for CAA. In particular:
- a. There does not appear to be any reduction in the burden on authorities in terms of inspection requirements, a promise in the White Paper.
  - b. The proposed enhanced annual use of resources judgement appears to replicate the current Corporate Assessment, which only occurs every 3 years. The attached response strongly argues against this development.
  - c. We have concerns around the capacity of auditors to make assessments on the complex areas proposed.
6. Timetable:
- a. This consultation will close on 15 February 2008
  - b. The new national indicators take effect from 1 April 2008
  - c. The new style Local Area Agreements will be signed by June 2008.
  - d. In the summer of 2008 the inspectorates will publish a second joint consultation document setting out the detailed approach to the framework and the methodologies underpinning it. Action learning will continue alongside this.
  - e. The last round of CPA annual performance assessments will be published at the end of 2008 or the beginning of 2009.
  - f. The inspectorates intend to publish the final CAA methodology early in 2009, or before if possible.
  - g. The first set of CAA results will be published in October 2009.

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<p><b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b></p> <p>1. Comprehensive Area Assessment - A joint consultation by the Audit Commission, Commission for Social Care Inspection, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted (Nov '07)</p> <p>2. The Evolution of Regulation – April '07</p>
<p><b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b></p> <p>There are no conflicts with the Human Rights Act</p>
<p><b>Environmental Appraisal</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Risk Management Appraisal</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member</b></p> <p>Malcolm Pate – Corporate Policy and Resources Peter Nutting – Performance</p>
<p><b>Local Member</b></p> <p>All</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>Appendix A –Covering letter to Audit Commission Appendix B – draft CAA consultation response Appendix C - Report linking proposed UoR KLOE with current CA KLOE</p>