

Corporate Assessment Report

August 2007



Embargoed until 00:01 on 14 August 2007

Corporate Assessment

Hampshire County Council

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

Copies of this report

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0845 056 0566.

© Audit Commission 2007

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 020 7828 1212 Fax: 020 7976 6187 Textphone (minicom): 020 7630 0421

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	4
Executive summary	6
Areas for improvement	8
Summary of assessment scores	9
Context	10
The locality	10
The Council	12
What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	14
Ambition	14
Prioritisation	16
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	19
Capacity	19
Performance management	22
What has been achieved?	26
Sustainable communities and transport	27
Safer and stronger communities	29
Healthier communities	31
Older people	32
Children and young people	33
Appendix 1 - Framework for Corporate Assessment	36

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 Overall the Council is performing strongly, well above minimum requirements. With its partners across the county it has developed clear and challenging ambitions that reflect the needs and diversity of its communities. These cover four key, cross-cutting themes - safe and strong communities; health and wellbeing; economic prosperity and lifelong learning; and environment, infrastructure and transport. They are underpinned by a commitment to long-term sustainability and social inclusion. The Council is forward looking, with a strong understanding of the key challenges facing Hampshire. These include responding to the demands for growth, and the impact of climatic and demographic changes. The sheer size and diversity of the county, and the number and complexity of partnerships presents its own challenges.
- 6 The Council is providing strong and effective leadership. It has played a leading role with partners in shaping ambitions through the Hampshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) and delivery through the Local Area Agreement (LAA). It is now leading the development of a new sustainable community strategy for the county and preparing for the new style LAA. It uses its extensive knowledge and intelligence about the county and its communities to good effect, adopting a long-term approach to issues. The Council's corporate strategy and business plan translate its ambitions into clear priorities with ambitious targets. Partners are involved in setting targets within the LAA, helping ensure they are challenging and realistic.
- 7 The Council has an excellent understanding of the challenges it faces in delivering its ambitions for the county. Political leadership is effective and well regarded. The leader and senior councillors play an active and influential role in championing the needs of the county in terms of economic and spatial development - this has been particularly so in the development of the South East Plan and in its engagement with sub-regional partnerships, notably the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). It provides strong community leadership, dealing with difficult issues in a considered but purposeful way. It has established the Hampshire Interfaith Network and recently set up a climate change commission, chaired by the leader to engage communities and partners in a wide debate about the issues facing the county.
- 8 Operating within tight financial constraints, the Council has maintained its generally high performance in its own services. It has maintained a strong and highly effective focus on its priorities over the long-term, for instance in its approach to investing in waste management. It has restructured its major departments, including children's and adult services, with minimal disruption to service delivery. Leadership from the chief executive and corporate management team has been strong and effective. Performance management is effective and developing further. Service performance continues to be strong and the Council has maintained its high CPA rating since its first corporate assessment in 2002.

- 9 The Council clearly understands its communities and uses good analysis of needs and communicates well to residents and other stakeholders. It effectively engages with most people and partners in a variety of ways. This engagement is regular and continuous, contributing to a good shared understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve. Departments engage effectively with diverse communities though there are opportunities for greater shared learning of this information across the Council. The Council is making steady but positive progress in its equalities scheme and developing its strategic approach to social inclusion.
- 10 The Council continues to perform well in achieving and improving value for money and ensures that its resources are used cost effectively. It has delivered savings and efficiency gains in excess of targets and uses its large scale effectively when buying goods and services. It has been particularly successful in using its land assets to support improvements in service provision and achieve its priorities. Financial reporting and management are generally effective and the Council has responded rigorously to a significant overspend in its adult social care budget in 2005/06.
- 11 Capacity is sufficient to deliver priorities and the Council is strengthening its approach to organisational development and workforce planning. Corporate governance is sound and political decision making is transparent. The workforce is generally well trained and motivated. The Council has effective human resource management but the strategic capacity of the HR team has been underdeveloped. Investment is being made to improve the scrutiny process and to enhance councillors' engagement in their own areas through the Hampshire Action Teams (HATs), though this is in its early stages.
- 12 Partnership working has been used well to enhance the Council's capacity. It would be easy for an organisation of the Council's size to dominate and overwhelm partners. It has done well to largely avoid this, with most partners appreciating the Council's genuine desire to work together. But there is scope for some improvement. Partners could be involved earlier in the development process in some cases; much work is done with the voluntary sector but more could be done to build its capacity; and it will be important for the Council to build on its promising start with the newly formed Hampshire PCT.
- 13 The Council, with its partners, has delivered significant community benefits across the shared priorities. Progress has been good against social, economic and environmental agendas. Project Integra shows a long-term and sustained approach to improving waste management. The ENHANCE project has delivered extra beds in nursing care homes for older people using capital from the health sector and the Council. Partnership working to deliver Hampshire priorities for children and young people is effective and built on good relationships. But partnership working on a county wide basis to reduce crime has been less effective to date. Overall, these achievements show a willingness and ability to work in partnership to achieve tangible benefits for the community.

Areas for improvement

- 14 The Council should review and update its relationship with the voluntary sector across its services, including the operation of the compact. In particular it should help to develop the capacity and capability of the sector. This will not only assist in building the long-term sustainability of the sector, it will also enable it to play a fuller role at a strategic level. This is of increasing relevance as the development of structures like the LAA, grow in significance.
- 15 The Council needs to strengthen further the strategic role of the HR function. This is to make sure that it can play a proper part in organisational development and ensure greater consistency of approach across the Council where this is necessary.
- 16 The Council should improve its capacity to support its top priority of 'Hampshire safer and more secure for all'. At present, the Council does not have sufficient corporate capacity to support the work it will be doing with partners on the county wide CDRP, nor to make sure that its approach to crime and disorder is fully mainstreamed throughout the Council.
- 17 The Council should enhance performance management arrangements for the LAA by establishing baseline data and performance measures across all outcomes.

Summary of assessment scores

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

**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

- 18 Hampshire is the third largest shire county in England with a population of 1.25 million residents in over 525,000 households. It is also one of the largest counties by area, covering some 3,680 square kilometres. It is diverse, with a mix of significant urban and extensive rural areas.
- 19 The county forms a large swathe of central southern England, stretching from the Thames Valley in the north, to the south coast, where it is bounded by the major port cities of Southampton and Portsmouth to the east, and the major resorts of Poole and Bournemouth to the west. It has extensive transport links. The county is well served by frequent and relatively fast rail services to London, placing much of the county within commuting distance of the capital. The major trunk roads of the A3 and A303, and M3 and M27 motorways provide ready access through and across the county.
- 20 Though less than 10 per cent of the county is urban, 87 per cent of the population live in urban areas, with the major towns being Aldershot, Andover, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Fareham, Farnborough, Gosport, Havant, and the county town of Winchester. Almost 90 per cent of the county is classified as rural, with significant areas which are the subject of national and international designations. The New Forest, in the south west of the county, has recently become a National Park, and the county has a significant proportion of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now the subject of a proposed National Park) within its borders.
- 21 The 2005 Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) residents' survey showed 89 per cent of residents being satisfied with Hampshire as a place to live. It is relatively prosperous, with low levels of deprivation; in 2004 it was ranked 141 out of 149 county, unitary and metropolitan areas in terms of national measures of deprivation.¹ Overall crime rates are lower than the national and south east average and only one district exceeds the national average (though the fear of crime is prominent among Hampshire residents). Age standardised mortality rates are lower and life expectancy at birth is higher than the national average for all but two districts. Hampshire exceeded the national average for all standard indicators of educational achievement in 2003 and 2004.

¹ Rank according to the average Indices of Multiple Deprivation Super Output Area scores. Scale 1 most deprived to 149 least deprived.

- 22** The population of the county is expected to grow from 1,264,657 in 2006 to 1,303,812 by 2011 - a 3 per cent increase. This varies across age groups. The number of over 65 year olds will increase by 9.9 per cent and will account for 18.2 per cent of the total population - an increase of 1.1 per cent on the 2006 figure. By 2011, people aged 85 and over will account for 15.6 per cent of all the over 65s in the county, compared with 14.3 per cent in 2006. Comparison with the Council's nearest statistical neighbours - 15 other councils - shows that Hampshire has a higher percentage of people aged 65 and over than average, and the second highest percentage of people aged 90 or older, which is the group needing the most intensive care.
- 23** According to the 2001 census, 2.5 per cent of the county's population belong to minority ethnic groups, relatively widely dispersed throughout the county. But 5.8 per cent of the 3 to 16 age group is from ethnic minorities and children in Hampshire's schools have 62 different first languages. In recent years, the county has seen increasing numbers of migrant workers from the expanded European Union.
- 24** The size of the county can mask differences between communities and locations. One district, Hart, is classed as the least deprived in England, while three wards in Havant contain pockets of deprivation that are among the 10 per cent most deprived. In common with many south east counties, Hampshire can suffer from its own success, with increasing demands for growth placing pressure on the environment, transport infrastructure and on housing, and leading to high house prices. Proposals from the South East England Regional Assembly for 120,000 new houses in the county over the next 20 years have significant implications, but the most pressure will be felt in the south of the county where 80,000 new houses are planned.
- 25** Unemployment (based on claimant count) is low at 1.2 per cent. This compares with a rate of 1.6 per cent for the South East, and 2.4 per cent for England and Wales. Though Hampshire's economy has been relatively successful when measured in UK terms (gross value added per head), it lags behind the regional average. This is particularly the case in South Hampshire, where the Council has worked with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)² on an integrated strategy to increase growth based on substantial investment in new infrastructure, improved skills and development of advanced business services.

² A partnership involving the County Council, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport and Havant Borough Councils, and Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils.

The Council

- 26** The Council is Conservative controlled and operates with the leader and cabinet model of governance. Cabinet consists of ten executive members, including the leader and deputy leader. All are members of the majority party.
- 27** The Council has 78 elected councillors, the current composition being 46 Conservative, 28 Liberal Democrats and 4 Labour. Elections are held every four years, the most recent being in 2005. Over 50 per cent of councillors are also members of district and borough councils.
- 28** Since the establishment of the leader and cabinet system, the Council has been trying to ensure all councillors are suitably involved in the planning and decision making process. It began a democratic review in 2005 leading to a stronger scrutiny role for policy and review committees, and the introduction of local area Hampshire Action teams (HATs). Since 2006, every councillor belongs to his or her local HAT and the Council is introducing delegated budgets to each elected Councillor to further strengthen their 'frontline' role. HATs have been established across the county, mainly coterminous with district and borough boundaries, with their prime role being to provide a forum for county councillors to deal with county council related service issues in that area, for example highways. They are also intended to provide the link between the county council and local partners, including the LSPs.
- 29** The Council is currently organised into the following main departments:
- Chief Executive's, incorporating Human Resources;
 - Children's Services;
 - Adult Services;
 - Environment;
 - Recreation and Heritage;
 - Property, Business and Regulatory Services; and
 - County Treasurer's, incorporating IT Services.
- 30** The corporate management team (CMT) comprises the Chief Executive and the six chief officers of the main departments. Every major department has undergone a fundamental re-organisation including the creation of separate Children's and Adult services. Engagement with communities is increasingly done in inter-departmental, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams.
- 31** The Council is a very large organisation, employing 39,136 people (26,533 full-time equivalent). Its budgeted gross revenue spending in 2006/07 was £1.48 billion. In 2007/08 budgeted gross revenue spending, including funding passported to schools, is planned at £1.57 billion. The County Council's council tax at Band D is £955.62, an increase of 4.9 per cent on the 2006/07 level.

- 32** Since 2006 the Council has been a 'floor' authority, which means relatively low increases in grant from the Government - 2.7 per cent for 2007/08 and in the lowest 25 per cent of county councils over the period 2003 to 2006. The Council faces a number of budget pressures caused by demographic and legislative issues, including a growing elderly population, rising costs of waste disposal, and increases in the numbers of children looked after by the Council. The budget for 2007/08 was also set in the context of major change programmes underway in the organisation: the development of a contact centre to handle calls across all services, and a pay and benefits programme to deal with equal pay issues and modernise the pay framework.
- 33** Stability has been a feature of the Council's political landscape. Over the last two decades, apart from a period in the 1990s, the Council has been led by a series of Conservative administrations. But there has been a good deal of cross-party consensus on the issues facing the county and its communities. This stability has helped provide long-term continuity to planning and investment, and the development of partnerships.
- 34** The partnership picture across Hampshire is complex and multi-layered. Since local government re-organisation in 1997, the Council has operated in a two tier system with 11 districts and boroughs within its boundaries. It also has close relationships with the unitary councils of Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. It is an active member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association - a vehicle for bringing together the leaders and chief executives of all the local authorities in the area. After a period of extensive change and consolidation in the NHS, Hampshire is now covered by a single PCT, coterminous with the county.
- 35** The Council plays a leading role in the Hampshire Strategic Partnership (HSP), providing the chair and officer support. The partnership comprises nearly 250 members. In 2004 the Hampshire community strategy - Shaping our future together - was published, following work with the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the districts and boroughs in the county.
- 36** During 2006, the Hampshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Local Public Service agreement 2 (LPSA2) were signed as separate agreements and then brought together in a single performance process. The LAA was to cover the period April 2006 to March 2009 and was a second round 'single pot' pilot. Work is currently underway with partners to prepare for the new style LAA that is to take effect from April 2008. At the same time a review of the county-wide community strategy is taking place to produce an updated Sustainable Community Strategy.

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

Ambition

- 37 The Council is performing strongly in this area, well above minimum requirements. With its partners across the county it has developed clear and challenging ambitions that reflect the needs and diversity of its communities. The ambitions are rooted in a strong sense of place and stewardship of the county's environment and are informed by comprehensive knowledge of what is important to its citizens. It has a well informed and long-term approach to issues and challenges and is constructive in its approach to managing and working in complex partnerships. It is playing a pivotal role in place shaping. Good leadership by the Council and its key partners is championing the needs of the county and adjacent areas in debates over the future of the South East and the nature and scale of development and growth.
- 38 Ambitions for the community address the underlying needs of the area. The county-wide Community Strategy, 'Shaping our future together', developed by the Hampshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) identifies the key aims. These are set out under four key, cross-cutting themes - safe and strong communities; health and wellbeing; economic prosperity and lifelong learning; and environment, infrastructure and transport. The strategy has been built upon the foundations of the work of the 11 district LSPs in Hampshire. The aims are underpinned by two key principles, sustainability, and positive action to promote equality, diversity and social inclusion.
- 39 Ambitions are stretching and shared with partners and aligned with other key strategies. These are documented in the LAA, the Council's own corporate strategy and in other key documents such as the county's Children and Young People's Plan and its Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. They are also encapsulated in the eight priorities of the LAA. Within the LAA priorities, particular emphasis has been given to four flagship initiatives covering educational attainment (Better Chances - Better Lives, the 12 schools project); reducing economic inactivity and unemployment; tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence; and increasing healthy, safe and sustained independent living for older and vulnerable people. These initiatives illustrate the strong focus on tackling the inequalities that exist within the county.

- 40 The Council is providing strong and effective leadership to strengthen further its partnership approach on a shared agenda. It is forward thinking and proactive in its approach to complex partnerships and structures. It is revising, with partners, the community strategy. This process incorporates improving the analysis and interpretation of data and development of longer-term performance indicators. This includes identifying outcomes for a sustainable Hampshire that recognises the spatial differences across the county in terms of the economy and demands for growth. Demographic information has been shared with Hampshire PCT, with projections to 2026. The timetable for refreshing the community strategy is aligned to the development of the new LAA with formal consultation being undertaken in autumn 2007. This alignment is designed to help consolidate the links between county wide governance structures and is necessary to enable better delivery of the shared agenda by all partners.
- 41 The Council is highly ambitious for its own services and for the community it serves. Its corporate strategy was revised in 2006 after extensive consultation and covers the period to 2009. It has three top-level priorities: Hampshire safer and more secure for all; maximising wellbeing; and enhancing quality of place. This provides a clear framework for its other strategies and plans that support its ambitions, such as the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 42 The Council has set clear and challenging ambitions, with supporting high-level targets, in relation to promoting sustainable development. It signed up early to the Aalborg Charter and Commitments, a European local authorities agreement committing signatories to a shared vision of promoting a sustainable future for their communities; and it was the first council in the UK to undertake a baseline review auditing its current sustainability performance against the 50 commitments in the Charter (and only the ninth in Europe at the time), and to use this to set targets for improvement.
- 43 Ambitions are founded on extensive knowledge of the county and its communities. Consultation has been wide and inclusive. In developing the LAA, the Council engaged with stakeholders, including the LSPs, on a range of topics, such as drug and alcohol reduction. The four Flagship initiatives are relevant to the needs of disadvantaged areas by focusing effort on those communities and individuals most in need of support. The Council regularly gathers market research data for itself and partners and uses a variety of mechanisms to do this, including residents' surveys, and a wide range of qualitative research with groups and individual users. This engagement helps foster a sense of ownership and involvement.
- 44 The Council has played an active, informed and effective role in shaping the regional agenda to suit the county's needs. It has worked in partnership with other south east councils in influencing the south east plan and has played a significant part in supporting sub-regional partnerships, including PUSH and the Blackwater Valley sub-region, by providing research, knowledge and officer support. It has good and comprehensive intelligence on demographic change and the long-term issues facing the county and has used these effectively to support its case for infrastructure developments to accompany housing growth.

- 45 Political leadership is evident and effective. The leader is well regarded and respected, both within and outside the Council. Other portfolio holders are active at both local, regional and, in some cases, international levels. Together, the Council's political leadership is seeking to make the growth agenda work, balancing this with protection of Hampshire's environment. The size and diversity of Hampshire makes this a difficult task, but the Council is showing leadership in key areas such as climate change and waste management; for example, in the establishment of a climate change commission to consider the long-term impacts of climate change on the county.

Prioritisation

- 46 The Council performs strongly in this area, well above minimum requirements. Priorities are appropriately focused on local and national issues. They reflect the views and needs of the county's communities. Consultation is wide and effective and is used to monitor progress. This is supplemented by regular surveys of citizens and users. There are clear and robust plans in place to deliver the priorities, with partners. Resources are allocated accordingly. The Council has been rigorous and successful in its approach to delivering its priorities over time. Its approach to meeting the needs of minority groups is effective and developing.
- 47 The Council's corporate strategy and business plan provide a good framework for delivering the Council's three corporate priorities. Consultation with local people, partners, stakeholders and staff to develop and agree these priorities has been extensive. There is a wide commitment to and good understanding of the priorities across the Council, including support from all three main political parties. Priorities are clear to all, and provide a strong basis for delivering improvements in a co-ordinated way to enable their achievement.
- 48 The strategic priorities are based on a strong understanding of local needs. The Council uses a wide range of data including surveys of residents which are undertaken regularly, a Hampshire wide residents' panel, and departments also undertake their own user surveys to inform specific reviews. The County Youth Council is active and has regular meetings with county and district councillors. Hampshire's schools are involved in debates on significant issues. To inform budget setting for 2007/08 the Council consulted a wide range of organisations, including the HSP, Hampshire Ratepayers Association, trade unions and the pressure group 'Is it fair?'. The Council collects a comprehensive range of information from users, but this is not always shared well between departments. The Council has recognised this and has now established a corporate database of user surveys and feedback to ensure better use of data across the organisation.

- 49 The Council's Corporate Business Plan effectively translates the strategic priorities into practical actions. It brings together the work of all the Council departments in a coherent whole, and demonstrates how each department's activities will help deliver the three corporate priorities. Departmental and service plans are linked to the corporate plan and the medium-term financial strategy (which covers the same period as the corporate strategy), and their contribution to corporate objectives is clear. Staff resources have been realigned to deliver the priorities, as for example in the establishment of area based teams in children's and adult services, and there are robust workforce plans in place within services. The Council's priorities are supported by the LAA priorities. There is a clear link between strategies and outcomes at different levels.
- 50 The Council has maintained a clear focus on key priorities for delivery. Emphasis has been placed on ensuring delivery of the key services of social care and education, responding to national policy initiatives and re-shaping services to take account of these. A case in point is the development of the integrated Children's Services Department, and the review of Adult Services following an overspend in 2005/06. The Council has maintained a long-term focus and significant investment on its nationally recognised approach to waste management, Project Integra, leading to increased recycling and composting rates and reductions in the amount of waste sent to landfill. Educational performance has improved consistently. The Council has also pursued a successful approach to delivering services over and above statutory requirements within its available resources, such as recreation and heritage work, which are seen as integral to the corporate priorities of wellbeing and enhancing quality of place.
- 51 Working between partners on delivering Hampshire priorities is good. The LAA provides a clear framework for shared priorities and improving outcomes for local communities. Partners on the LAA are clear about their roles, and the process for managing and developing the LAA. There are good links between the county and district LSPs. The role of the Hampshire Community Strategy and its partnership board has become less well linked to the Council's and partners' priorities recently, as these have evolved, but is due to be refreshed shortly to provide a clearer focus on the quality of life in Hampshire. There are shared and pooled budgets, and there has been a recent joint appointment to the post of Director of Public Health.

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

- 52** The Council takes clear action to deliver service priorities. In 2006, the Council reduced the number of corporate priorities from six to three, supporting an enhanced focus for its work. Resources have been shifted to meet new priorities, such as the development of the locality teams in Children's Services, and the introduction of Accredited Community Support Officers (ACSOs). Increased support was given to improve public transport use through Quality Bus partnerships, using capital funds while reconfiguring subsidised services to retain accessibility levels. Following a review of customer access, the Council is setting up a new contact centre to support improvement in service and efficiency. Physical access to Council premises has been reviewed to ensure compliance with disability legislation, and more than 78 per cent of buildings comply, which is in the best 25 per cent of county councils. Difficult decisions have been made to close residential care homes and children's facilities, and to close and merge schools where there is oversupply of places. The Council has a strong commitment to supporting changes where these are identified as necessary to support strategic priorities.
- 53** The Council is active and forward thinking in the use of its assets to support priorities. It has an agreed, strategic approach to the use of its land assets in the long-term. This will provide a stream of capital receipts to enable reinvestment in public services, and support the delivery of the Council's priorities of wellbeing and enhancing quality of place. In the 2007/08 financial year, the target for receipts is £60 million.
- 54** The Council embraces equality and diversity in its consultations. Specific examples of consultations with minority groups completed by the Council include: the MORI survey 2003 which included hard-to-reach groups; significant research in 2005 through a survey of BME residents on their 'Quality of Life in Hampshire' which resulted in some changes to services, for example better access and choice in library book and video loans; and work this year to support the LAA designed to build BME capacity with the voluntary sector. It is hosting a seminar in the summer of 2007 for key partners in the county to discuss issues relating to migrant workers.

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

Capacity

- 55** The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. Councillors and officers are clear about their roles and responsibilities within effective decision-making processes. The Council is responsive to recruitment and retention issues and is implementing county-wide workforce planning. Partnership working is innovative and strong and delivering significant community benefits. The Council is improving access to services to meet diverse community needs while addressing the variable quality of its Equality Impact Assessments. The Council continues to perform well in achieving and improving value for money. While risk management is effective in departments it is not fully embedded at councillor decision making level.
- 56** Councillors and officers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The capability and capacity of the corporate management team (CMT) is strong. CMT meetings focus appropriately on key strategic issues. For example, Task and Finish groups are used to progress corporate initiatives and major programmes, such as pay and benefits. The leader is currently Chairman of the County Councils' Network, the Local Government Association Resources Committee and the Innovation Forum. Portfolio holders are generally well versed in the cross-cutting agendas and there are positive relationships between officers and councillors. This enables councillors to take responsibility for strategic and policy decisions, allowing officers to manage operational issues.
- 57** The Council has in place effective decision-making processes. Cabinet is effective and well supported. Key decisions are documented four months in advance in the Forward Plan. The Council is seeking to improve local engagement through the introduction of local area Hampshire Action Teams (HATS). Since 2006, every councillor belongs to his or her local HAT and the Council is introducing delegated budgets to each elected Councillor to further strengthen their 'frontline' role. These are currently more beneficial to the Council than its district partners, with a lack of clarity about how they can effectively link with existing district and borough partnership structures.
- 58** Scrutiny is effective and improving. Improvements to the system of scrutiny are in train with the introduction of 'select committee' processes. A number of in depth scrutiny reviews have been completed, the work of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which averted the closure of Community Hospitals is cited as best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Officer support has been strengthened in Scrutiny. Scrutiny topics are scored by Scrutiny Committee members ensuring that the most relevant issues are being reviewed. Good quality scrutiny helps improve the standard of policy making and leads to better outcomes.

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

- 59** Councillors and officers work effectively within the ethical framework. Regular training sessions are arranged for Councillors on the Code of Conduct and understanding of the Code is good. Only a small number of complaints have been received by the Standards Board which is chaired by a County Councillor, although having an independent chair is accepted as good practice. The Monitoring Officer has dealt with one local investigation, which has been handled well and robust action taken. This ensures confidence in governance arrangements.
- 60** Risk management is effective in departments but is not embedded at councillor decision making level. The Corporate Strategy for Managing Risk 2007 to 2010 has been agreed and there are risk registers in each department. A strategic risk register has been developed and will be presented formally to councillors in July 2007. The Council has provided a programme of training for relevant councillors but understanding is not fully embedded throughout the Council. Good quality risk management helps the Council take actions to prevent or avoid occurrences that would be costly to itself and the communities it serves.
- 61** The Council has effective HR processes but the strategic capacity of the HR team has been underdeveloped. There is good operational HR support for departments but the strategic capacity of the HR team is limited although the Council has taken recent action to address this. For example, work on pay and benefits (Single Status) has taken significant resource and time and is yet to be concluded. The Council takes action in response to recruitment and retention issues. It has launched the Hampshire Own Grown initiative (Future Leaders and Graduate Programme) and has workforce planning arrangements within departments, though a council-wide overview has yet to be developed. The Council has developed a web-based shared recruitment portal with partners. Sickness absence is in the best 25 per cent of councils and is being actively managed.
- 62** Training and development opportunities for staff and councillors are made available but training is not consistently monitored and evaluated. The Council is in the process of improving its development processes and is implementing a new system for evaluating training. For example, it is working with the IDeA to develop individual learning and development plans for councillors. The Council has achieved Investors in People accreditation across services and management competencies have recently been developed but are not yet embedded. The Council is presently not able to consistently assess the impact of its training activities.

- 63 Overall, partnership working is innovative and strong and delivering significant community benefits. With its partners, the Council took an innovative approach to invest in some of the best recycling and disposal facilities in Europe, including three state-of-the-art incinerators which recover energy from waste. Project Integra has delivered extensive investment in waste infrastructure for the county. The ENHANCE project used £40 million from the health partnerships and £20 million from the Council's own capital to deliver 500 beds in ten new and seven refurbished elderly persons' homes. Hampshire's Discovery Centre concept led it to be chosen to be part of a two-year Cultural Pathfinder Programme 2005 to 2007. The Council is using its procurement practice to enable it to discharge its role as corporate parent, for example, to provide work placements for children in the Council's care. The Council is able to deliver significant outcomes because of the quality of its partnership working supported by effective project management and procurement processes.
- 64 The Council is engaged with the voluntary sector but is not optimising the capacity of the sector. The Council has a voluntary sector compact but it is not operating effectively and understanding of the needs of the voluntary sector is variable. The main contact with the Council is through traditional funding and contractual mechanisms, as in adult services, but there is limited engagement at a senior level, with some voluntary sector partners feeling marginalised. While the Council provides significant funding to the sector, it is not making the most of the capacity of the sector nor facilitating its development as an equal partner.
- 65 The Council is providing effective and improving access to services to meet diverse community needs. It is implementing a new Contact Centre in 2007. This will provide comprehensive access to council services for extended hours. The Council has good quality Race and Disability Schemes based on extensive and inclusive consultation as well as an effective corporate working group including the equalities councillor champion. However, the Council's workforce is not representative of the local communities it seeks to serve. The Council communicates well with the public, through its magazine Hampshire Now and its campaign specials are valued by residents. The Council is developing its approach to improved targeting of diverse communities.
- 66 The quality of the Council's Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) is variable. The Council has achieved only level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government; progress has been slowed while it revisits its impact assessments. An external review recommended that the Council needed to consolidate at level 2 before moving on to level 3 later in 2007. Use of EIA is not being maximised to effectively assess impact of policy making on diverse communities.

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

- 67 The Council continues to perform well in achieving and improving value for money and ensures that its resources are used cost effectively. The Council has a budget in excess of £1.5 billion (including schools budgets) and it delivered £19.8 million of efficiency savings in 2005/06 (3.4 per cent of its annual budget) and plans to deliver £1 million each year on the £5 million contact centre project. It has resources set aside to meet the costs of implementing single status. Financial reporting and management are generally effective, although a significant overspend in Adult Social Care in 2005/06 was identified late. A robust recovery plan is now in place. The Council is researching service cost benchmarking and improving the links between financial and performance information.
- 68 ICT resources and e-government are effectively used to support delivery of priorities and action is underway to improve usability. In 2006, the Council's website 'Hantsweb' was recognised as the best 'Effective use of IT in the Public Service' in the annual Effective IT Awards. 'Hantsnet' connects some 14,600 staff across more than 1,000 sites in Hampshire, with a cost-effective IT network. However, not all part-time staff have access to the network as the Council considers the costs of this to outweigh the benefits. The percentage of services delivered electronically in 2005/06 was 98.9 per cent. The Council has implemented a new computerised system improving its core financial processes. Further opportunities exist to drive efficiencies and improve access and usability of this system.
- 69 The Council, with its partners, has the capacity to respond flexibly to changing circumstances and emerging challenges. The Council is self-aware about its capacity and has recruited people with the skills it needs, for example, in the areas of business continuity and risk management. It has positively managed an emergency situation, dealing with World War II Pipe Mines, and its emergency plans are nearly finalised. The Council has appointed external consultants to review how the Council transforms its business to deliver £30 million of savings and to ensure it is fit for purpose for the next two decades.

Performance management

- 70 The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. The Council is in the top 25 per cent of councils in terms of Best Value Performance indicators, and improved performance on 60 per cent of these over the period 2005/06 to 2006/07. Performance management and service improvement is built into the culture and systems of the organisation. The Council takes a proactive approach to performance management and uses effective scrutiny processes. There is an effective approach to integrating resource management with the performance management process. Management of complaints is adequate. Performance management of partnership work is generally effective, though there are some gaps in performance measures in the LAA. There is good use of external benchmarking and challenge and of local people's views to improve services. Information on the Council's performance is communicated well to people in Hampshire.

- 71 The Corporate Business Plan provides an effective framework for delivering the three county council priorities which are widely publicised throughout the Council. A clear thread runs from the priorities in the corporate business plan through departmental and service plans to individual staff objectives. As a result the Council focuses well on corporate priorities, and staff see themselves as playing a role in the whole, and understand the value of what they contribute.
- 72 Councillors play an active and effective role in performance management. The lead member for performance management supports performance management across departments and uses benchmarking data to identify local performance variations. The Cabinet ensures that portfolio holders are informed of any underperformance, such as on sickness performance, which has subsequently been addressed, and of what action is planned. Councillors follow these up as 'critical friends' with responsible managers. Scrutiny Committees' challenge is robust. Some proposals such as the review of the schools hearing impairment service have been changed through the scrutiny challenge process. There is scrutiny of all departments' performance and budgeting data and of external reviews. Scrutiny has led to changes in departmental actions to address underperformance and to changes in the performance management and reporting systems used.
- 73 There is an effective approach to integrating resource management with the performance management process. Integrated service planning has been introduced in 2007/08 which brings together financial and human resources with service plans to ensure that the financial impact of services is managed effectively. In Children's Services there has been use of activity data, for example on in-year increases in referrals to help identify resources needed. Budget processes clearly link performance information and financial data, both through the regular budget management processes and through the value for money reports produced by each department. Use of integrated service planning helps enable the Council to demonstrate the achievement of value for money through improved management of resources.
- 74 The Council uses staff resources well to drive improvement. Recently the Council has implemented a leadership programme, 'Success through people' to foster a culture of ownership and leadership for work at all levels. For instance, staff are encouraged to identify and take responsibility for reduction to the Council's carbon footprint, which has contributed to delivery of the corporate sustainability plan and meeting the Aalborg commitments. The introduction of individual performance plans which are linked to corporate and service objectives has increased staff's understanding of their responsibility for delivering these. This emphasis on individuals' contribution has led to staff at all levels reviewing what they do to identify improvements in their work, and to challenge themselves and their peers.

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

- 75** The Council's management and use of complaints is adequate. There is a publicised complaints system, accessible in hard copy and through the website. Summaries of complaints, with an analysis of complaint subjects are made to some departments regularly, such as Recreation and Heritage. However, this approach is not consistently used across the Council and information on complaints is not regularly reported to Cabinet. Complaints are not always dealt with in a timely manner. Following a review, the reporting of complaints is being improved, but some recommendations are being delayed pending the establishment of the new contact centre in 2007. Better use of complaints information would increase the Council's understanding of local people's concerns, support learning and highlight where services are not satisfactory.
- 76** The Council has a good understanding of the views of local communities. Survey findings are reported to Cabinet, Corporate Management Team and departmental and service management meetings to ensure that staff are aware of local views and can use them to improve services. The Environment Department learned from MORI surveys that people found the Council too remote and as a result expanded four area offices, which has improved the service to local people. Mental health service users and disability service users are invited to monitor and review provider contracts, and their views are used to improve the quality of care. Processes to ensure that consultation is always explicitly linked to service improvement are not yet embedded. As a result key consultation messages are not always shared across services to maximise their impact.
- 77** Performance management in partnerships is open and effective. The LAA now provides the overarching framework for partnership delivery of shared priorities. Performance is reported to the LAA executive regularly and is challenged effectively by partners. Cross-cutting issues such as the relationship between violent crime and alcohol use have led to robust discussion on different partners' responsibilities. However, partners to the LAA have not all contributed to resources to support the partnership in a couple of outcome areas because of their own lack of capacity. The voluntary sector in particular finds it difficult to be fully involved in partnership work because of under-capacity. As a result the LAA has not been achieving its full potential in delivering priorities in partnership.
- 78** The Council and its partners have a good range of performance measures with which to judge progress, though there are some gaps. Overall, the partners have made good progress on delivering the LAA priorities. However, some LAA performance measures for 2006/07 have no available data and for others there is no baseline data, making performance hard to assess. Some of these gaps are due to new or deleted performance measures as well as those where baselines are intended to be collected over a longer period. This has been addressed in the LAA refresh work for 2007/08. Performance measures for children and young people are still dominated by social care and education measures, with far fewer measures for assessing partnership contribution to improving outcomes.

- 79** The Council uses benchmarking well. Comparative data from other authorities is used across the Council to identify differences in performance. The Children's Services Department used comparative cost information to review the value for money of foster care to inform commissioning and tendering processes and achieved lower unit costs as a result. Councillors encourage staff to visit authorities with better performance to learn from them. Staff share information and learn from others through membership of national and regional benchmarking groups. Use of benchmarking and external contacts supports a learning culture.
- 80** The Council uses internal and external challenge well to improve services. In the last few years there has been a regular programme of internal reviews on priority services and themes. The older people's wellbeing team is reviewing all the older people wellbeing projects using the New Economics Foundation wellbeing evaluation tool to identify which are most effective in delivering better outcomes and value for money. Peer reviews have been used in the Environment Department. The Council demonstrates an openness to challenge that contributes to continuous improvement.
- 81** Council performance is publicised well to local people. The Council uses its website, 'Hantsweb', its well regarded magazine 'Hampshire Now' and leaflets sent out with council tax demands to inform local people about its performance and how it delivers value for money. The Children's and Young People's Plan is publicised well through a shortened version setting out what the plan aims to deliver which is widely distributed and read by a range of stakeholders. Annual portfolio reports provide a narrative summary of achievement as well as financial and performance summaries. Good information helps the public understand how the Council is performing.

What has been achieved?

- 82 The Council is performing well in this area, consistently above minimum requirements. It can show significant achievement across the shared priority areas. It has a history of achievement across its major services and has used its considerable capacity and effective partnership working to improve the quality of life for local people. Its achievements range from regional issues - addressing the growth agenda and sustainability - to meeting the expressed needs of local residents, for example by the introduction of Accredited Community Support Officers. These achievements are impressive, particularly given the size and diversity of the county.
- 83 The Council has achieved improvement or maintained high quality services in national priority areas and areas of concern to local people. Customer satisfaction with Council services remains above average when compared to other councils. There is a clear link from the Council's ambitions and priorities to achievement of outcomes. Some of these, such as Project Integra and its overall approach to waste management, and its focus on educational attainment have a very long-term focus, but with successful outcomes already delivered. Its record on waste management is exemplary.
- 84 There have been important and sustained improvements in education and social care services for children. Outcomes for children and young people in Hampshire are good and the Council has made a strong contribution to the partnership.
- 85 The Council has a strong focus on promoting sustainable communities, and has been successful in integrating economic, social and environmental issues which it delivers in partnership with others. It has played an active and important role in regeneration initiatives, with partners, such as at Rowner, and Leigh Park. It has made good progress in dealing with traffic issues in the county, though the issue of congestion remains in places. It has made excellent progress in reducing the number of road injuries, ahead of target.
- 86 It has achieved considerable success in helping provide affordable housing on its own land, and has worked actively with partners to provide services for older people that go beyond health and social care. The provision of 500 extra care beds is an effective response to community need. The Council has worked with health partners to positive effect in schools and has had success in reducing teenage pregnancy rates. It is now developing a strategic approach to health inequalities with the PCT.
- 87 The Council gives highest priority to building a safe community and has invested significant resources in this area. It has achieved some success with its ACSO programme, particularly in tackling anti-social behaviour, and through the work of its trading standards teams. But while Hampshire remains a low crime county in relative terms, some key crime figures have been rising, and the Council is still building, with partners, the strategic capacity to deal effectively with this on a county wide basis.

Sustainable communities and transport

- 88 The Council has a strong focus on promoting sustainable communities, and has been successful in integrating economic, social and environmental issues in partnership with others. The Council and its partners have a strong understanding of the varied challenges they face across the county in promoting and sustaining employment, the economy, appropriate housing and transport infrastructure, and the environment. Comprehensive strategies are developing well, for example for employment and integrated transport, and reflect the prioritisation given to partnership development and the external environment. Outcomes across this area are good and in some instances excellent.
- 89 The Council has set up a comprehensive partnership to reduce worklessness as part of the LAA and is developing a co-ordinated Employment Strategy with all the key stakeholders. The Council has provided a wide range of support to help address the low skills base and high unemployment in some parts of the county. It is helping people on benefits back into work, improving support to local firms and improving skills in the workforce. The Council has successfully supported schools to raise educational and vocational standards, which have improved in Hampshire every year since 2002. The Council is the largest employer in the county and provides opportunities for work experience in some departments but its Supported Employment programme is underdeveloped.
- 90 The Council has provided effective leadership on economic development which is part of its four key cross-cutting themes of economic prosperity. It has played a role in facilitating and encouraging economic development where appropriate. It has used its own farm land to help maintain the rural economy and runs an apprentice scheme for its own services. It has also played an active role in regeneration, for example at Rowner, and at Leigh Park, Havant where a number of craft workshops have been built. The eHampshire Partnership (of which the Council is the lead partner) has ensured that all Hampshire telephone exchanges are now 'broadband-enabled', and has boosted take-up to 34 per cent, while over 600 businesses have been helped with grants or specialist advice.
- 91 The Council has had important successes in improving the co-ordination of transport and access to services, including improving public transport and reducing congestion. Transport is a significant issue in Hampshire where there is relatively high income, low overall unemployment, and a high-level of commuting. The Council and its partners are tackling this by making it easier for people to use alternatives and by influencing the planning system. Initiatives include working with the Strategic Rail Authority on providing cycle racks and bus information at train stations as well as opening a previously disused station at Chandlers Ford. The use of key public transport routes, walking and (since 2005) cycling have increased, congestion in targeted locations is easing and the negative environmental impacts such as poor air quality are measurably reducing. Twenty five Quality Bus Partnerships have been established and bus patronage increased on these routes. The Council has introduced a range of school transport schemes including Yellow school buses in the Basingstoke area. The LAA plans to increase use of public transport by co-ordinating different types of transport in local areas and improving access and information.

- 92 The Council is effectively using its role as a strategic planning and transportation authority and as a major land owner to help improve access to affordable housing making better use of existing land and housing stock in a sustainable way. Over 3,000 new dwellings have been built on the Council's surplus land holdings in the last ten years and up to 3,000 more are planned to be built in the next five years. The Council successfully integrates its approach to ensure developments are sustainable. For example, it invested over £3 million on roads and lighting and included new schools in the plans for the Binfield and Merton Rise and Popley developments. The latter provides a new park, a sustainable drainage system, a neighbourhood centre, and other community facilities. Other vulnerable groups are also assisted through the excellently rated Supporting People's programme and through a range of housing support including seven locality housing officers who work with district councils to ease the process.
- 93 Leadership on sustainability issues has been strong. As well as its long-term approach to dealing with waste, the Council has been successful in protecting and enhancing environmental assets and promoting sustainability in its own work. Its commitment to the Aalberg agreement is driving actions within the Council's own services. It has introduced a timber fired heating plant at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, and its new corporate headquarters building will have carbon emissions reduced by 60 per cent. Its work in a Biodiversity partnership since 1997 resulted in improvements to 1,200 hectares of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 94 The Council performs strongly in waste management. The Project Integra waste partnership has been very successful in addressing a key environmental issue facing the county, by greatly reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Less waste is sent to landfill in Hampshire than anywhere else in the UK. Only 15.6 per cent of waste is put in landfill sites, with 84.5 per cent either recycled recovered or composted. The energy recovery facilities put electricity back into the national grid and generate enough power to heat 40,000 homes. The LAA aims to build on the high recycling levels by working with the commercial sector and stimulating market responses to recycling and reuse measures. The Council has set an ambitious target to divert 85 per cent of waste from landfill in 2007/08. The use of the three incinerators and the phased introduction of a bi-weekly kerb collection system have already resulted in the achievement of most of this target. This will contribute to the aspiration of reducing consumption of resources within the county and will reduce costs to the Council as landfill tax increases.

Safer and stronger communities

- 95** The Council is performing well in building safer and stronger communities. It has recognised this as a key priority and invested significant resources to support it, for example, Accredited Community Support Officers. It is developing its strategic approach to the partnership agenda. There are many positive examples of working in partnership to build safer and stronger communities, these include initiatives to address anti-social behaviour, road safety and social inclusion. However, the Council has made mixed progress on reduction of crime and strategic plans for a county wide CDRP are developing.
- 96** The Council displays a strong commitment to building a safer community. Hampshire safer and more secure for all is one of the Council's three strategic priorities. To support this priority it has invested £1 million in the appointment of 34 ACSOs and is working well through the LAA in utilising these resources. The Council has a close relationship with the Police and is in the process of implementing a database to share information relating to community safety with 16 partners. The Council's Chief Executive is also the chief executive for the police authority and chairs the youth offending team steering group. This enables a joined up approach to be taken to address a key community concern.
- 97** The Council is working to develop a county-wide CDRP, though does not yet have the capacity at the corporate centre to effectively respond to the strategic partnership agenda. It is developing its approach to mainstreaming Crime and Disorder Act (Section 17) responsibilities through the Council, and raising awareness of councillors and officers. The absence of a county-wide co-ordinating forum makes it difficult currently to secure a consistent focus across the 11 CDRPs on LAA priorities. The Council plans to address this through an inaugural meeting for the county wide CDRP arranged for May 2007.
- 98** In the British Crime Survey Hampshire is classed as one of the safest places to live but the Council and its partners have a mixed record in reducing crime and disorder when compared to similar areas. Crime figures for 2005/06 show robberies and theft of a motor vehicle are in the best 25 per cent of councils, but burglary and theft from a motor vehicle are above average, and sexual offences and violent crime are in the worst 25 per cent of councils. The 2006 MORI survey of Hampshire residents indicates that fear of crime is a key concern for residents. However, all indicators in the British Crime Survey show lower than average levels for all crimes including household and personal crime.

- 99 The Council is working successfully in partnership to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB). Trading standards provide a quick response team to address complaints about doorstep traders who target the vulnerable and have taken action to reduce sales of alcohol to under-age people. The Council's support of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has helped to significantly reduce youth re-offending rates. The ACSOs deal with more than 1000 incidents a month and local surveys suggest that people feel safer. The service is currently operating mainly in four pilot areas, based on crime and geographic spread. It operates high visibility patrols with vans equipped with CCTV. Surveys show that while most of the county sees little change in ASB, 70 per cent of residents in these areas feel that their area is safer as a result.
- 100 The Council and its partners have had some success in reducing the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on communities. The Council is a member of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and hosts it. Drugs hotspots have been identified and the Council supports initiatives such as police drugs safety groups and SNAP discos which it helps to fund. The Hampshire DAAT is rated average compared to other DAATs with challenges remaining in areas such as the number of drug users attending and remaining in treatment for 12 weeks, though targeted work on underage alcohol sales has been effective.
- 101 The Council has worked effectively with the police to reduce motor cycle deaths in the County and the Council's performance on improving road safety is strong. Initiatives have included engineering projects and a casualty reduction programme with the Police and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight safety camera partnership and an older person's driver assessment to help drivers stay safe. The Council has now met its own target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured five years early and road casualty levels for fatal and serious casualties have fallen to their lowest level since 2004.
- 102 The Council is developing a systematic approach to emergency planning. The Emergency Planning Unit's emergency arrangements were tested in 2006 when 20 World War II pipe mines were discovered leading to the evacuation of 1,000 homes. The Council's Major Incident plan is due to be finalised in June 2007, it has identified the top 20 risks across services, and these are being categorised with testing planned for 2008.
- 103 The Council is delivering on its responsibilities under gender, race and disability legislation and is developing a more integrated approach to social inclusion. It has established a county wide Inter-faith forum and has introduced the Rights, Respect and Responsibility Programme in Hampshire schools. This programme has been evaluated and shown to reduce bullying, improve attendance and educational attainment. The Council recognises the need to develop a more strategic approach to inclusion and plans to develop a Social Inclusion Strategy with key partners based on county wide intelligence.

Healthier communities

- 104** The Council and its partners provide good services that improve the health of local residents. Specific vulnerable groups have been identified, such as those with physical and sensory disabilities and older people, as well as those in the more deprived areas. These groups have access to provision to support their health improvement. Ambitions are focused on tackling health inequalities. The health of the majority of Hampshire residents is good. This is reflected in the level of funding the PCT is given to support the health needs of its community. A strategic needs analysis is currently being undertaken, led by the Joint Director of Public Health, to inform the joint commissioning strategy between the Council and the newly formed Hampshire Primary Care Trust. This is building on the work of the area Directors of Public Health that had been linked across the districts. Most services to tackle health inequalities for children and young people are good. Specific targets to achieve the health improvements have been set in key areas and there will be further county-wide targets set after the needs analysis has been completed. The impact of health and wellbeing initiatives is known.
- 105** Partnership working with the local health community is adequate and rebuilding after a period of rapid change within the NHS. The Hampshire PCT is now coterminous with the County Council and it has been agreed that the structure of the PCT will replicate the geographical area working for children's and adult services to maximise joint working and minimise duplication. The planning and financial cycles with the Council and the PCT have been brought together to promote alignment of budgets and services.
- 106** Joint commissioning is presently underdeveloped. Some joint budgets do exist, for example in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the joint equipment store and in provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), and there is a commitment to use these further if it will benefit the service users. There are a range of services provided in partnership for example to assist people to stop smoking. However, having a PCT that is now coterminous with the Council is seen as supporting further developments.
- 107** Targeted activities promote good health and wellbeing in children and young people including those with learning or physical and/or sensory impairment. These include services aimed at increasing physical activity in children such as the partnership work with Sports England and specialist PE teachers so children with disabilities can engage in sports such as blind rugby and wheelchair basket ball. A comprehensive range of accessible sexual health services, available in rural and urban areas, has helped to reduce teenage pregnancies. Prevention and health improvements are supported by a wide range of good family support services that can be easily accessed. The development of these initiatives has been informed by a range of partners' data. These initiatives are appropriate to improve the long-term health of local young people.

- 108 Vulnerable groups across the county have services to meet their needs. There is an active voluntary sector which has a county, district and village profile which responds according to needs. At present resources and improvements are targeted at those areas in greatest need and further co-location of services is planned to expand provision. The production of the strategic needs analysis and the subsequent joint commissioning strategy are seen as key drivers for delivery here.
- 109 Approaches to reducing drug and alcohol misuse are adequate and effective. The Drug Alcohol Action team does not provide specifically targeted programmes for some groups for example children or young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, performance against both the Youth Justice Board and the National Treatment Agency young people's substance misuse targets, have been consistently rated 'green' or met. Through targeted work with the DAAT local underage alcohol sales have reduced by 14 per cent decreasing the risks of liver disease and other alcohol related disorders in later life.
- 110 The Council and its partners are taking positive steps to support local people with disabilities into employment although there is not a strategic response to this at present. For example, the library service has been working with adults with learning disabilities to support them into work. The Council is aware of the need to increase its own employment of people with disabilities. Actions such as these provide effective support for local people who may otherwise be disadvantaged.
- 111 While the Council is not a housing provider it is keen to support people into local housing who become unwell or have a wide range of disabilities. The Council has an LAA target to help 264 people into mainstream housing by 2009. It has funded several housing officers to work with the district councils to provide help and expertise to smooth the transition into a new home or provide the necessary specialist equipment to remain in their home.

Older people

- 112 The Council and its partners have a comprehensive strategic approach to older people that goes beyond health and social care. One of the executive portfolios is for adult social care and part of this role is to try and ensure that older people's needs are addressed across service priorities. This has led to the Council having a corporate response to older people that goes beyond health and social care needs and is based on what older people say they need. Services include Silver Surfers, intergenerational programmes, and leisure activities such as walking for health. In addition the response is sensitive to the varied needs of the district communities across the county – it is not a one size fits all approach.

- 113** The Council has a wide range of methods of engaging older people although there is limited engagement with the 50 to 65 years and BME older people. There is engagement with a range of older people over 65 years using existing forums, such as the citizens' panel and focus groups. It is clear how the outcomes from these consultations are reflected in service plans and policy decisions for example the review of the eligibility criteria. As a result the Council and its partners are confident that the needs and aspirations of those older people are being met.
- 114** Social care initiatives and projects are targeted to meet the needs of older people, including through voluntary and community groups. For example, day care provision, actions to improve the housing stock and improved routing of buses such as the Cango. There are LAA targets that focus on areas that reflect older peoples needs including the reduction in missed hospital appointments due to lack of public transport. A wide range of small scale innovative projects, have been funded to address the needs of groups of older people through the Older People's Wellbeing Team. The impact of these projects is being evaluated using the New Economics Foundation Wellbeing tool. The outcomes of this evaluation will help decide the roll out and continued funding of these programmes. This has been a co-ordinated and strategic response based on older people's views and needs.
- 115** The Council with its partners is seeking to ensure that its adult social care services including those services for older people are fit for current and future needs. There is a transformation programme in place and this is focusing on maximising independence but also providing care and support when needed. The Telecare and ENHANCE projects are tangible outcomes of the modernisation and respectively provide safety within the home, with 2,000 people supported with Telecare (over a three year period and including partnership funding) and 500 extra care beds to meet future needs.

Children and young people

- 116** Outcomes for children and young people in Hampshire are good and the Council with its partners have made a good contribution to these. Strengths outlined in last year's annual performance assessment have been sustained and built upon. Work has been undertaken to address the weaknesses and all of them have been fully or partially dealt with. The arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are good and services for children and young people in care and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are good. The realignment of Council services into the children's department has made it more effective and efficient in terms of its service delivery. Partnerships have remained effective and they have a strong commitment to the preventative strategy and to shifting and developing resources to deliver it through multi- agency working. Engagement with children, young people, their families and carers in developing priorities and in reviewing performance is good.

- 117 The management of services for children and young people is good. Partnership working to deliver Hampshire priorities for children and young people is effective and built on good relationships. The partnership is focusing resource where it is needed to tackle disadvantage within a generally prosperous county. The Director of Children's Services and the senior management team provide very effective leadership for the partnership and there is a high level of commitment from the lead member to promoting better outcomes for children and young people.
- 118 The combined work of the Council and its partners in securing the health of children and young people is good and the contribution of local health services, to addressing health inequalities for children and young people in Hampshire is good. Children have a good start in life with national targets set for the health of children and young people being met in most areas and exceeded in some. Overall, the health of children and young people in Hampshire is the same as, or in some instances, better than the England average. However, there are significant health inequalities between areas within the county but many key initiatives are appropriately focussed on areas of deprivation and associated health inequality. Children's Centres, Sure Start projects, the 'Better Chances-Better Lives' 12 Schools Scheme, as well as the Healthy Schools initiative more generally, all offer good support to families and schools to improve the health of their children and young people.
- 119 Child and adolescent mental health provision for children and young people is good overall although the service for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inconsistent across the county and inadequate in some areas. Minimum health surveillance is routinely provided for all children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but there are some delays in identifying significant health and/or developmental problems. All looked after children receive annual health screening, dental checks and immunisations where appropriate.
- 120 The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk, or requiring safeguarding, is good and preventative services are having a very positive impact on improving outcomes for these children and young people. In 2006, the percentage of initial assessments completed within seven days and the percentage of core assessments completed within 35 days had significantly increased and were judged good with performance noted to be above that of similar councils. Some of these improvements have been maintained; the numbers of children on the register, the percentage of re-registrations, reviews and de-registrations are in line with similar councils. There are a number of effective multi-agency initiatives in place to reduce anti-social behaviour and to prevent offending and reduce re-offending.

- 121** The Council makes an excellent contribution to ensuring that children and young people enjoy life and achieve. Children make a good start to their education through excellent child caring facilities, good nursery and day care provision and a strong early years education, which prepares them well for school. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Developments in provision for children and young people with LDD are well informed by detailed assessments of need and the promotion of inclusion has been a key guiding principle for several years. The collection and analysis of data on the educational progress of children and young people with SEN is outstanding. Schools are given good support for self evaluation and their work in such respects is subject to rigorous moderation by local authority staff.
- 122** The Council makes an excellent contribution to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution. Its services for children and young people are making a difference and are beginning to have a real impact on their lives. In most primary schools, a good proportion of secondary schools, and all special schools, pupils are making a positive contribution to the community. Children and young people are willing to take responsibility and become enterprising individuals. For example, children have opportunities to interview their future teachers and children's views about new developments are taken seriously by the council. Effective measures are taken to involve children and young people who are in care in planning and reviewing the provision made for them at both individual and setting/service level. Programmes such as 'I am a child in care get me out of here' and the CAT mark given to establishments inspected or visited by young people has also given looked after children opportunities to express their views.
- 123** The Council makes a good contribution to ensuring children and young people achieve economic wellbeing. Provision for young people aged 14 to 19 is very good with high success and participation rates in most areas. The authority and its partners work closely to improve quality and build capacity to meet the needs of communities. Detailed participation data is used rigorously to manage performance and young people receive effective advice and guidance. Innovative approaches to prevent disengagement and improve equality of access are beginning to have an effect. Many providers are nationally recognised as outstanding. A wide choice of options is expanding as consortia develop although choice varies across the county. Connexions staff provide effective advice and guidance. However there is insufficient provision at level 1 for those aged 16 and over, and for disabled people when they reach 19.
- 124** Capacity to improve is good. However joint commissioning and partnership resource use is underdeveloped and the comprehensive framework for needs analysis is not yet in place to support this work.

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 Hampshire County Council was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from 8 to 18 May 2007.
- 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.