

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	13 January 2004
Subject:	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Executive Director (Organisational Development)
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Strategy and External Affairs
Status:	Part I
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	None

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report advises cabinet of the outcome of the 2003 Comprehensive Performance Assessment Score for Harrow. It compares the Council's performance for 2002 with that for 2003. It also proposes that the Council applies for a corporate reassessment in 2004.

2. **Recommendations** (for decision by Cabinet)

- 2.1 **That the Cabinet note the outcome of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment for 2003.**
- 2.2 **That the Council apply for a corporate reassessment under the exceptional circumstances provisions of the Audit Commission's guidance - Applying for a Corporate Assessment.**

Reason: To enable progress within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

- 3.1 Not applicable.

4. **Policy Context (including relevant previous decisions)**

- 4.1 Cabinet at its meeting on 11 November 2003 Minute 369 considered the Corporate Performance Assessment Process for 2003 and 2004.

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

5.1 This report is relevant to all of the vision and strategic corporate priorities agreed by Cabinet in May 2002.

6. Background Information

6.1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced in 2002 by the Government as a way of supporting Councils to deliver improvements in services to local people.

CPA comprised two elements:-

- (1) It brought together existing information on service performance from Best Value Performance indicators, and inspections. These are brought together in a service score.
- (2) A corporate assessment of a Council's ability to improve.

These two elements are brought together to reach an overall judgement of whether a Council was excellent, good, fair, weak or poor.

6.2 CPA 2003

The new CPA information published on 18 December 2003 is based principally on reported changes in service performance during 2003. There has not been a further corporate assessment this year - and this is discussed further in the report. However in lieu of this complete reassessment the Audit Commission has issued a 'relationship manager letter' which summarises the improvements made by the Council during the year. The letter will be considered in detail alongside the Council's Annual Audit letter in a separate report to this Committee.

6.3 **How is Harrow Council Performing?**

Set out below is the Council score card as issued by the Audit Commission.

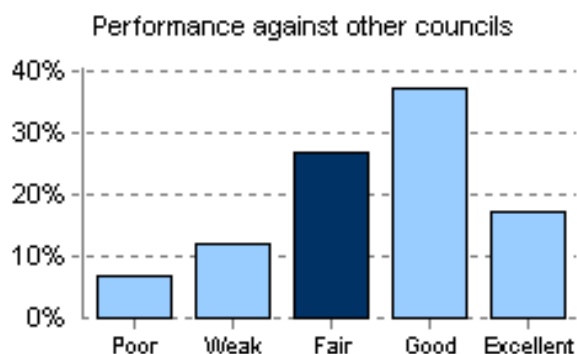
Overall Performance

fair

"Harrow Council has been measured as **fair** in the way that it serves its local people. The chart below shows what share of councils also received this rating.

We reached this overall rating by looking at:

1. How Harrow Council is run; and
2. How Harrow Council's main services perform.



1. **How is Harrow Council run and what progress has the Council made in the last year**

Harrow Council has changed from being weak to fair.

The council has made improvements in education, social services, environment, libraries and leisure over the last year.

The 'New Harrow Project' has contributed to improvements, such as cleaner streets in South Harrow. However, this has only been implemented in part of the borough.

The council is working with local partners to develop a community strategy.

There has been some deterioration in housing benefits performance, for example, in the time taken to process housing benefits claims. The council has recently introduced changes to improve performance against all of its targets.

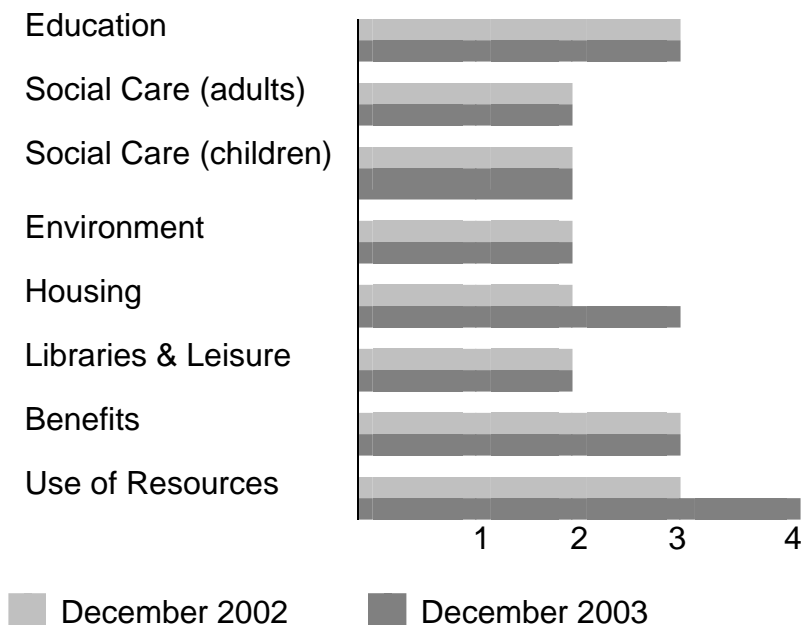
Harrow Council needs to maintain its focus on streetscene services and on building internal systems. The council has put plans in place to do this.

In December 2002 Harrow Council received a measurement of 2 out of 4 for the way it is run.

2. **How do Harrow Council's main services perform?**

We have assessed core service performance in the service areas shown below. Each service is scored on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. education and social care are being given more importance in reaching the overall service score than other areas.

Overall service performance 3 out of 4.



On the basis that we scored 2 for corporate assessment and 3 for service improvements we are now deemed to be fair as the matrix below shows.

Core service performance

	1	2	3	4
1	Poor (1.1)	Poor (2.1)	Weak (3.1)	Not applicable
2	Poor (1.2)	Weak (2.2)	Fair (3.2)	Good (4.2)
3	Weak (1.3)	Fair (2.3)	Good (3.3)	Excellent (4.3)
4	Not applicable	Good (2.4)	Excellent (3.4)	Excellent (4.4)

From the above it can be seen that the Council can progress to “good” by either increasing its service score to 4 and the corporate assessment remaining at 2 or increasing the corporate assessment to 3 as well as the service scores

7. Corporate Assessment

7.1 Despite increasing its service score - from 36 to 39 and increasing a category, from weak to fair, we are not automatically eligible for a corporate assessment in 2004. (To be automatically eligible we require a revised point score of 42 points).

7.2 We must therefore apply for a corporate reassessment using the exceptional circumstances provisions of the Audit Commission document - Applying for a Corporate Assessment - A Guide for Councils.

7.3 To do so we must:

- be confident we have made the significant improvement required to change category. We must be able to demonstrate we can improve our corporate capacity score from 24 to 36.
- submit an application for treatment as an exceptional case by 31 January 2004.

The application will be judged by an audit commission panel which will consist of

- a Senior Member of the Audit Commission CPA team
- a Senior Member of the audit commission’s regional staff
- a peer.

This will be undertaken during February 2004 and we will be notified of the outcome in March 2004.

There is an appeal process should our application be rejected. Appeals will be considered by the Managing Director of the Local Government Commission at the Audit Commission.

If the application has been agreed, the Commission will undertake the corporate assessment in May or September 2004.

8. **Consultation**

- 8.1 Within the process for the initial CPA review, a wide range of partner organisations were consulted by those carrying out the assessment. Further consultation will take place should a corporate reassessment occur in 2004.

9. **Finance Observations**

- 9.1 Any costs will need to be contained within the medium term revenue and capital budget strategies.

10. **Legal Observations**

- 10.1 The CPA has been put on a statutory footing by the Local Government Act 2003.

11. **Conclusion**

- 11.1 The progress made in the Corporate Performance Assessment is encouraging and reflects the improvement made over the past year. This progress needs to continue and much work is still to be done particularly in building internal systems and services and further improvements in service delivery.

12. **Background Papers**

- 12.1 Audit Commission - Relationship Manager letter - December 2003.
Audit Commission - Applying for Corporate Assessment - A Guide for Councils - October 2003.
Audit Commission letter - 15 December 2003

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8424 1024

13. **Author**

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