

APPENDIX B
Agenda Item No. 5

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – Chief Executive
INSPECTORS REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to discuss the implications of the inspector's report following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the council in February 2004.

2. Recommendation

That the Scrutiny Committee considers the feedback from the inspector, summarised at Appendix 1, and make any comments to Cabinet as appropriate.

That the Committee supports the proposal to include improvement actions within a revised Medium Term Work Programme, for monitoring on a six monthly cycle, and make any comments to Cabinet as appropriate.

3. Supporting Information

2.1 As Members will be aware, the council's CPA inspection took place in February this year and the inspector's report was circulated to all Members on 24 June 2004.

3.2 A summary of the inspector's judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of the council against the ten themes of the CPA inspection is attached as Appendix 1. The summary also includes explanatory notes alongside the identified weaknesses and information about the progress we have made to date in addressing the issues highlighted in the report, the majority of which were identified in our CPA Self Assessment.

3.3 Cabinet will consider the CPA report at their meeting on 7th September and the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committees will be given the opportunity to consider the inspector's report in relation to the relevant diagnostic assessments, which covered our work on the Decent Homes standard and Public Spaces.

4. Improvement Planning and Progress Monitoring

4.1 A revised Medium Term Work Programme is currently being compiled which will outline the key targets to be achieved to enable the council to meet its new key aims and outcomes. It is proposed to include outstanding actions from the Improvement Plan in the Medium Term Work Programme, due to be considered by Cabinet on 7 September 2004.

4.2 The Medium Term Work Programme will then be a key document in the council's performance management framework – summarising the key actions to deliver our strategy, and providing a tool for officers and Members to monitor progress. It is

proposed that relevant progress reports are brought to each Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis, to provide Members with an opportunity to review progress and inform scrutiny work programmes.

5. Options Considered and reasons for recommendation

- 5.1 The current improvement plan could be updated to address the issues raised within the CPA report, in isolation from the Medium Term Work Programme. However, there would be extensive duplication which may lead to confusion. In addition, the improvements will be agreed on the basis of the contribution they make to our key aims and outcomes, and to improving our services to local people; CPA should therefore not be considered as an end in itself.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 The resource implications of each action will be highlighted in the Medium Term Work Programme. There are no financial implications in the proposed arrangements for monitoring and reporting.

7. Response to Key Aims and Outcomes

- 7.1 Improving the way in which we report and monitor progress against targets is in line with the council's organisational aspirations, in particular to work strategically and to be performance driven.
- 7.2 The various actions arising from the CPA inspector's report will impact on each of the council's key aims, as well as its organisational aspirations.

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Background Documents: CPA report – June 2004;
AVDC Self Assessment January 2004;
AVDC Improvement Plan January 2004

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Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Summary of strengths and weaknesses for each of the CPA themes

Issues which are not already being highlighted in the council's improvement plan have been highlighted below in bold text.

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and aims provide clarity of direction • Embraced growth agenda • Vision supported by communities • Strong leadership internally and in community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing community planning arrangements are confusing for some partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspector noted the Council's decision to revisit our community planning arrangements and to create the Vision 2031 forum, and this is highlighted as a strength in the 'Learning' theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vision 2031 forum has been established and its inaugural meeting was held in March 2004, at which representatives were elected to sit on the board of Delivery 2031, the local delivery vehicle for the growth outlined in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear targets not yet in place in all areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted the lack of clear and measurable targets in the council's medium term work programme and performance plan. It was also noted that targets were currently being formulated for the new key aims and outcomes. (see also performance management theme below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed Medium Term Work Programme 2004 - 07 and arrangements for monitoring progress will be reported to Cabinet on 7 September.

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Prioritisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New priorities are in place • Wide consultation and surveys have informed new priorities • Funding in place to support new priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed approach to local and national priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector's comment refers to the council's decision not to make plans to meet the Government recycling targets for the next two years of 26% and 36% respectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are underway to increase our recycling rates by 4% with the introduction of a kerbside collection of glass.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-priorities not identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Although the medium term financial strategy supports growth in priority areas over the next four years, the council has not clearly stated where and if service levels will be reduced..." (page 11, para 33) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration to be given to our response to this alleged weakness
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained focus on customer service • Revised systems effective in maintaining focus • Outcomes of focus starting to show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of focus on old priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted that, "the new, fewer priorities will enable the council to improve focus" (page 12, para 38) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed Medium Term Work Programme 2004 - 07 and arrangements for monitoring progress will be reported to Cabinet on 7 September
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some confusion for staff and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted that the council was addressing this issue with the move towards is new key aims and outcomes, and the communication of this strategy to staff and partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to communicate our priorities to our partners (eg: recent presentation to Registered Social Landlord Forum).

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial capacity – debt-free • Well motivated and trained workforce • Effective political working arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, retention and sickness issues in some areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted that “the council is aware of these problems and is actively managing the situation” (page 13, para 45) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These issues are being addressed through the council’s Human Resource Strategy and specifically workforce planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern IT systems in use • Clear responsibilities and accountabilities between officers and councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of overall structure for partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted that the council is reviewing its approach to partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of partnerships is included in the council’s improvement plan

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service performance monitoring • Risk management in place • Good approach to value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate systems not yet producing clear outcomes for customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector noted the reporting systems in place for performance indicators but felt that there were few examples of the impact of this work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the councils performance management framework is underway which aims to address the issue of ensuring positive action in response to reported performance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets not always SMART 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets are not Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This issue is being addressed in the formulation of the revised Medium Term Work Programme to be reported to Cabinet on 7th September. • This issue needs to be taken into account in the development or revision of all council strategies and action plans.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service standards not consistently used to inform public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the council is monitoring performance using service standards, the standards and the results are not reported to the public via the website or in public display areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration to be given as to how this information might be made more widely available to customers.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakness in data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector referred here to the difficulties highlighted by the external audit of performance indicators in 2003. In addition the lack of monitoring of partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with data collection have been addressed by the introduction of templates for all statutory indicators. • The review of partnerships is included in the council's improvement plan

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Achievement in quality of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving structure plan targets • Strong performance indicators for housing benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below average PIs in 2002/03 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of nationally comparable indicators were below average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for improved performance against statutory indicators are included in the Best Value Performance Plan, and individual service plans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good leisure facilities • Meeting targets to reduce crime • Approach to customer care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some aspects of planning performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the Inspector noted the strengths of the planning service our comparative performance in terms of the Best Value Performance Indicators was seen as a weakness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for improved performance against statutory indicators are included in the Best Value Performance Plan, and the Planning service plan
Achievement of improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements made in local indicators and BVPIs • Good progress on crime reduction • Customer care and satisfaction is improving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling levels not improved for 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspector noted the council's plans to increase recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are underway to increase our recycling rates by 4% with the introduction of a kerbside collection of glass.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer using bed and breakfast for homeless people • Use of leisure facilities increasing • Improved planning performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in length of time homeless people in temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspector did note that as at 2003/04 there were no homeless people using bed and breakfast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our review of stock options includes consideration of how best we can 'enable' additional housing to reduce stays in temporary accommodation. In addition we have recently agreed a target of 250 affordable homes a year in the Housing Enabling Strategy.

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Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding streams identified for future long-term developments • Longer-term investments made in infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete picture on amount of money to achieve decent homes and other improvements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan identifying the targets and resources required to meet the Decent Homes Standard is currently being drafted.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved BVR process • Strong service planning and appraisal framework • Investments to improve staff capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of previous investment aligned to priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspector noted that the move to a strategy led budget in 2004/05 will support priorities in the future. 	
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong self-awareness • Recognition of the need to review community planning arrangements • Extensive use of benchmarking • Learning has taken place to inform future developments • Examples of learning internally and from customer suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No structured approach to sharing learning across the council 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration to be given as to how this can be achieved, and sustained
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No structured system to learn from customer complaints 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Best Value review of Customer Service is currently reviewing our approach to handling customer complaints
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency to look at Buckinghamshire 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the use of benchmarking information and ensure that examples are drawn from as wide a range of organisations as possible

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Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good response to planning for growth agenda • Advanced plans for Aylesbury town centre • Consultation on future plans involving the whole community • System and resources in place to assist future planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some important strategies/plans are not in place or sufficiently developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies highlighted in the report include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Housing Strategy and Business Plan which have not yet achieved a 'fit for purpose' rating from GOSE • A costed decent homes action plan • The procurement Strategy for which a supporting action plan is currently being drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Strategy has been revised and resubmitted – awaiting feedback from GOSE • The Housing Business Plan will be revised and resubmitted to GOSE by end July 04 • An action plan identifying the targets and resources required to meet the Decent Homes Standard is currently being drafted

GLOSSARY

PIs	Performance Indicators
BVPIs	Best Value Performance Indicators
BVR	Best Value Review
GOSE	Government Office for the South East region