

**Subject:** Comprehensive Performance Assessment  
Re-Categorisation

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 19 September 2006

**Report of:** Chief Executive

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Leader

**Key Decision:**

**NO/YES** (Please highlight)

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency  "X" In Relevant Box

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out for Councillors the process by which Councils can apply for re-categorisation under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process. The report details the options relating to the application process and includes the issues to be taken into consideration in deciding the way forward.

## 2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support all the Council's improvement priorities as the review of these will be at the core of the inspection.

## 3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

The Council's Corporate Risk register identifies two risks in relation to CPA - delay in the re-categorisation progress as well as the Council has not sufficiently developed & progressed to achieve a '2 Star' CPA rating. The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan and process addresses the latter point. There has been some delay to the CPA process as a result of the development of the new framework for District Councils. Applying to be in a later tranche of inspections would further add to the delay.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

4.1 Rossendale BC has made significant improvements in all aspects of its operation since the original CPA inspection report was published in January 2004. This change is well documented in the Progress Assessment Reports published by the Audit Commission and evidenced through improved performance. The Council has been clear, throughout the improvement process, in its commitment to an early re-inspection.

4.2 In July 2006, the Audit Commission published a new framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment of district councils. A two stage process has now been introduced. From 2006 the Audit Commission will undertake re-categorisation activity only where there is significant evidence to indicate a potential change in CPA category. This will apply in the following circumstances:

- where councils can demonstrate performance that is significantly better than that identified in the original corporate assessment, and the council wishes to be considered for re-categorisation; or
- where there is evidence of significant deterioration in either service or corporate performance which could result in re-categorisation if a further corporate assessment was undertaken.

4.3 There are significant benefits for the Council in obtaining an improved CPA category – these include reputational benefits but also include capacity currently engaged in the formal engagement process with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – formerly the ODPM and the Council’s inspection regime.

4.4 This report requests that Elected Members confirm their desire to be considered for re-categorisation.

### 4.5 Re-Categorisation Process

4.5.1 The decision on whether or not a corporate assessment will be undertaken will be made by regionally co-ordinated panels. The panel will decide whether or not there is a realistic prospect of a change in category if a corporate assessment is carried out. They will base their decision on both quantitative and qualitative performance information:

- Council’s 3 page submission statement demonstrating step change in performance in council’s priority areas and previously identified areas of weakness
- Use of Resources Statement
- Direction of Travel Statement
- Service performance information showing changes in performance since 2002/03, current performance, service inspection scores and Benefit Fraud Inspection Scores.

- Relationship managers will gather evidence from relevant Commission staff, including appointed auditor.
- Written evidence will be submitted from GONW lead official
- Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

4.5.2 Once the Panel has made its decision Councils will be notified. Priority will be given to councils where performance is deteriorating and subsequently to councils in poor and weak categories.

4.5.3 The Audit Commission has set out a number of submission dates for consideration of Council's applications for re-categorisation. These are set out below, together with the Audited PI set to be used and the Annual audit and inspection letter.

Submission Date	Audited PI set to be used	Annual audit and inspection letter
2 October 2006	2004/05	2005/06
1 February 2007	2005/06	2005/06
1 June 2007	2005/06	2006/07
1 October 2007	2005/06	2006/07
1 February 2008	2006/07	2006/07
1 June 2008	2006/07	2007/08
1 October 2008	2006/07	2007/08

## 5.0 ISSUES FOR ROSSENDALE BC

5.1 One of the key issues for the Council is the audited PI base on which the decision will be based. The figures for 2005/06 show further improvement from the 2004/05 figures.

5.2 The current Progress Assessment (Direction of Travel) for Rossendale BC is a positive document which reflects the improvements made, underway and planned within the Council. This will feed into the decision making process. If the Council applies by 2 October it is unlikely a Progress Assessment will be undertaken in 2006. The 1 February submission date would mean the Progress Assessment would take place as currently planned, albeit on a proportionate basis.

5.3 An inspection of the Council's Strategic Housing function is planned for December 2006. This will take place as planned irrespective of the CPA process. Whilst much of the work in preparing for the inspection is similar to that for CPA there is clearly a significant issue for any Council in having two such significant inspections 'back to back.'

5.4 The outcome of the 2006 satisfaction survey carried out on behalf of DCLG in September/October 2006 will not be available for CPA based on the October 2006 submission date.

5.5 A key issue in the CPA inspection process is the balance between improvements planned, introduced and embedded. The timing of the CPA will link to this.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

6.1 No specific comments.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

7.1 No specific comments.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

7.1 N/A

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 Rossendale BC has made strong progress in delivering improvements over recent years and the re-categorisation exercise provides the opportunity of having these formally recognised.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

9.1 Recommendation One:

Option A: That Rossendale BC applies for re-categorisation under the CPA process.

Option B: That Rossendale BC does not apply for re-categorisation under the CPA process.

Recommended Option: A

9.2 Recommendation Two:

Option A: That Rossendale BC submits the request for re-categorisation by 2 October 2006, with inspection held sometime in the period February to April 2007.

Option B: That Rossendale BC submits the request for re-categorisation by 1 February 2007 with a likely inspection date of September/October 2007.

Option C: That Rossendale BC submits the request for re-categorisation by an alternative date set out in paragraph 4.5.3 in this report.

Recommended Option: Option A

## **10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

10.1 Senior Management Team, Audit Commission and DCLG Lead Official

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
Name	Carolyn Wilkins
Position	Chief Executive
Service / Team	
Telephone	01706252434
Email address	carolynwilkins@rossendalebc.gov.uk

<b>Background Papers</b>	
<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
<b>Rossendale BC CPA Report January 2004 CPA – District Council Framework from 2006: Regional Panel Guidance</b>	Audit Commission web-site <a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk">www.audit-commission.gov.uk</a>