

Camden Local Strategic Partnership

Meeting	Thursday 27 March 2008
Report Title	Comprehensive Area Assessment: the new performance framework for the council with its partners
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Purpose	To advise the LSP of the national implementation of a new area-based performance framework that covers the work of both the council and its partners.
Recommendations	The LSP is asked to: Note the report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the recently passed Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the government has legislated for the introduction of a new area-based performance framework – the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
- 1.2 The CAA will provide, for the first time, an annual measure of the prospects for the area and the quality of life of its residents, and look across what the Council delivers both on its own and with its partners. It is designed to complement statutory partners' existing performance regimes by sharing some common performance measures and taking into account the findings of other assessments in coming to its area and partnership-based judgements.
- 1.3 The new framework will take effect from April 2009 but will be used to measure performance from 1 April this year. The proposals are still in draft, though, and will not be finalised until early 2009.
- 1.4 This report provides a brief summary of the proposals – which are still to be finalised – and starts to look at its implications for Camden's LSP and its individual members.

2 About the Comprehensive Area Assessment

- 2.1 The CAA will replace local government's current performance framework, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, under which councils have been assessed for a number of years and Camden has

performed well. It is also intended to replace Joint Area Reviews and annual performance assessments of childrens' services, and the annual star ratings for adult social care, although details of how this would work is yet to be provided.

- 2.2 The critical difference between the CPA and CAA is that the CAA is an **assessment of the area** and will cover all local services for which councils, alone or working with partners, are responsible. The following extract from the recent consultation document summarises the approach:

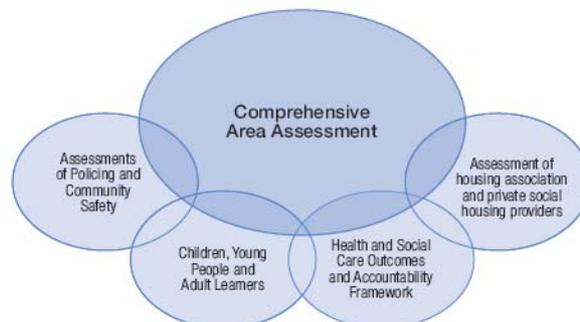
“Comprehensive Area Assessment will provide the first holistic independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there...It will recognise the importance of effective local partnership working, the enhanced role of Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements and the importance of councils in leading and shaping the communities they serve.

This focus on outcomes for local people requires CAA to look across councils, health bodies, police forces, fire and rescue authorities and others responsible for local public services, which are increasingly expected to work in partnership to tackle the challenges facing their communities. CAA, therefore, will be developed and delivered jointly by all the inspectorates responsible for assessing those organisations and services.”

Source: Audit Commission et al, Comprehensive Area Assessment, November 2007

- 2.3 The CAA will take account of how well councils, statutory partners and organisations in the private and third sectors work together to address the priorities for their communities. Other statutory sectors will continue to have their own performance frameworks but the intention is that they will be developed alongside the CAA and complement each other (see Figure 1 below). Evidence to date suggests that beyond the National Indicator Set, this alignment is in its early stages of development.

Fig 2. The inter-relationship between performance frameworks (Source: A/C)



Source: Audit Commission, CAA consultation, Nov 2007

- 2.4 The proposed CAA has three main elements:

- An annual Area Risk Assessment
- An annual Use of Resources assessment
- An annual Direction of Travel statement

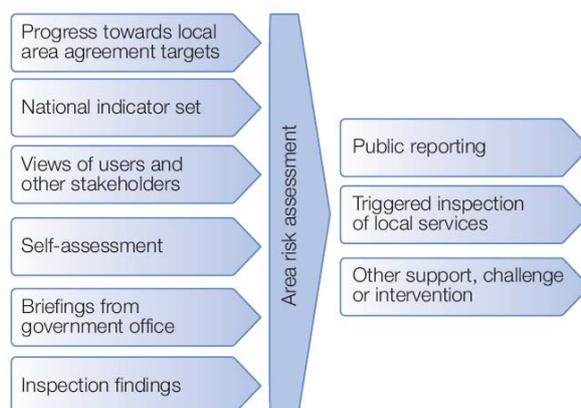
2.5 The Direction of Travel statement applies just to councils and fire and rescue authorities, in terms of their separate organisations' performance. The Use of Resources assessment applies to a range of public bodies, but again as separate organisations. As such, neither element is covered here. The Area Risk Assessment, on the other hand, will be area and partnership-focused and therefore have significant implications for the LSP and the organisations that sit on it.

3 About the Area Risk Assessment (ARA)

3.1 The Area Risk Assessment will be an assessment of the prospects for a local area and for the quality of life of its residents. It will look, in particular, at the likelihood of priority outcomes – in the form of the Local Area Agreement, and other national priorities – being achieved.

3.2 The inspectorates have committed to jointly making and agreeing this assessment, not just by bringing together their separate judgements, but by pooling evidence and conclusions in a genuinely shared assessment process. The figure below illustrates the evidence sources that will feed into the process, and what can result.

Fig 1. Annual Risk Assessment



Source: Audit Commission

3.3 The consultation proposes a set of questions that would be the focus of the Area Risk Assessment – the LSP would be judged against them, and would probably have to rate itself against them in its self-assessment. The questions are:

- How well does the partnership understand and assess the needs of its communities now and in the future?
- Does it use this understanding to inform its local priorities?
- Does the partnership organise itself and ensure it has the capacity to deliver these priorities?
- Has it secure and effective arrangements to identify and manage the

- risks to achieving successful outcomes?
- Are improved outcomes likely to be achieved?

4 Implications for the LSP

4.1 We will not be certain of the full implications of the transition to the Comprehensive Area Assessment until the final details are published in early 2009. However, from the most recent consultation it is clear that:

- The LSP is expected to have an **ongoing and direct relationship with the CAA lead** for the area, who will represent the Audit Commission and joint inspectorates. The consultation suggests that they will regularly attend meetings, and have an ongoing dialogue with the LSP, raising issues of concern or strength throughout, rather than waiting for a specific report to do so.
- The **Local Area Agreement** will sit at the heart of the new performance regime. The LSP's performance against the LAA will be reviewed annually by the Government Office for London (GOL), and attention will be paid to progress towards the targets, the adequacy of delivery plans, resource allocation etc.
- The Annual Risk Assessment will go beyond the LAA, however, to look at an area's performance against the whole 198 PIs in the **National Indicator Set** (NIS), with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. These indicators are owned and contributed to by organisations represented at the LSP.
- There will be a biennial '**place survey**' from autumn 2008, which will be used to gather data for the NIS and feed residents' views into the CAA.
- LSPs are likely to be required to complete and submit an **annual self-assessment**. In practice the Council is likely to be the lead on this, but it would require input and transparency from all partners.

4.2 As long as the details of the final framework remain unknown there will be a limit to the preparations the LSP can undertake. However, there are some key things the LSP can do during 2008/9 which will help. In particular:

- **Robust performance management of the new LAA** will be essential. This will need to involve both the LSP and strategic partnerships in challenging performance and resolving delivery issues across partners. Proposals covered under the LAA report on this agenda are relevant.
- Partnership performance management will need to go beyond the LAA to ensure **an overview of the whole National Indicator Set** of 198 PIs. Proposals will be brought to the LSP and partnerships

about the best way of approaching this – potentially by focusing on ‘exceptions’ ie. those that are not progressing in the right direction.

- The rolling programme of progress reviews for each **community strategy aim** will continue to play an important role, and will need to be informed by performance across the relevant National Indicators.

5 Next steps

- 5.1 Results of the recent consultation on the proposals for CAA are due out in late Spring 2008, and will be followed by a final consultation during the late summer and autumn to which the Council will co-ordinate a response. The final CAA framework will be published in early 2009.
- 5.2 In the meantime, progress is being made in terms of the preparations outlined above. The Council’s corporate performance team is in the process of ensuring that all partners are clear about those PIs from the National Indicator Set for which they are the lead organisation. Arrangements for gathering the data and preparing regular performance reports will be drawn up in the first quarter of 2008/9.
- 5.3 Should you wish to find out more, please contact Rachel McEvilly in the Council’s corporate performance team at rachel.mcevilly@camden.gov.uk. A link to the recent consultation document is provided below.

Performance Team,
Customers, Strategy and Performance
7 March 2008

Link to:
[CAA consultation document](#)