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Innovating, creating...

Comprehensive Performance Assessment
**Improvement Plan 2005/6 –
2006/7**

April 2005

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Introduction

Commitment to improvement

The Council is committed to providing excellent services and value for money for the people of Bracknell Forest. Continuous improvement is a fundamental part of realising this commitment. That is why, despite an extremely positive Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) during the third quarter of 2004/5, the Council has moved quickly to put this Improvement Plan in place.

Scope of this CPA Improvement Plan

Covering the two year period 2005/6 – 2006/7, this Improvement Plan provides:

- the strategic context within which the Plan will operate, including the Council's Vision and Medium Term Objectives
- the Council's CPA experience to date
- the Council's many strengths identified by CPA 2004
- an action plan for addressing the key priorities for improvement identified as part of the CPA process

Strategic Context

Vision

The Council's vision for Bracknell Forest is:

“To make Bracknell Forest a place where all people can thrive: living, learning and working in a clean, safe and healthy environment”

Community Plan

The Council operates in partnership with many organisations within the Borough and is a principal contributor to the Bracknell Forest Community Plan. This aims to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough by bringing together the long-term ambitions of the different parts of the public sector such as local police and health partners and the business, voluntary and community sectors in co-ordinated, forward looking action. The ambitions in the Community Plan were agreed in 2003 and are being reviewed by the Bracknell Forest Partnership with a view to refreshing them in summer 2005.

Medium Term Objectives

In December 2003, the Council agreed a challenging programme for the next three years and published, after widespread public consultation, a new set of Medium Term Objectives to provide focus and direct resources over the period 2004/5-2006/7. These objectives are underpinned by 98 key action points detailing what the Council aims to achieve over the period (the Council's Corporate Plan provides further detail).

The table below lists the Community Plan ambitions, the Council's Medium Term Objectives, and illustrates how they link together

Community Plan Ambitions 2002 onwards (under review)	Medium Term Objectives 2004-2007
Develop Sustainable Communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the health and well-being of people in Bracknell Forest • Make Bracknell Forest a safer place • Protect and improve Bracknell Forest's environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with partners to improve health provision within the Borough • To provide a safe framework for developing the Community • To create and maintain a quality environment
Improve access to services and opportunities in life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Learning and Educational Achievement • Promote social inclusion in Bracknell Forest • Encourage Communities to shape the future of Bracknell Forest • Promote innovation in the use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain quality and extend access to all services • Improve Older People's Lives • To raise achievement in schools • To increase participation in adult learning to increase basic skills for employment • To achieve a better match of Special Education provision to need • To improve outcomes for Children • To review the provision of school places in Bracknell • Work with the voluntary sector to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups
Give Bracknell Forest a Sense of Place and Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve art, culture, sport and recreation provision within the Borough
Support Key Workers and Meet Accommodation Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote sustainable communities through innovative housing strategies and effective maintenance
Improve Transport Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and implement transport policies that improves movement and maintenance.
A Town Fit for the 21st Century: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to redevelop Bracknell town centre • Support the Bracknell Forest Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead the regeneration of Bracknell to provide a town fit for the 21st century

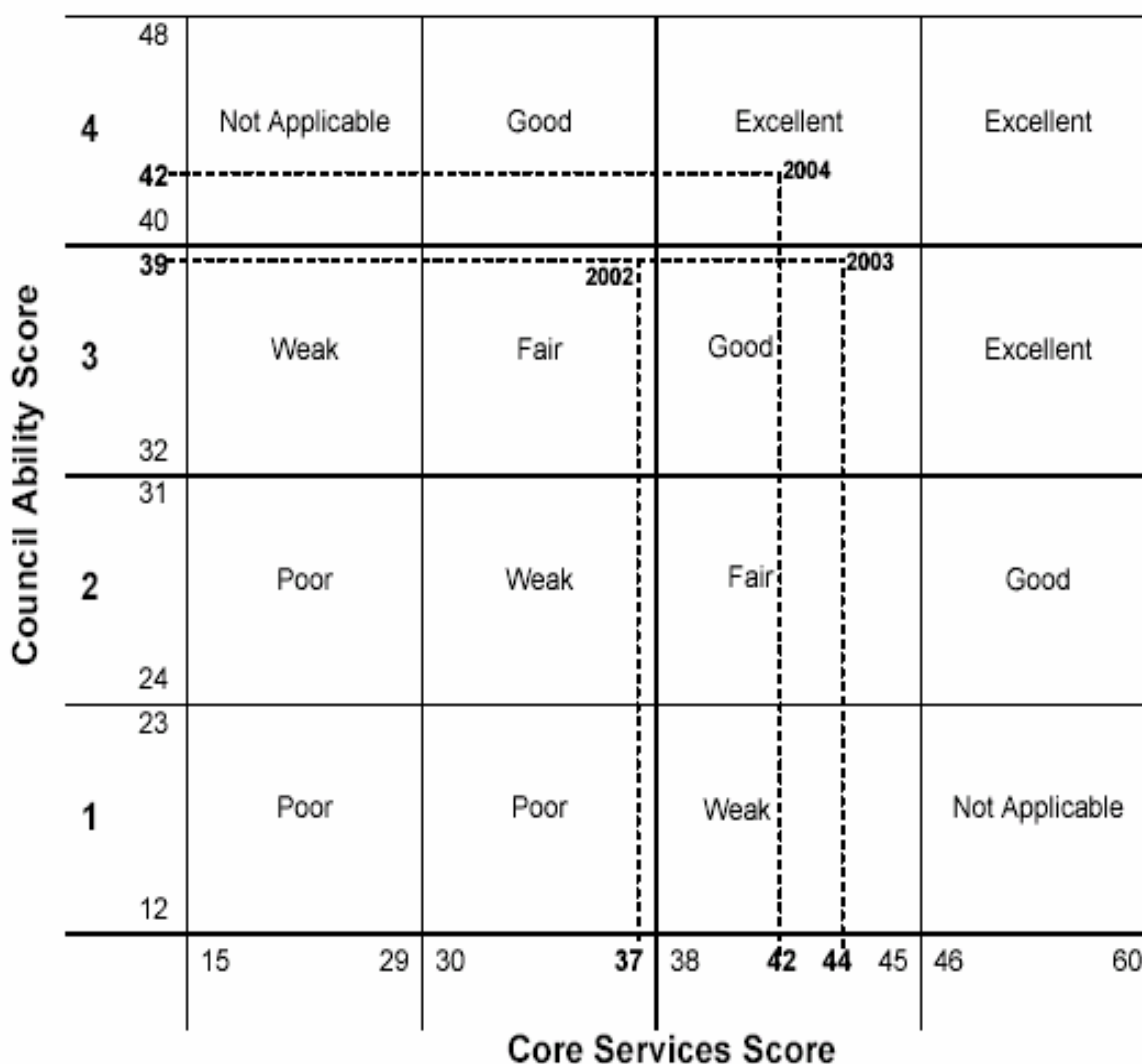
The Council's CPA experience to date

Significant and consistent improvement characterise the CPA assessments made about the Council since the process was introduced in 2002. This is summarised in the graph below.

In 2004 the Council's CPA performance was very high in both Council Ability and Core Services. Between 2002 and 2004 the overall picture has been one of consistent improvement. In this respect, the Council's previous CPA Improvement Plan 2003/4 – 2004/5 was fully achieved ahead of schedule.

In 2004 the Council's performance scores were equivalent to an 'Excellent' categorisation. However, the Council's actual category was "Good" due to the performance in individual service areas. In particular, the fact that Social Services was rated as 'One Star' precluded the overall 'Excellent' rating.

Nevertheless, the Council is proud of its performance to date and is well placed to receive the recognition of a CPA 'Excellent' category in the near future. This plan represents the next step towards achieving this objective.



Maintaining the Council's many strengths

The Council's CPA 2004 recognised that the Council has many strengths, including those listed below. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining these strengths whilst simultaneously addressing its areas for improvement.

Ambition

1. Ambitious longer-term plans, e.g. to regenerate Bracknell town centre and improve services
2. Clear and realistic Medium Term Objectives
3. Medium Term Objectives reflect local need and align with the Community Plan
4. Working with partners to revitalise the Local Strategic Partnership and develop longer-term plans for the area
5. New community cohesion strategy
6. Active and visible leadership

Prioritisation

1. Clear priorities for improvement
2. Medium Term Objectives balance national and local priorities
3. Community engaged in developing priorities
4. Prioritised improvement in response to weaknesses identified in last corporate assessment
5. Well integrated service and financial planning
6. Additional resources directed to priority areas
7. Priorities communicated to partners and community
8. Working to improve community engagement

Focus

1. Not deflected from long-term objectives
2. Sustained focus to drive core service improvement
3. Executive and Corporate Management Team are very focused on corporate priorities
4. Strong corporate and service planning framework keeps the whole council focused on what matters
5. Effective mechanisms to sustain focus

Capacity

1. High quality councillors, managers and staff supported by effective development programmes
2. Strong and effective councillor-officer relationships
3. Enhanced corporate capacity and scrutiny role
4. Strategies to maximise staffing and IT capacity
5. Robust financial planning and management
6. Strong partnership working and openness to new ways of providing services

Performance Management

1. Strong performance management framework embedded across the whole Council
2. Good systems for performance reporting
3. Intervention to tackle poor performance
4. Corporate approach to risk management
5. Track record of sound financial management and actively seeking to improve value for money

Achievement

1. Sustained educational achievements
2. Significant environmental improvement e.g. recycling
3. Information technology is delivering important community benefits e.g. Smartcard
4. Improvements in health and social care
5. Some successful community safety initiatives
6. 75% of Local Public Service Agreements improving in line with targets
7. Recent improvement in poorer performing areas

Investment

1. Major investment in new systems e.g. performance management, procurement and risk management
2. Investing in internal and external communications
3. Staff capacity increased by new human resource mechanisms
4. Information technology systems significantly enhanced e.g. call centre, planning on-line, leisure management
5. Strong financial investment in priority areas, including actively seeking external funding
6. Investment in poorer performing areas e.g. parts of housing, development control and transport

Learning

1. Excellent self-awareness
2. Lessons learned from previous corporate assessment and Best Value reviews
3. External learning used to improve services
4. Strong learning culture
5. Staff development and empowerment

Future Plans

1. Robust statutory and corporate plans
2. Future plans link to the council's ambitions and are re-assessed in light of changing needs
3. Stakeholders engaged in planning for the future
4. Active involvement with nearby councils to develop strategic long-term plans for the area
5. Well-developed plans for Bracknell town centre
6. Capacity for future plans addressed.

Addressing the Council's key CPA improvement priorities

CPA 2004 priorities

Despite the high overall rating achieved by the Council a number of key areas for improvement were inevitably identified in either the Council Ability or Core Service dimensions of CPA 2004. The following list summarises the key issues that the Council needs to focus on, in addition to its overall work, to deliver its fifteen Medium Term Objectives, and to seek to continuously improve performance across all service areas.

1. Adult Social Services: addressing the CSCI judgement that the capacity for improvement is uncertain
2. Children's Services: reconfiguring services to meet the Every Child Matters agenda
3. Housing Strategy: delivering affordable homes and the Decent Homes Standard
4. Housing Management: improving housing management performance
5. Community Safety: providing a stronger focus and strategic approach to the safer communities role
6. Performance management and service standards: improving robust performance data, and publishing accessible standards for all services
7. Transport: a stronger strategic approach, using the catalyst of the Best Value Review of Streetscene, formally structured within the second Local Transport Plan
8. Information Technology: implementing new systems in social services, housing management, and benefits.
9. Developing plans for refurbishing Garth Hill School

Actions identified to address the key areas for improvement are set out in the CPA Improvement Plan at the end of this document.

The Council's Service Review Programme 2005/6 – 2006/7

To ensure the best use of resources, the Council accepts a proportionate approach to the performance review of its services. Accordingly, the Council will use the resource intensive Best Value methodology to conduct a small number of cross-departmental reviews per year. This will be supplemented by a range of more proportionate review activity targeted at specific improvement issues.

The Council has currently scheduled the following Best Value reviews for 2005/6–2006/7:

- Community Safety: a joint review with the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- Community Leadership: including the Council's approach to community engagement and partnership working
- Corporate Emergency Response: including the Council's approach to emergency planning, out of hours emergency services, business continuity etc..

The Council is also committed to ensuring its Public Scrutiny Commission plays a key role in the performance review of its services. Accordingly an annual programme of review activity is drawn up in Spring each year following the annual stakeholder conference which is included in the Council's annual Corporate Plan published on 30 June each year.

Local Public Service Agreement 2

The Council is currently negotiating with the Bracknell Forest Partnership, partner organisations and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) a series of stretch targets to be included in its second Local Public Service Agreement. The targets included will be important elements of the drive for continuous improvement in priority areas and will be incorporated in the CPA Improvement Plan when agreed by the ODPM.

CPA Improvement Plan 2005/6 – 2006/7

Improvement Priority	Key Improvement Objective/Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Adult Services: "addressing uncertain capacity for improvement "	Continue to implement the Adult Services modernisation programme, particularly:		
	– increasing joint commissioning, and	April 2006	AD Adult Services
	– integrating sheltered housing provision with adult community care	September 2006	AD Adult Services
	Review and remodel day opportunities for people with learning disabilities	April 2007	Director of Social Services & Housing
	Extend the time that older people with dementia can live in their own home	April 2007	AD Adult Services
	Increase the take up of direct payments	April 2006	AD Adult Services
	Incorporate Adult Services performance indicators within the Performance Indicators Improvement Plan	June 2005	Head of Performance & Improvement
Children's Services: "urgently progress plans to reconfigure future services to meet the Every Child Matters agenda"	Put in place the following mechanisms to ensure the Council is well positioned to meet the Every Child Matters agenda:		
	– appoint a Director of Children's Services (DCS)	May 2005	Chief Executive
	– reconfigure the Children's Services and Education teams within a new departmental structure	May 2005 – April 2006	Chief Executive/ CMT/ Director Childrens Services
	– implement the strategy "Towards Better Integration of Children's Services", including completing the needs analysis	April 2006	CYPSP/DCS
	– maintain engagement of children, young people and other partners	Throughout	CYPSP/DCS
	– prepare a Children and Young People's Plan	April 2006	CYPSP/DCS
	– work towards a children's trust approach	Agreed plan by April 2006	CYPSP/DCS
– develop a Local Safeguarding Childrens Board	April 2006	CYPSP/DCS	

Improvement Priority	Key Improvement Objective/Action	Timescale	Responsibility
<p>Housing Strategy:</p> <p>(i) Affordable homes: "slow progress"</p> <p>(ii) Decent Homes Standard: "slow to develop firm plans"</p>	<p>Housing Strategy to be assessed as 'Fit for Purpose' by GOSE</p> <p>Agree affordable homes delivery targets as part of the Housing Strategy</p> <p>Submit Housing Stock Options Appraisal containing a plan to achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2010</p> <p>Implement the initial phases of the plan to achieve the Decent Homes Standard, recognising the potential impact of the Housing Stock Options Appraisal</p> <p>Develop a plan to implement choice based lettings</p> <p>Undertake a new "Housing Assessment" to determine the Borough's overall need</p>	<p>June 2005</p> <p>May 2005</p> <p>July 2005</p> <p>Throughout</p> <p>April 2006</p> <p>April 2006</p>	<p>AD Sustainable Communities and AD (Sustainability)</p> <p>AD Sustainable Communities</p>
<p>Housing Management:</p> <p>"some aspects of performance have declined"</p>	<p>Establish clear client contractor arrangements in line with the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Best Value Improvement Plan</p> <p>Improve the Standard Assessment Procedure rating of the Council owned stock to upper quartile nationally</p> <p>Improve the Housing Benefit performance on all indicators to above the national average</p>	<p>September 2005</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>April 2007</p>	<p>AD Sustainable Communities and Head of Bracknell Forest Services</p> <p>AD Sustainable Communities</p>
<p>Community Safety:</p> <p>(i) "slower to focus attention on the safer communities role"; and</p> <p>(ii) "strategic approach is weak".</p>	<p>Conduct a Best Value Review of Safer Communities with the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead</p> <p>Publish a new Safer Communities Strategy for 2005-2008</p> <p>Implement the Safer Communities Strategy and Best Value Improvement Plan</p> <p>Develop and publish a new Borough-wide Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy in full consultation with partners</p>	<p>September 2005</p> <p>September 2005</p> <p>September 2005 onwards</p> <p>July 2005</p>	<p>AD Sustainable Communities</p>

Improvement Priority	Key Improvement Objective/Action	Timescale	Responsibility
<p>Performance Management & Service Standards:</p> <p>"urgently resolve the robustness of the performance indicators"</p> <p>Performance Indicators (incl. satisfaction) - mixed performance</p> <p>Accessibility of standards for all services</p> <p>Continuously improve all of the Council's services</p>	<p>Implement a Performance Indicators Improvement Plan to ensure that fewer than 2% of audited BVPIs are qualified</p> <p>Complete the audit of existing standards for all services</p> <p>Publish standards for all major services</p> <p>Introduce the Customer Relationship Management system</p> <p>Ensure that no more than 10% of the Council's BVPIs indicate performance in the bottom quartile nationally</p>	<p>June 2005</p> <p>June 2005</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>Autumn 2005</p> <p>April 2008</p>	<p>Head Performance & Improvement</p> <p>Head Communications & Marketing and Head of Customer Services</p> <p>Head of Customer Services</p> <p>All Directors</p>
<p>Transport:</p> <p>strategic vision for transport in the Borough and overall achievement remains mixed</p>	<p>Develop and implement the second Local Transport Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provisional second Local Transport Plan in place - Final second Local Transport Plan in place - Accessibility Strategy in place - Strategic Environmental Assessment complete - Implement the second Local Transport Plan to address the 'Four Shared Priorities', particularly Accessibility <p>Implement a five year Improvement Plan for the Best Value review of Transport Provide by Bracknell Forest Borough Council</p>	<p>July 2005</p> <p>April 2006</p> <p>April 2006</p> <p>April 2006</p> <p>2006 - 2011</p> <p>Throughout</p>	<p>AD (Sustainability) / AD (Streetcare Services)</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services & Resources</p>
<p>Information Technology:</p> <p>Improve the systems in social services, housing management, and housing benefits</p>	<p>Implement the new Benefits I.T. systems</p> <p>Implement new Housing Repairs & Maintenance I.T. system</p> <p>Complete the implementation of the new integrated housing management IT systems</p>	<p>September 2005</p> <p>May 2005</p> <p>April 2006</p>	<p>Chief Info Officer</p> <p>Chief Info Officer / Head of BF Services</p> <p>Head of I.T. (SS&H)</p>

Improvement Priority	Key Improvement Objective/Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Education: "lack of certainty over funding plans for Garth Hill School"	Collaborate with Bracknell and Wokingham College on the submission of a revised bid for capital funding from the LSC for the Wick Hill Centre for 16-19 Studies Develop an alternative strategy for refurbishment of the Garth Hill College and other secondary schools' premises in the light of notification by the DfES that Bracknell Forest is in waves 13 to 15 of the national Building Schools for the Future programme.	Submission mid 2005 Strategy approved by March 2006	Director Ed&L and AD SP&R AD SP&R

