

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA PARTNERSHIP

STEERING GROUP

Wednesday September 17

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

This paper highlights some of Government's latest proposals as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment, outlined in a recently published consultation paper. The Steering Group is asked to note the contents of the report and annex for information.

For information

1. Introduction

1.1 The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) replaces the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The shift represents a fundamental change in the approach of Government inspectorates towards the delivery of local public services. It is recognition that organisations delivering these services are increasingly doing so in partnership and have improved over time. There are now greater expectations on local authorities and partner organisations to tackle challenges and priorities in the local area together, as evidenced by the new statutory element to the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Community Strategy, which aims to ensure that partners co-operate to develop and deliver both.

1.2 In response to this, CAA aims to take account not just of the Council's performance in delivering services, but the performance of partner organisations too, both statutory and non statutory. The focus for assessing levels of performance will also no longer rest with individual services or organisations but will look beyond these to the wider picture and assess how well organisations are working together to deliver better services in the local area. It will bring together the work of seven inspectorates to provide an overview of this.

1.3 A consultation paper on joint inspectorate proposals for CAA was published in July 2008 by the Audit Commission, Commission for Social Care Inspection, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted. Responses to the consultation are expected by October 20.

2. Background

2.1 The purpose of the CAA is defined as providing:

- a catalyst for improving partnership working, achieving better outcomes in the local area and delivering services that are more responsive and better value for money;
- a source of independent assurance for local residents, service users and taxpayers that they are receiving good quality public services;
- an independent evidence base for central government which tracks progress against the National Indicator Set; and
- a means of focusing, rationalising and co-ordinating inspection.

2.2 Government consulted on these general principles in November 2007 and as a result of feedback scaled down the original suggested approach. Initially, CAA was to contain four key elements:

- reporting performance against the National Indicator Set;
- an area risk assessment;
- a use of resources assessment for local public service bodies; and
- a direction of travel assessment for councils and fire and rescue services.

Government has reconsidered this approach and joint inspectorates are now proposing a simplified approach which consists of two main elements instead:

- an area assessment; and
- an organisational assessment which will combine the use of resources assessment and reporting performance element.

PCTs and police authorities will also be subject to a use of resources assessment which will contribute to separate performance frameworks from the National Health Service and police authorities which they are subject to.

2.3 Having refined this approach, the most recent consultation now outlines how the joint inspectorates intend to carry out these two elements of the CAA, how they will report performance and how they will address deficiencies where these arise. A copy of the full consultation document and consultation questions can be downloaded here:

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/consultations/907943>

Since the CAA will focus on how the Council and local partners across all sectors are contributing to improving outcomes in the local area, it is important for the KCP to consider the composition of the proposed new CAA. A summary of key points is attached at Annex A.

3. Conclusion

3.1 CAA will be implemented from April 2009 and will provide a useful set of challenges for the partnership to address in the delivery of core business. In the lead up to April 2009 the KCP will publish a new Community Strategy, develop an accompanying monitoring plan likely to become the full new LAA and undertake a bi-annual review. During this time, it will be important for the partnership to have regard to the key elements which comprise the new CAA.

3.2 The Steering Group is asked to note the contents of the report and annex. The partnership is also asked to note the deadline for the consultation period should they wish to individually or collectively forward a response.

FOR INFORMATION

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