



Coventry City Council

9.2.1

Public report

Report to

Cabinet
Council

17 January 2006

17 January 2006

Report of

Head of Corporate Policy

Title

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report reminds you of the forthcoming Corporate Assessment of the council, to be carried out as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment system, and seeks your approval for the Self Assessment of the council's progress and capacity.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 You are recommended to:
- (a) note the process for conducting the Corporate Assessment of the council and the requirement to produce a Self Assessment beforehand
 - (b) note the latest draft Self Assessment attached as Appendix 1 and give your views on the final draft that will be circulated to Members by 16 January 2006
 - (c) delegate to the Chief Executive authority to finalise the self assessment in the light of comments from elected Members, and any further information which becomes available, prior to submitting it to the Audit Commission.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Audit Commission published the final framework for the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment system in October 2005 under the title "*CPA – the harder test*". The name emphasises the fact that assessments under the new framework will be considerably more demanding than previously.
- 3.2 In the new framework, councils receive a star rating on a scale of 0 stars to 4 stars. This is based on a combination of scores awarded for:
- an annual assessment of the council's "Use of Resources"
 - an annual score for "core services" (based on assessments by the Audit Commission, Ofsted, CSCI and the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate)
 - a Corporate Assessment inspection to be carried out once between 2005-2008.
- The star ratings are announced each December together with an annual "Direction of Travel statement" saying whether a council's performance is improving, deteriorating or staying the same.

3.3 In December 2005 the council was assessed as Improving Well and was awarded 2 stars. This rating was based on scores for Use of Resources and core services awarded in December 2005 and the score awarded for our last Corporate Assessment which was carried out in February 2004. The Council's external auditors will be attending Scrutiny Board 1 and Cabinet on 24 January 2006 to give further information about this judgement and other performance issues in the annual Audit & Inspection Letter.

4 The Corporate Assessment

4.1 The Council will receive a corporate assessment inspection in March 2006. A team of five people will be on site between 6-19 March to carry out a range of interviews with elected Members, employees, partners and service users. The inspection team will also review a wide range of documentation about the council's systems, policies and performance. The team will include three inspectors from the Audit Commission, together with a Peer Member and a Peer Officer from other local authorities.

4.2 The Corporate Assessment is based on three "headline questions" underpinned by five themes. The headline questions and related themes are:

Question 1: What is the council, together with its partners, trying to achieve? This measures:

- ambition for the community
- prioritisation.

Question 2: What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve? This measures:

- capacity
- performance management.

Question 3: What has been achieved? This measures achievement in terms of the central/local government shared priorities:

- sustainable communities and transport
- safer and stronger communities
- healthier communities
- older people
- children and young people.

4.3 Each theme is underpinned by detailed Key Lines of Enquiry which inspectors will use to assess the council's performance. The Children and Young People judgement under Question 3 will be based on the Joint Area Review of Children's Services, which will be carried out at the same time as the Corporate Assessment. This is a separate and equally intensive inspection undertaken by Ofsted, CSCI and other inspectorates. Further information about this has been provided to Members in separate bulletins and at the informal Members' seminar on 16 January 2006.

4.4 Each of the five themes i.e. Ambition; Prioritisation; Capacity; Performance Management; and Achievement is scored on a scale of 1-4. These scores are then combined to form a score for the whole Corporate Assessment, again on a scale of 1-4.

4.5 The score for the Corporate Assessment is expected to be announced in June 2006 and it will then contribute to a new star rating for the council to be published at the end of June 2006. It will subsequently form a major part of the score for the annual star ratings to be published each December until at least 2008 and possibly one or more years after that. It cannot be updated, however much we improve in the meantime.

5 Self assessment

- 5.1 Prior to the Corporate Assessment, we have to provide a Self-Assessment. This will be used to help inform judgements made by the assessment team and decisions regarding the scope and focus of the assessment team's on-site fieldwork. The self-assessment will also be used as evidence of our self-awareness of our current capacity to deliver improved outcomes for local people.
- 5.2 The format and length of the Self Assessment are prescribed by the Audit Commission and the deadline for submission is 20 January 2006. At the time of writing this report, the self assessment was still work in progress. Sections 1-5 were near completion, (though some further information was still awaited) and are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Section 6 of the document, which covers the theme of Achievement is still in preparation. A consolidated final draft will be circulated to Members by 16 January 2006.
- 5.3 At that stage, it may still be necessary to make some changes to the text of the self-assessment, either as a result of comments made by elected Members or receipt of additional information – for example, it is anticipated that the ODPM may publish new comparative data about achievement against Best Value Performance Indicators at this time. You are asked to agree that the Chief Executive can make the necessary amendments so that it can be submitted to the Audit Commission within the required timescale.
- 5.4 The draft Self Assessment attached refers to an accompanying CD-ROM of supporting information. This largely consists of council documents and inspection reports which are readily available on the internet and intranet and it has not therefore been circulated with this report. Copies can be made available to Members if required.
- 5.5 The Audit Commission requires councils to give their own score for each of the themes in the self assessment. Your officers consider that a score of 3 out of 4 should be awarded for each of the following themes: Ambition; Prioritisation; Performance Management; and Achievement. We believe that we are also very close to a score of 3 for capacity, but that a rigorous interpretation of the Key Lines of Enquiry for this theme currently makes a score of 2 out of 4 more appropriate.
- 5.6 At our last Corporate Assessment in 2004, the Audit Commission agreed with our self-assessed score for all of the nine themes which were then used to form the overall judgement. If they do so again this year, and award the scores listed in paragraph 5.5 above, this would result in an overall Corporate Assessment score of 3 and increase our star rating to 3 stars.

6 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

- 6.1 It is proposed to finalise the self assessment and submit it to the Audit Commission by 20 January 2006.

7 Other specific implications

7.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Best Value	✓	

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Children & Young People	✓	
Comparable Benchmark Data	✓	
Corporate Parenting	✓	
Coventry Community Plan	✓	
Crime and Disorder	✓	
Equal Opportunities	✓	
Finance	✓	
Health and Safety	✓	
Human Resources	✓	
Human Rights Act	✓	
Impact on Partner Organisations	✓	
Information and Communications Technology	✓	
Legal Implications	✓	
Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Property Implications	✓	
Race Equality Scheme	✓	
Risk Management	✓	
Sustainable Development	✓	
Trade Union Consultation	✓	
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact	✓	

7.2 The self assessment makes reference to most aspects of the Council's operations, including its relationships with partners in all sectors.

8 Timescale and expected outcomes

8.1 The self assessment must be received by the Audit Commission by 20 January 2006.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location

None

Introduction and Summary

- 1 This self assessment provides contextual and background information for the Corporate Assessment of Coventry City Council in March 2006. It was considered at a seminar for all elected Members on 16 January 2006 and approved by full Council on 17 January 2006. The supporting documents referred to in the text are available on an accompanying CD-ROM.
- 2 In the two years since our last Corporate Assessment the council has significantly improved its services and the way it works. We were one of the first authorities to become a Local Area Agreement pilot in 2004/5 and gained our second Beacon Council award in 2005. Our Social Care services, once our weak point, were awarded two stars in December 2004 and we were recognised as "Improving Well" in our recent Direction of Travel Statement.
- 3 We have a strong track record of improvement, a clear and ambitious vision for the future and a good understanding of the context in which we work. Our plans for the future are soundly based on the needs of the city. Clear leadership, strong partnerships and a sound performance management framework will ensure that we deliver them.
- 4 We are not complacent and we know where we still need to improve. But we are convinced that the inspection team will find that we are performing well. Our self assessed scores are:

Ambition - 3	Capacity - 2	Achievement - 3
Prioritisation - 3	Performance management - 3	Overall score - 3

Our people

- 5 Coventry is the centre of a sub region serving 550,000 people. It is a growing city and currently has about 305,000 residents. It is the third largest of the seven West Midlands Metropolitan Councils in terms of population. Population density averages 3,089 people per square kilometre.
- 6 Coventry's population is younger than average, with 24% of the population under 18 years of age and 35% under 24. The high proportion of 18 to 24 year olds reflects the fact that two major universities – Coventry University and the University of Warwick - are located in the city. 16% of our residents are over 65, which is a little below the national average. Our over 85 population, currently numbering about 5,200 people, is expected to grow by 17% by 2010.
- 7 We are proud of our reputation for peace and reconciliation and have a strong sense of community cohesion. 21.7% of our population comes from minority communities, as compared to 13% for England as a whole. About a quarter of the pupils in our schools are from minority backgrounds and together they speak over 80 languages.
- 8 The city is home to an estimated 6,500 refugees and 1500 asylum seekers. With the accession of new EU member states, we have welcomed economic migrants from Poland, the Baltic States and Malta. 1319 people from 73 countries have been granted British citizenship in our Citizenship Ceremonies since April 2004.

The local economy

- 9 For over two decades, the Council has led a successful programme of work with private and public sector partners to regenerate the city and restructure the local economy. We have attracted significant inward investment and external funding, using our land and capital assets to facilitate growth and development. Once known largely for manufacturing, the city has successfully diversified and three quarters of the workforce are now employed in the service sectors.
- 10 Coventry's skills and excellent communications make it an ideal centre for business relocation. It is situated at the heart of the UK motorway network, and is only 65 minutes from

London by train. The Lyons report named Coventry as a top location for government science and policy functions and we are attracting public sector relocations from London and South East.

- 11 The city is currently undergoing a £6.5bn investment programme, 90% of which is private sector funded. This includes developments in private and social housing, business, distribution and science parks, shopping, sports and leisure, environmental enhancements and transport improvements. With the support of £57m New Deal for Communities funding, we are working with partners to implement a £300m programme of social and economic investment in the north east of the city.
- 12 The number of Coventry residents in work rose from 132,000 in February 2004 to 137,000 in May 2005. The number of people of working age (16 to 65) claiming benefits in Coventry fell to 28,800 in May 2005 from 29,700 in August 2004.. The 2001 Census showed that 32,000 Coventrians work outside Coventry, and 48,000 people commute into the city to work.
- 13 Average household income has increased over the last year from 86.4% of the national figure to 89.3%. However, there is a significant contrast in the distribution of incomes across the city with the poorest 10% of households receiving under £7,121 p.a. compared to the richest 10% earning over £52,808.
- 14 We have improved our position on the Index of Deprivation from the fiftieth most deprived in 2000 to the sixty-fourth, using the new methodology introduced in 2004. However, we remain concerned about absolute deprivation levels and the differences between the more affluent and less well off neighbourhoods in the city. 33% of the population in Coventry reside in areas that are currently designated as being in the 20% most deprived areas in England.

Housing and health

- 15 There are about 128,000 dwellings in the city, of which approximately 19% are rented through Registered Social Landlords. The council transferred its own housing stock to an RSL in a large scale voluntary transfer in 2000. The demand for social rented housing exceeds the supply and there is a lack of some specialist accommodation, such as for people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities or older people needing care and support. We usually have only 2 or 3 homeless families in emergency accommodation with an average length of stay of 2 weeks.
- 16 Housing development is taking place on an almost unprecedented scale and we anticipate that some 20,000 new homes will be built by housing developers in the city over the next ten years. Recent research shows that average house prices in Coventry are now about five times the average household income. Our Housing Strategy aims to meet the demand for affordable housing (either for rent or part ownership), which will encourage more young professionals to settle in the City.
- 17 Coventry is one of the 70 local authorities in the Spearhead Group tackling health inequalities. Life expectancy is 75.6 years for men (against a national average of 76.8) and 80.1 years for women, one year less than the national average. The latest published data shows that life expectancy has increased by approximately 3 years in all areas but the difference in average age of death between electoral wards has remained at approximately 10 years. Smoking is the biggest single contributor to the differences in life expectancy between various parts of the city.

Political leadership

- 18 The City Council was Labour controlled for many years until 2003, since when it has been under no overall control. The Conservative party has formed the administration since June 2004. The current political composition is:
 - Conservative - 27 seats
 - Labour - 20 seats
 - Liberal Democrat - 3 seats
 - Socialist - 2 seats
 - Independent - 2 seats

- 19 Our 2005 Direction of Travel statement recognised that *“the council provides strong community leadership and contributes significantly to partnership working.”*[Document xxx]. There are 54 elected Members, 69% of whom are male and 31% female. Five elected members (9% of the total), including both the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, come from visible minority communities.
- 20 The Council operates on the Leader and Cabinet model. There are nine Cabinet members, with specific portfolio responsibilities as follows:
- Policy, Leadership & Governance (held by the Leader)
 - Finance & Equalities (held by the Deputy Leader)
 - Adult Education, Libraries, Sport & Leisure
 - Children's Services
 - City Services
 - Community Services
 - Corporate & Customer Services
 - Health & Housing
 - Urban Regeneration & Regional Planning

People and Money

- 21 The Council is the largest employer in the City, with about 16000 employees, half of whom are part time. Women make up about three quarters of the total workforce and half of the top 5% of earners. Approximately 10% of employees come from black and minority communities and about 5% are in the top 5% of earners.
- 22 The Chief Executive leads a Management Board made up of:
- Director of Children, Learning & Young People
 - Director of City Development
 - Director of City Services
 - Director of Community Services
 - Director of Finance & ICT
 - Director of Legal & Democratic Services
 - Head of Corporate Policy
 - Head of Human Resources
 - Head of Neighbourhood Management
 - Communication & Media Relations Manager
- 23 The Management Board is supported by the Corporate Management Team of the council's 70 most senior managers. This meets quarterly to discuss and agree managerial priorities and to ensure coherent and consistent leadership across the council. We have recently built on our area co-ordination and regeneration track record and adopted a new Neighbourhood Management structure to improve local public services and community involvement and to address issues of particular importance to residents, such as community safety and liveability.
- 24 The council's financial framework is set out in our Medium Term Financial Strategy. The net revenue budget for 2005/06 is £382m and we have a £124m capital programme. The Band D Council Tax for 2005/06 is £1,258. We have achieved our Gershon efficiencies for 2005/06 [Document xxx], but the need to reduce costs and make significant new efficiency savings in 2006/07 and 2007/08 is a major challenge.
- 25 Council tax increases have been consistently below average in recent years despite significant investment in priority services. This has been achieved through clear prioritisation, the identification of on-going efficiency savings, significant external income and successful lobbying for a fairer RSG allocation. Our 2004/05 Audit and Inspection Letter notes that *“the Council recognises the need to respond to predicted financial shortfalls proactively by managing and controlling future expenditure and ensuring that its balances are used effectively.”*[Document xxx]

A Council with a Vision

- 1 We recognise that the Council has a key role to play in helping Coventry grow and develop in prosperity and to play its full part in regional and national affairs. At local level, we are determined to be a high performing Council that serves resident and visitors consistently well.
- 2 In March and April 2005, members of the Council's controlling group worked with the Improvement & Development Agency to develop a new statement of our Vision, Values and Corporate Objectives. These reflect the election pledges made by the group in 2004; the social, economic and environmental issues facing the city; the priorities expressed by local people; and the levels of satisfaction expressed on council services in the 2003 Best Value national survey.
- 3 The Council's vision is *"to make Coventry a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and where businesses choose to invest."* We have adopted the following corporate objectives to ensure that we work towards this vision in a planned, prioritised and sustainable way:
 - to improve the quality and efficiency of services and make it easier to access them
 - to ensure the best quality education for all and that children and young people can achieve their maximum potential
 - to regenerate the city and ensure people have a good choice of jobs and housing
 - to promote health, independence and choice for all citizens
 - to create a city where people feel safe and confident and no-one is disadvantaged by the neighbourhood in which they live
 - to make the city clean and green
 - to actively promote equality so that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
- 4 These objectives closely reflect the central/local government shared priorities and complement the overarching aim of the current Coventry Community Plan to *"bring together resources, energy and creativity of key organisations, groups, communities and people to work to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the City of Coventry and the health and well-being of its people."* [Document x] The council's determination to achieve these aims was rewarded by our successful application for Local Area Agreement pilot status in February 2005. [Document x]. Work is currently underway to bring the Community Plan and the LAA into one revised document which will also incorporate our second Local Public Service Agreement [Document x].

A key regional player

- 5 We are working actively with our partners to develop the city and to ensure that it can play its full part in regional and national affairs. The successful restructuring of the city's economy and a growing population is recognised in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which states *"Coventry will continue to build upon its reputation as a forward looking city which, along with Solihull and Warwickshire, can help create an important growth engine for the Region with links to the growing part of the South-East and the East Midlands."* [Document xxx]
- 6 We believe that our location and developing applied knowledge economy provides scope for economic and population growth above that already planned in the Regional Spatial Strategy. We are working closely with the other West Midlands Metropolitan Districts and the ODPM to develop a central city region as a new national growth point.
- 7 We were founder members of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnerships (CSWP), which brings together private, public, education and voluntary agencies to support economic development and promote the prosperity of the sub region. CSWP is managing the Regeneration Zone on behalf of Advantage West Midlands, distributing £13m funding, assisting 187 businesses and creating or safeguarding 600 jobs in 2004/05.

Getting our message across

- 8 Our communications strategy [Document x] recognises the importance of ensuring that Members and employees have a good understanding of the council's aims and objectives and the progress being made towards them. A monthly magazine "insight" provides regular news and information and this is supplemented by one-off bulletins on key issues [Document x]. The Intranet was relaunched in 2005 to provide a better source of information, data and news to all employees. A new communication strategy is in preparation which will introduce a formal and unified team briefing system across the council during 2006[Document x].
- 9 Regular feedback from our employees, focus groups held as part of our Use of Resources assessment and our last Corporate Assessment [Document x para 24] and the fact that 73% of our employees are now covered by Investors in People accreditation indicate a high degree of internal understanding of the council's and its key partners' objectives.
- 10 The Council produces a quarterly residents' magazine - "Citivision" – [Document xxx] which provides information about the council's priorities in an informative and entertaining way. More detailed information about services, policies and performance is available on the council's website, use of which has increased by xx% in the last year with a total of xxxx hits during 2005.
- 11 High profile campaigns, run jointly with the local newspaper, have shown that Coventry people clearly want their say on issues of key importance. For example a joint campaign with the tPCT to gauge public opinion on a smoking ban in public places in March 2004 attracted 6,000 votes whilst 8,000 people took part in a consultation on priorities for a city wide clean up campaign.

Making good use of information

- 12 The Council and its partners recognise that accurate data and information is essential if we are to plan services appropriately, evaluate the effectiveness of actions and ensure good value for money. Information is shared across the council and with key partners through the Coventry Partnership data sharing group and our Coventry Statistics website will be relaunched in January 2006 to enable greater access to socio-economic and environmental information and progress against the targets in the Coventry Community Plan [Document x]. Cabinet has recognised the need for further co-ordination and a central research, data and consultation unit will be established in the Chief Executive's Directorate in 2006[Document x para yy].
- 13 An annual household survey [Document x] allows us to identify residents' views, needs and aspirations for their neighbourhood and to measure progress against targets in the Community Plan and Corporate Plan. This is currently supplemented by community profiles of seven of the city's priority areas [Document x] with a further study under way.
- 14 Our 2005 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services notes that "the authority is making good use of data to target the performance of underachieving groups and to improve attendance. [Document x page 3]. It also highlights the "good partnership working to prevent crime, including the introduction of an information sharing management system. As a result of one initiative, youth crime in school holidays was reduced substantially"[Document x page 4].

Consulting with our communities

- 15 Extensive consultation ensures that our priorities match those of our customers [Document xxx]. Local views about the Wood End and Henley Green NDC area have led to a major demolition and rebuilding programme aimed at improving housing, the environment and job prospects while keeping the community intact [Document xx]. An Environmental Health Business Forum provides commercial uses with the chance to comment on our services and how they can be improved.
- 16 Our 2005 Performance Review Report for Adult Social Care notes that "*The council has continued its investment in and expansion of initiatives to consult and involve customers and carers in both service developments and the planning and delivery of their own care and support*" [Document xxx]. Our Early Years Access and Inclusion officer acts as an advocate on behalf of hard to reach families. The Adult Education service holds an annual conference with adults with

learning difficulties where learners put forward suggestions for new programmes. The Cabinet Member (Finance & Equalities) holds regular meetings with the Older People's Advisory Panel and Disabled People's Advisory Panel. A Black and Minority Ethnic Elders Forum was launched in October 2005. The 2005 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services says that *"The council makes good arrangements to gather the views of children and young people and uses them to make improvements"* [Document xxx].

Leadership and Partnership working

- 17 External inspectorates have consistently praised the council's leadership and partnership working. Our last Corporate Assessment report noted that *"Clear and consistent leadership is provided by senior councillors and managers"...* *"the council provides effective community leadership for the city"* [Document xxx page 8] Our 2004/05 Audit & Inspection Letter acknowledged that *"The Council benefits from strong leadership and good partnership working arrangements and has articulated clear improvement priorities."*[Document xxx page 4] The 2005 CSCI Performance Review Letter notes that *"The council has good partnership arrangements to deliver services and to respond to government and local priorities"...* (There is) evidence that these have been and are being translated into action and outcomes for service users and carers on the ground." [Document xxx].
- 18 The 2005 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services notes that outcomes for *"Enjoying and achieving"* *"are good with partnership working having a strong impact on improving them"* [Document x page 3] . *"The 14-19 strategy is developing well and strong partnerships and federations are in place. The council is carrying out further partnership work with the Learning Skills Council to address the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities."* [Document xx page 5].
- 19 The council is secretary to, and a very active partner in, the Coventry Partnership (the local strategic partnership). This is made up of 35 members from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors including a well developed Community Empowerment Network. The Audit Commission Validation Review found that the Partnership's performance management framework met the ODPM/NRU core requirements in all respects and that key players in the LSP are aware of and understand how it is used to drive improved delivery.[Document xxx] The Partnership was awarded a Green light by GOWM in 2003/04 and 2004/05 and the latest GOWM annual review noted that the Partnership's plans are clear and focused and that good progress is being made.[Document xxx] Our Community Safety Partnership was rated Green in the Crime and Disorder Partnership Leadership Audit in August 2005. It is currently being studied by Harvard University having been recommended for its good practice by the Home Office.
- 20 Members of all parties have consistently supported the council's improvement agenda and the current administration has continued to pursue longstanding key priorities such as education, economic regeneration, health and social care and community safety.
- 21 The council has also continued to demonstrate a willingness to take and defend difficult decisions to achieve its stated objectives for the city as a whole and achieve good value for money. Examples include action to: implement Single Status [Document xxx]; revise the threshold for eligibility for community care services to ensure that costs stay within control and we can meet the needs of those who need our services most [Document xxx Cabinet 12 July]; press ahead with upgrading key bus routes in the city as part of a £42m development scheme [Document xxx]; pursue strategies to support asylum seekers and refugees and challenge popular misconceptions about them[Document xxx]; make changes to long standing day services for people with learning difficulties [Document xxx Brandon Farm]; modernise special educational needs provision [Document xxx]; close five residential care units and open three new extra care housing schemes. Older people and their relatives have now welcomed these despite initial concerns and opposition.

Section 3 – Prioritisation

Improving Well

- 1 We fully recognise the importance of effectively prioritising the use of our human, financial and other resources. Service and community priorities are therefore clearly set out in the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Cabinet Member Strategic Plans. [Documents xxx]
- 2 The Community Plan has eight themes (currently being updated) which were developed as a result of extensive consultation:

- Jobs & Our Local Economy
- Health & Well being
- Environment
- Community Safety
- Equalities & Communities
- Learning & Training
- Housing
- Transport

The Council's Corporate Objectives closely reflect these themes, with a clear, shared emphasis on regeneration, education, training, community safety, the environment, health and housing underpinned by a commitment to equality. As such the Coventry Community Plan both influences – and is influenced by – the Council's Corporate Plan.

- 3 The council also has clear priorities for improving the way we work so that we can continue to deliver our corporate objectives whilst increasing efficiency and improving value for money. These Management Objectives are grouped under three headings – “Money”, “Improving the way we work” and “People” – as shown below and combine with our corporate objectives to form a balanced scorecard which measures our overall progress:
 - *Money* - ensure sound management of the Council's resources; deliver value for money to meet the Council's priorities; maximise resources
 - *Improving the way we work* - improve the quality of our service delivery; improve access to the services we provide; improve the efficiency of the services we provide
 - *People* - ensure that Councillors are well trained and well supported; develop the skills, competencies and motivation of our workforce; build a representative workforce, fairly treated; maintain the health, safety and welfare of our workforce.
- 4 The development of three year Strategic Plans for each Cabinet Portfolio - setting out how individual Cabinet Members plan to implement the Council's Corporate Objectives - has improved our ability to prioritise the use of available resources and identify areas of lower priority where savings can be made. Accordingly the 2005/06 budget provided for new investment of:
 - £7m to improve front line customer services
 - £3m to meet increasing demand in Social Services
 - £10m to improve highways, street lighting and the street scene
 - an additional £10m to improve standards of education
 - £1.4m to fund neighbourhood wardens and Community Support Officers
 - a £12m programme to increase the volume and choice of affordable housing across the city.
- 5 By 2008 the city will have benefited from £33m NRF funding. The use of this funding is agreed by a sub-group of the Coventry Partnership, with the council undertaking performance management as the accountable body. The allocation of funds for 2006 onwards is being based on a review of progress on the Community Plan to identify areas of greatest need. [Document xxx]

Some recent achievements

- 6 Our 2005 Direction of Travel statement recognised that “*Performance has continued to improve well in priority areas.*” For example, we are continuing to perform at the level of the best nationally on supporting people at home and delivering equipment quickly. The number of older people receiving Direct Payments doubled between April and October 2005. We have developed Supplementary Planning Guidance to deliver more “affordable housing” as well as “aspirational

Section 3 – Prioritisation

housing". Our Housing Strategy will improve services and save money by bringing people back into the city from expensive out of city placements. We have made good progress on Supporting People and are achieving the on-going savings required in provider payments.

- 7 We were awarded Beacon Status for Effective Environmental Health in March 2005 – one of only two councils to do so. The award recognises that the council can “*clearly demonstrate the positive impact of its environmental health activities on local citizens*”. [Document xxx] The recommendations to Ministers noted that “*there has been particularly good work in promoting health amongst minority groups and in working with the automobile industry on a long term basis to implement environmental management systems, thereby reducing pollution*” [Document xxx].
- 8 The Council appointed a Cabinet Member (Children’s Services) in 2004 and we have made it a priority to develop a new Children’s Directorate whilst maintaining and improving our existing service standards. Our APA letter notes that “Plans for an integrated Children’s Service are well in hand and reflect the views of children and parents/carers”[Document xxx page 7] School exclusions have reduced dramatically, taking us from bottom to top quartile and leading to the award of Pathfinder status by the DfES. Alternative tuition of 21 hours or more for excluded pupils has risen from 49% in 2003-04 to 100% in the first half of 2005/06. Our Annual Performance Assessment Letter acknowledges good multi-agency work to ensure that children and families have access to appropriate services, and that only those children genuinely in need of protection are placed on the register. The Letter notes that “the council’s performance on reviews and re-registrations of children on the child protection register is respectively good and very good” [Document xxx page 7]
- 9 Concerted efforts have led to greatly improved Council Tax collection levels. In year collection has risen from 91.7% in 2002/03 to 95.1% in 2004/05 and we are on target to achieve 96.5% for 2005/06. Whilst this is not yet where we want to be, the success of our strategy to date encourages us in our aim to achieve top quartile performance by 2007/08. Council Tax arrears reduced from £17.5m in 2002/03 to £11.2m at 31 March 2005, its lowest level for 6 years.
- 10 In the current year over 300,000m² of highway will be improved and about 1000 replacement lamp posts will be installed. Our library service, which had been condemned as Poor with uncertain prospects for improvement in 2001, now exceeds all the Public Library Standards. We have opened or refurbished seven libraries since then, with 35% of library opening hours being in the evenings, Saturday and Sunday. Further examples of our recent achievements are shown in our 2005 Direction of Travel Self Assessment [Document xxx].

Serving all our communities

- 11 The council achieved Equality Standard Level 3 in March 2005. A new sexual orientation equality policy [Document xxx] and action plan was approved in 2005 and a Community Cohesion Strategy and Hate Crime Reduction Strategy are in preparation. We have introduced a new service - “Healthy Horizons” - to help people with predominantly mental health problems to return to work. Launched in April 2005 and funded by the ESF and Jobcentre Plus it aims to place 480 people into secure employment over its 27 month cycle to 2007.
- 12 We continue to co-ordinate work with refugees and asylum seekers in the city and to promote good relations in areas of the city where they live. We successfully rehoused 130 asylum seekers in late 2004, after the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) terminated the contracts of two large private sector accommodation providers. NASS is in the process of awarding new contracts for the dispersal of asylum seekers and a revised Asylum and Refugee Strategy to reflect the new situation is in preparation. Integration of the new communities into the life of the city continues to be a key theme of our strategy.
- 13 Our library service continues to place a high priority on meeting the needs of all the communities in the city. Our most recent inspection report highlighted good work to assist visually impaired users, minority ethnic communities”. [Document xxx paras 56 and 81]. The LEA Ofsted Inspection 2004 rated support for raising achievement of minority ethnic pupils including gypsy and traveller

Section 3 – Prioritisation

children, strategy for social inclusion, services for pupils educated other than at school, support for behaviour and support for looked after children, as "highly satisfactory". [Document xxx].

- 14 Our 2004 report from the Adult Learning Inspectorate recognised that our adult education service was "one of the best in the country" and praised its "effective strategies to widen participation and tackle social inclusion", "clear focus on recruiting learners who are usually hard to reach" and "learning programmes .. specifically designed to meet the needs of different groups such as those with mental health problems and asylum seekers" [Document xxx].
- 15 Our 2005 Performance Review Report for Adult Social Care notes that "*The council has clear fair access criteria aimed at focusing resources on those in greatest need. Performance on E47 (ethnicity of older people receiving an assessment) and E48 (ethnicity of older people receiving services after assessment) are both above plan figures for 04/05. The availability of a range of BME focused service provision is demonstrated in the DIS. Good work has been done to produce a range of documents for people with a learning disability in accessible formats. The council has a clear charging policy*" [Document xx page 8].

Work in progress

- 16 While these examples demonstrate the ability to turn priorities into good outcomes, we are aware that we are not making progress as quickly as we would like in two significant areas - benefits and sickness absence.
- 17 In Benefits, wide ranging changes to systems, structures and processes have yielded a significant improvement in achieving the enablers set down by the BFI. The changes introduced have started to have a positive impact on processing times which have fallen from 67 days for new claims in September 2005 to 52 days in November 2005. However, we clearly still have some way to go and in the meantime this is holding back our CPA score. We recognise that our score of 2 for benefits currently places us in the bottom 10% of councils nationally for this service and we will continue to make it a priority for improvement in 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 18 We recognise that one of the main issues preventing us from achieving better performance is the need for an updated Benefits system. The software currently in use is outdated and does not integrate well with our Electronic Document Records Management and Workflow software. We are by far the largest user of this system, having a benefits caseload of approximately 34,500 claimants. However, despite work with the supplier and other users, it has proved impossible to make the improvements necessary. With financial support from the DWP, we will now be investing in a replacement system in the coming year in order to bring our performance up to an acceptable standard.
- 19 Sickness has been reducing each year since 2002/03, but absence levels remain a cause of concern. Average absence reduced from 14.17 days in 2003/04 to 13.32 days in 2004/5. Current projections show an average of 12.36 days lost in the current year, a welcome further improvement but well below our target of 10.32 days. This is extremely disappointing considering the extensive attention that has been paid to this issue, including a comprehensive Promoting Health at Work strategy [Document xx], the provision of much improved management information, the employment of an Attendance Adviser to assist in areas of high absence and detailed attention by elected Members [Document xxx Cabinet 10 Jan] the Chief Executive and Directorate management teams to the issue.
- 20 The sickness absence recording procedures were recently re-launched with 1000 managers attending briefings and employee information sent with payslips and in "Insight", the council's monthly employee magazine. The Promoting Health at Work strategy seeks to implement 16 of the 18 best practice recommendations on managing sickness absence made by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The remaining recommendations relate to penalising absence or rewarding attendance and these are now being investigated. This work includes discussions with colleagues in West Midlands Police where a successful scheme ("Always There") awards a benefit to employees who have had no sickness absence in a year.

Section 4 – Capacity

Our Balanced Scorecard

- 1 Our balanced scorecard is helping us to ensure that the council's internal systems and processes properly support our current and future needs. This approach recognises that the council needs to have a sound financial base, effective processes and trained and knowledgeable Members and employees if the council is to achieve its vision and corporate objectives.

People

- 2 As the largest employer within the city we recognise that the effective delivery of services and achievement of value for money is very dependant on making the best use of our human resources. Over the last three years we have developed a completely new HR framework, based on a clear analysis of the skills we need, our knowledge of the local and regional labour market and our desire to promote equality of opportunity and support the employment objectives of the Community Plan. The framework includes:
 - an Elected Member Development Strategy covering induction, annual performance development interviews, personal learning plans and a skills programme [Document xxx]
 - a management development framework, covering senior, middle and first line managers developed with our local universities [Document xxx]
 - A Training, Development and Learning Strategy to ensure our business needs can be met [Document xxx]
 - An Equality Strategy, covering both service delivery and employment issues to help make our workforce representative of our local community [Document xxx]
 - A Recruitment Strategy to bring greater consistency across the organisation, speed up recruitment processes and to help address recruitment difficulties. A complementary diversity audit has been undertaken to identify potential barriers within the process and recommendations for change [Document xxx]
 - A performance appraisal system, ensuring that all employees have the opportunity to discuss their work formally with their Manager and to understand how their work fits into the delivery of the Council's objectives [Document xxx]

We are now consolidating this work with the production of a draft People Management Strategy. This sets out the Council's approach to Human Resources over the coming three years. [Document xxx]

- 3 Although our performance on the Best Value equality measures is relatively strong, we still have work to do to build a truly representative workforce. We are working with Job Centre Plus and the Coventry Partnership on a "Local People for Local Jobs" initiative which includes using more community based recruitment methods and a wider range of recruitment techniques and with Remploy to develop access to Council employment opportunities for disabled people. We are also aiming to build capacity by providing training for the independent and voluntary sector through our NVQ training centre.

Improving the way we work

- 4 Our last Corporate Assessment report noted that "*Clear and consistent leadership is provided by senior councillors and managers*" and that "*Councillors have also managed the transition to no overall political control in a responsible and effective way.*" [Document xxx paras 20 & 38] These strengths have helped the council adjust to a change in administration in June 2004 and Member/Officer relationships remain very positive and productive.

Accountability and decision making

- 5 The nine Cabinet Members have clearly defined portfolios and each produces a Strategic Plan [Document xx] which sets out how the work of her/his portfolio will contribute to the achievement

Section 4 – Capacity

of the Corporate Plan. Actions from these plans cascade into Operational Plans and Team Plans which set out the responsibilities of managers and employees. Each member of staff has an annual appraisal where their responsibilities for the coming year are outlined and agreed.

- 6 The Cabinet meets fortnightly and representatives of each of the Opposition groups are invited to attend and take part in discussion. Individual Cabinet Members take decisions relating to their portfolio at formal meetings held in public. The respective shadow Cabinet Member is invited to attend and give their views on the proposals under consideration. These arrangements ensure openness and accountability, while the opportunity for members of all parties to comment before decisions are taken means that only 3 decisions have been called in for scrutiny this year.
- 7 The Council has four Scrutiny Boards with work co-ordinated by a Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. Management responsibility for support to the scrutiny function has recently transferred to the Chief Executive's Directorate with a view to closer integration with the forward planning and the improvement and value for money agendas. The Scrutiny Boards prepare an annual report on their work for full council so that all Members have a good understanding of their work and priorities. [Document xxx]
- 8 All reports to Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Scrutiny are considered in public, unless there are legal reasons which prevent this. In these cases, it is the practice for Members to receive two separate reports on the issue – one in public outlining the policy implications and one in private containing any confidential information, such as contract prices. All reports and minutes are available on the council website, as are the council's constitution and scheme of delegation.
- 9 The Standards Committee has a majority of independent members (five of out seven) and the Chair is an independent member. It meets regularly and has dealt successfully with referrals from the Standards Board and changes to the Constitution. There are Codes of Conduct for both officers and Members and the Register of Members' Interests and Hospitality Register are available for inspection. The Coventry Partnership has adopted a partnership protocol and constitution [Document xxx] and other key partners, such as Coventry Sports Trust Limited and CV One Limited (the City Centre Company) have formal Codes of Best Practice [Document xxx].

Managing risk and project management

- 10 Our last Corporate Assessment report recognised that *"The council has effective arrangements for assessing risk as part of operational planning and has taken a more robust approach to assessing risks in planning major projects"*. [Document xxx Para 45] Detailed assessments of risk, using outside consultancy where necessary, are conducted for major schemes such as the recently opened Ricoh Arena, a £113m regeneration project. The council's project management toolkit [Document xxx] ensures that risks are properly assessed before schemes are approved and more detailed information is available in a Risk Management & Insurance Manual [Document xxx]. Regular Risk Awareness Newsletters are produced to ensure employees are aware of how they can help to reduce risks in their everyday work. [Document xxx]
- 11 Risk registers are maintained at directorate & corporate level, with the latter being reported to Cabinet quarterly. The Council holds claims reserves, externally assessed for adequacy annually, but regularly releases funds to the centre if viable. We plan to have our insurers carry out an audit of risk arising from our major partnerships shortly.
- 12 We have produced a Programme and Project Management Toolkit which includes a gateway process to ensure that projects only proceed if they satisfy relevant requirements [Document xxx] We are currently bringing together our programme office and performance management functions to ensure effective planning and delivery.

Improving access

- 13 The Customer Services Strategy [Document xxx] sets out to ensure that by 2008 the council has a strong customer focused culture; offers services which are easily accessible to all citizens; consistently delivers high quality services; and works closely with partners to deliver them. The strategy is based on the development of a corporate contact centre as a key enabler of improved

Section 4 – Capacity

customer services and the phased introduction of one-stop shops. The contact centre and the first of the one stop shops are now in use, the latter being a joint initiative with the Coventry Partnership. [Document xx]

- 14 Improvements to our website have placed us in the top 60 local government websites for availability, accessibility, number of errors or warnings and speed. We provide free access to ICT and the internet in all our libraries, with 260,000 hours of computer time now booked each year. We offer a highly effective 24/7 out-of-hours service for Housing and Social Care needs.

Money

Financial management

- 15 Effective financial management is critical to our success and real progress has been made in ensuring that managers have the information and advice they need to manage their services. Our 2004/05 Audit and Inspection Letter acknowledges that *"improvements were seen in the quality and timeliness of the working papers provided to us in support of the financial statements"* and says that *"the Council should be commended for the quality of the working papers"* underpinning its group accounts. We have used the CIPFA Financial Management model to identify where further improvements can be made to the service and an action plan is being developed. A comprehensive and up to date set of financial procedures, advice and information is available to assist budget holders on the "Finance Friend" section of the intranet.
- 16 The council's financial framework is set out in its Medium Term Financial Strategy. This was revised by Cabinet in December 2005 and will guide the budget setting process in February 2006. [Document xx] At the same meeting, Members received a report outlining the availability of revenue and capital resources in the short and medium term to support the implementation of priorities in the Corporate Plan and Cabinet Member Strategic plans [Document xxx]. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council have since held meetings to discuss spending priorities with a range of organisations including the Coventry Partnership, representatives of the business community, the Youth Council, voluntary and community sector representatives and the council's trade unions.
- 17 Once the budget is approved, budgets are delegated to designated service managers. Budget holders regularly monitor their spending and income - most now have this information on-line - and take action to deal with variations. Corporate reports on budget monitoring are considered by the Management Board monthly and by Cabinet and Scrutiny Board quarterly.
- 18 The Council actively manages its reserves and regularly reviews commitments to ensure that best use is made of them. At 31 March 2005, the Council's reserves totalled £77m, the vast majority of which are committed to help pay for future developments. The uncommitted total (excluding the Working Balance) currently stands at £9m and the use of these resources will be considered at the annual budget setting meeting.

External finance

- 19 Our policy is to maximise the level of external grant income secured subject to the grant supporting Council policy, the existence of a robust succession strategy if the project is likely to be of an ongoing nature, our capacity to administer the grant adequately and satisfaction that we are achieving value for money overall.
- 20 We have been consistently successful in securing external funding from European and other sources to help meet corporate and community plan objectives. An External Grant Funding Team identifies grant opportunities while the European Funding team coordinates bids to the EU and works with partners and Advantage West Midlands to ensure that projects optimise resources available. Awards amounted to £24m in 2004/05 and are currently anticipated to be some £17.5m in 2005/06. In addition, the Council facilitates the attraction of other grants (such as lottery funding) to the local area. These amounted to £9m in 2004/05.

Section 4 – Capacity

Effective procurement

- 21 We have developed a procurement strategy and a detailed procurement toolkit [Document xxx]. We are currently reviewing our procurement structures with recommendations for change likely in the summer of 2006. Member and officer training has taken place, led by the 4Ps and IDeA, together with a training course for non-procurement experts. We are an active member of the Central Buying Consortium, the largest local authority buying consortium in the UK and one of six members of the West Midlands Forum which has developed a common standard for contractors on race equality. This has gained national recognition and has been highlighted as best practice in the National Procurement Strategy.
- 22 We have invested in internet procurement software, which is integrated with our financial information system. In the 9 month period since April 2005 we have placed over 27,000 orders electronically with a value of over £62m. We have now rolled out our electronic purchase order system to over 80% of our budget.
- 23 Services are outsourced when this brings advantages to the council, either in terms of cost or expertise e.g. IT provision is contracted to Serco, engineering services to Babbie. An arms length company – CVOne – is responsible for the management and development of the city centre and a waste to energy company is operated as a joint venture with Solihull MBC. Over the last 3 years we have reviewed all our grants and contracts for social care with the voluntary and independent sector and put all arrangements on a firm footing. [Document xxx].
- 24 Joint commissioning with the Primary Care Trust (tPCT) has speeded up the supply of equipment to vulnerable people and joint working with the tPCT and the acute trust has reduced bed blocking. We jointly commission drug treatment services and crime & disorder initiatives on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership and work with JobCentre Plus to get people back into work - both good examples of how we can help reduce public spending and improve quality of life in the city. We are jointly producing a Children's Services Directory with Warwickshire County Council saving a total of £50,000 between us.
- 25 There are formal partnership agreements with the tPCT under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 to fund the management, commissioning and administration functions of the Partnership Boards for Older People, Learning Disability and Mental Health, and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership [Document xx Cabinet 12 July].

Value for Money

- 26 Elected Members have made it clear that they expect to see continued and demonstrable improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness. We were therefore pleased that our 2005 Direction of Travel statement formally recognised that our work to date had led to "*clear improvement in value for money alongside quality of service provision*" [Document xx].
- 27 Our overall approach to value for money is set out in our Value for Money Self Assessment [Document xxx]. We are aware that the Audit Commission Profiles show that some of our costs are above average. We also recognise the significant challenges in our medium term financial strategy and the cost pressures facing us in such critical areas as provision for looked after children. We are therefore investing in the creation of a small value for money unit in the Chief Executive's Directorate to improve our capacity and accelerate progress in this area. In addition, we are currently working with the Treasury and the Department of Health Efficiency Unit to develop more sophisticated ways of measuring value for money for our social care services.

Section 5 – Performance Management

Performance management in practice

- 1 Good performance management has been key to all the improvements we have made to our services since our first Corporate Assessment in 2002. However, the impact is perhaps the most noticeable in our social care services where we improved from 0 star to 2 stars in the space of two years. As our 2005 CSCI Performance Review report notes *"the council has demonstrated a clear and sustained improvement trend through services available and performance indicators. Plans and priorities are clearly articulated and are guiding services on the ground and those under development....Resources are in place to support the achievement of stated goals and management structures are supporting the delivery and development of services...(There is) continued effective use of corporate and departmental performance management processes to monitor, inform and improve services"*. [Document xxx]

Performance management framework

- 2 We introduced a new Performance Management Framework in January 2004, but this was still in its infancy when our last corporate assessment was conducted a month or so later. We were therefore very pleased to find our approach validated in our 2005 Direction of Travel statement with the verdict that *"the council has a coherent planning framework and a recent track record of good performance management making it well placed to continue to deliver further Improvement."*
- 3 The corporate framework is based upon three levels of plans:
 - The Corporate Plan
 - Cabinet Member Strategic Plans
 - Operational Plans
- 4 The Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will deliver its vision and objectives at a corporate level. It covers a three-year period, updated annually, and includes high level performance indicators and targets for each Corporate Objective and Management Objective in a balanced scorecard. A separate technical manual for managers sets out the detailed methodology to be used for calculating each performance measure [Document xx] The Corporate Plan is formally reviewed twice a year by Cabinet and Scrutiny [Document xxx] and is the principal guide to the corporate health of the organisation and the progress we are making.
- 5 Cabinet Member Strategic Plans set out in more detail how individual Cabinet Members plan to implement the Council's Corporate Objectives over the coming three years. They review the previous year's performance, set milestones, targets and actions for the year of the plan and anticipate/plan for the following two years. Cabinet considers formal reports on progress twice a year and agrees any remedial actions if progress is not on target [Document xxx]. Scrutiny Boards also receive the reports and may choose to keep issues of concern under review - for example Scrutiny Board 1 has been receiving monitoring reports on the Benefit Improvement Plan and actions taken to reduce sickness absence.
- 6 Our operational plans set out the actions that Directorates plan to take to put Council policy into effect. They are produced by service areas and address a two-year period by reporting on the previous year's performance and planning for the year ahead. They are principally working documents to enable Heads of Service to allocate staff and other resources and to manage performance at officer level. Heads of Service and their management teams actively monitor and evaluate performance and amend the plans as necessary to ensure that targets are achieved and resources are used effectively and efficiently. Exception reports are considered quarterly at Directorate Level and each Director presents a quarterly summary of key issues to the Management Board [Document xxx].
- 7 Each employee is allocated personal duties and targets to ensure that team and directorate objectives are achieved. These are reviewed annually though the formal performance development review scheme [Document xx].

Section 5 – Performance Management

Targets, standards and progress

- 8 We have undertaken a range of work to improve employees' understanding of performance management and target setting [Document xxx]. Employees are kept informed of progress and priorities through the employee magazine Insight, and ad hoc Insight Bulletins are issued to provide immediate information about matters of key importance and to celebrate success. Insight is also used to convey regular messages about any key issues of concern, such as sickness levels.
- 9 We produce an annual Performance Report for members and employees. [Document xxx]. This complements the Corporate Plan and together the two documents meet our statutory duty to produce a Best Value Performance Plan. However, we use the documents to bring together a wider range of information than the statutory requirements including progress against the corporate and management objectives and the performance assessment framework for social services. More detailed reports on specific issues as necessary e.g. an annual report on complaints [Document xxx] and a one off report on the detailed results of the last Best Value User satisfaction survey.[Document xx]
- 10 Informal seminars are held for Members and senior managers June each year when the Chief Executive and the Management Board present an overview of performance in their Directorate and the key challenges for the coming year [Document xx]. A less detailed summary, setting out "What we promised and what we achieved" is circulated to all households in the council's magazine Citivision each March. We also publish service standards for our street services, housing services and, jointly with the Primary Care Trust, social care services for adults. [Document xxx]
- 11 Regular reporting ensures that any deterioration in performance is identified and acted on. For example our 2005 APA Letter notes that :*"The proportion of young people leaving care who entered education, employment or training dropped in 2004/05 from the very good performance level that had been established since 2001/02. The authority has done a case by case analysis of the reasons for this and has introduced tighter performance management and a new contract with its after-care service provider"*. [Document xx page 5]

Learning from others

- 12 We are keen to learn from others and contribute to the improvement of performance management. We commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake a review of the new performance management framework in late 2004. They concluded that *"the Council has made significant progress in implementing and improving Performance Management across the Council... There is a greater level of consistency and clarity in both the planning and reporting activity being undertaken, which should help the Council to retain focus on its priorities"*. Their full findings were included in our Annual Performance Report 2004/05 [Document xxx page 32] and reported separately to Scrutiny Board 1.
- 13 We are currently undergoing a Corporate People Management Peer Review in order to evaluate our work to date and maximise the value of our new people management strategy [Document xxx]. A peer review of the Coventry Partnership was conducted in 2004 [Document xxx]. We are piloting work on the Audit Commission Area profiles [Document xxx], the Audit Commission Economic Regeneration Performance Indicators [Document xxx] and Sport England's TAES (Towards an Excellent Service) Toolkit. [Document xxx]
- 14 The latest audit of our Best Value Performance Plan produced an unqualified report with no statutory recommendations [Document xxx]. However, we believe that our current arrangements for data quality control can be further strengthened and we are working with our external Audit Manager to ensure we can learn from best practice in other authorities.