

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD'S
COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) SCORE**

Date: 17 December 2009

Members Reporting: Councillors Maxwell & Mrs Bateson

Officer Reporting: Andrew Elkington, Head of Policy & Performance

Contact Officer(s): As above, Extn 6025

Wards Affected: ALL

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead received their Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) score in October 2009 (although Members should note there was an embargo on this being released until 10th December 2009). There were two parts to the CAA assessment – an Area Assessment involving the Council and its partners and an Organisational Assessment which examined the Council's use of resources and its management of performance. The former was concerned with how well local priorities expressed community needs and aspirations and whether outcomes and improvements were being delivered. For the Area Assessment the Council received no red flags and no green flags although the overall report that went with this part of the CAA was positive. For the Organisational Assessment the Council received a 3 out of a maximum scoring of 4.

2. **RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted, in particular the Council's CAA scoring.**

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
--

The CAA is specifically concerned with outcomes to residents and the commentary that has been received by the Council in relation to its CAA assessment gives a clear indication of where residents' needs are currently being met and where some further work needs to be done in order to ensure that robust outcomes are delivered.
--

3. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Background – The Comprehensive Area Assessment**

- 3.1.1 The CAA was introduced by the Government as a replacement to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), which all councils had to undergo on an annual basis prior to 2009. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead received its last CPA report in March 2009 and this indicated that the Council was a 3 star council that was improving well. The CAA was introduced in an attempt by

the Government to streamline the various inspection processes that the public sector is subjected to. These include inspections by OFSTED, the Quality Care Commission (QCC), HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation and the Audit Commission. It was also designed to ensure that the audit was concerned with outcomes rather than simply processes – which tended to be the main focus of this CPA. As such the results of the CAA process are expected to show a downward pressure on local authorities with some four star councils receiving a lower scoring.

3.1.2 The CAA process consisted of two elements: the Area Assessment and the Organisational Assessment. The first of these was a way of assessing how councils and their partners are working together to meet the needs of people they serve. As such it was designed to hold local public services collectively to account for their impact on improving the quality of life for residents. In so doing the Area Assessment examined the Borough’s Community Partnership and Strategy. It examined such issues as reducing inequalities, increasing affordable housing, reducing fear of crime, improving education, attracting investment and reducing the area’s carbon footprint. Although no scores were given for this part of the assessment a flag system was included in the final report. Green flags indicated an area of excellence and improvement. Red flags were areas that the Commission felt needed attention. It should be noted that the Royal Borough’s Area Assessment did not result in any red flags or green flags. Broadly this element of the CAA was positive noting a number of areas of success including recycling, street cleanliness, transparency, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles by schools.

3.1.3 The second element of the CAA was the Organisational Assessment. This examined the Council’s use of resources - in particular whether they were efficient and effective - and further its management of performance. RBWM scored 3 out of 4 for this part of the assessment. This is notable particularly given that the CAA was designed as a harder test and as such there has been a downward pressure on old CPA scores. The work areas of ‘risk management and internal control’ and ‘the use of natural resources’ were identified as being in the early stages of implementation. It was acknowledged that should planned outcomes be delivered in these areas the Council’s score would be expected to increase.

4. **OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

4.1 **Options**

OPTION	COMMENT	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
To note the report (preferred option)	Council and Partners engage with the Audit Commission over the Summer of 2009 to ensure they had the information required to make a full assessment of the activity within the Royal Borough.	All costs were covered from existing revenue budget.

4.2 **Risk Assessment**

4.2.1 The overall CAA report on both the Council's activities and the actions of both the Council and its partners in delivering services to meet local residents' needs was broadly positive. However there were some things noted as being in an early developmental stage and a community strategy refresh is now underway to ensure that these areas are developed should any future inspection take place by the Audit Commission.

5. **CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT**

5.1 Partners were kept informed of all activities that were undertaken by the Audit Commission through the Community Partnership and had an opportunity to comment on the final reports that were produced by the Audit Commission in October 2009.

6. **COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

6.1 Awaiting comments

7. **IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The following implications have been addressed where indicated below:

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Background papers: None