

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

26 January 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the receipt of the Audit Commission's first Organisational Assessment of the Borough Council

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. It works to ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.
- 1.1.2 Attached is the first Organisational Assessment (OA) of the Borough Council conducted by the Commission. The OA is one element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) that has replaced the former Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). CAA is intended to provide an overview of how public services are performing across the whole of Kent with the Organisational Assessments providing an opinion on the performance of individual public sector bodies. OA's are heavily focussed on how well the local priorities for the bodies are being delivered.

1.2 Organisational Assessment

- 1.2.1 The OA [**Annex 1**] concludes that the "Borough Council performs well overall." It also states that "The Council provides excellent services for local people and they have improved further over the past year."
- 1.2.2 One further important comment is "It manages its finances well and delivers good services at low cost compared to its neighbours."
- 1.2.3 These are welcome judgements on the Council's performance, especially given the constraints it has faced in terms of the resources it has available and the savings targets it has had to achieve.

- 1.2.4 The scoring system can be found on page 2 of the Annex where it will be noted that the Council has scored 3 on both Managing Performance and Use of Resources. A score of 3 is defined as “An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements. Performs well.”
- 1.2.5 Whilst it is gratifying to be assessed thus, I shall be meeting Claire Bryce-Smith, the Audit Commission CAA lead for Kent, on 22 January to discuss the scores allocated. I have no particular issue with the Use of Resources score but wish to understand in detail why the Council was not awarded a 4 for Managing Performance as my reading of the OA’s for other councils which have been scored at 4 for this element has not indicated to me why this Council’s performance should have been judged as less successful.. There is no longer an opportunity to seek a revision to the score but it is important that we understand the reasons for scoring 3 rather than 4 in order that we can make and demonstrate any improvements required.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The Organisational Assessment fulfils the requirement to communicate the judgements reached by the Audit Commission to Members, the public and other stakeholders.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 None save that Members and council taxpayers have received independent assurance that the Council is performing well against some very challenging criteria.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 The work of the Audit Commission gives an independent and informed opinion of the Council’s performance and its use of resources and is an important additional tool to discharge the Council’s accountability to its residents and council taxpayers. The judgements contained in the Organisational Assessment demonstrate that the Council continues to be assessed as performing well.

Background papers:

contact: David Hughes

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive