

## Comprehensive Area Assessment - next steps

The Inspectorates will be finalising the CAA methodology over the next couple of months, for sign off and publication in the New Year. It is important our continuing efforts to influence the way CAA are finalised is informed by the lessons learnt from the trials and councils' feedback on the consultation proposals.

Members are asked to agree that the LGA press for:

- Sector involvement in the proposed Inspectorate guidance to CAA leads (Audit Commission staff appointed to coordinate Inspectorate activity locally). The CAA proposals are still quite “high level” and we need to avoid any possibility that the guidance prescribes an approach to CAA that is not evident from the consultation paper;
- Stronger member involvement in CAA: Member involvement in the trials has been disappointing. CAA leads should engage with members in order to understand their sense of place and how local priorities have been determined;
- Assurance that CAA will not challenge locally agreed priorities: Whilst we want CAA to be challenging and drive improvement it should not question politically determined and agreed LAA or council priorities;
- Transparent evidence base for the assessments: Whilst welcoming the intention to rely on published data and the partnerships' own performance information (including self evaluation) the evidence on which assessments are made should be open and transparent, enable challenge by councils and their partners, and facilitate a dialogue about the conclusions that can be drawn from it;
- Assurances about Inspectorate capacity to undertake forward looking assessments: It is clear from the experience of the trials that the Inspectorates have struggled to deliver forward looking assessments about the prospects for future improvement. These are new and challenging assessments and we need to be assured that the Inspectorates have the capacity to make them;
- Further clarity around the circumstances in which flags could be raised and consultation with the sector about the arrangements for challenging the award of red flags;
- Peer involvement in CAA: LGA and IDeA have put forward a number of suggestions about how member and officer peers could be involved in CAA and add to the credibility of the assessments;
- Tangible evidence that the burden of inspection and assessment will reduce;
- Stronger integration of other performance frameworks (for example for health and social care, police and community Safety or children and young people, etc) with CAA. At the moment other Inspectorates do not seem to be articulating a similar sense of ambition for CAA and this is undermining the involvement of partners at local level.

These proposals are also consistent with the feedback from the LGA survey of Chief Executives on the new performance framework.

# 23 4

**Members are asked to agree the proposed issues on which LGA should continue to lobby for changes in the CAA methodology and endorse the LGA's formal response to the CAA consultation paper, attached to this Appendix.**