

Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

March 2007



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Rutland County Council

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Status of our reports

This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work and is prepared by your Relationship Manager.

In this report, the Commission summarises findings and conclusions from the statutory audit, which have previously been reported to you by your appointed auditor. Appointed auditors act separately from the Commission and, in meeting their statutory responsibilities, are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of the Commission (and the audited body). The findings and conclusions therefore remain those of the appointed auditor and should be considered within the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission.

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Our overall summary

- 1 This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council, from the Corporate Assessment, Joint Area Review and inspections that have been undertaken in the last year and from a wider analysis of the Council's performance and its improvement over the last year, as measured through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework.
- 2 The report is addressed to the Council. In particular it has been written for Councillors but is available as a public document for stakeholders, including members of the community served by the Council.

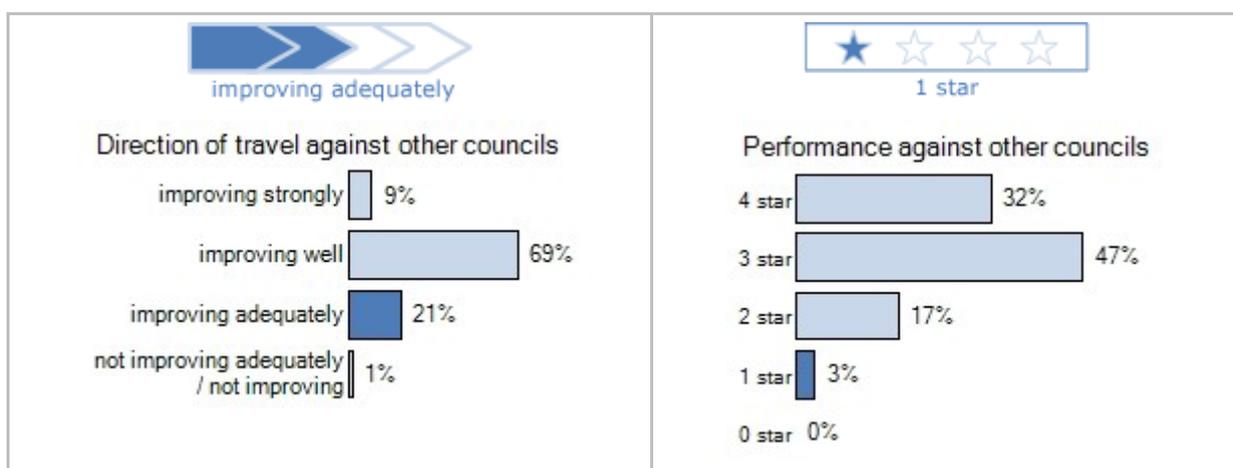
Main messages for the Council

- 3 The overall CPA star rating has reduced from two stars to one star due to a deterioration in housing services. A number of areas of the housing services are performing well below standard. However the Council has taken the positive step to engage a registered social landlord to manage the housing stock and the housing services more effectively.
- 4 Our Direction of Travel assessment shows that the Council is improving adequately. The Council is getting better at meeting priorities, although many of its own targets in 2005/06 were missed.
- 5 We gave an unqualified opinion on your accounts for 2005/06.
- 6 We concluded that your vfm arrangements in 2005/06 were adequate except for arrangements regarding strategic objectives and performance management. We acknowledge that new strategic objectives have subsequently been agreed, and that a new approach to performance management has been introduced.
- 7 Use of Resources work carried out in 2006 saw the overall score remaining at 2 but the Council only just fell short of an overall score of 3, with improvements in five sub-themes in comparison to last year.
- 8 The Council should focus efforts on improving performance in the areas set out below. Members have a key part to play, in this respect, in:
 - ensuring that the new housing landlord partnership starts to deliver improvements for tenants;
 - accelerating the rate of improvement across all services to that achieved by high performing councils, as measured by performance indicators;
 - implementing the communications strategy to tell residents about the Council's strategic aims and about what it has done or plans to do; and
 - continuing to address key weaknesses identified in its 2006 Corporate Assessment, particularly the development of the new '10' performance management system.

How is the Council performing?

- 9 The Audit Commission's overall judgement is that the Council is improving adequately and we have classified the Council as one star in its current level of performance under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. These assessments have been completed in all single tier and county councils with the following results.

Table 1



Source: Audit Commission

- 10 The detailed assessment for the Council is as follows.

Our overall assessment - the CPA scorecard

Table 2 CPA scorecard

Element	Assessment
Direction of Travel judgement	Improving adequately
Overall	1 star
Current performance	
<i>Level 1</i>	
Children and young people	3
Social care (adults)	3
Use of resources	2
<i>Level 2</i>	
Benefits	4

Element	Assessment
Environment	3
Culture	2
Housing	1
Corporate assessment/capacity to improve	2

(Note: 1 = lowest, 4 = highest)

The improvement since last year - our Direction of Travel report

- 11 The Direction of Travel summary statement text is set out below and is expanded on in the subsequent paragraphs.

Rutland County Council is improving adequately.

The Council is getting better at meeting priorities and is providing good value for money. Improvement is not happening consistently across all areas. Educational achievement; adult social care services and housing benefits continue to improve from an already high base. Crime rates continue to fall and highways have improved.

The overall improvement in the Council's performance indicators was below the national average in 2005/06, although it has a higher than average proportion of indicators in the top quartile. Some service areas are performing at comparatively low levels such as recycling and planning. Housing landlord services have deteriorated significantly, although the outsourcing of the service has started to lead to some improvement.

The Council missed many of its own targets in 2005/06 but has responded well to the 2006 Audit Commission corporate assessment. It has started to lay the building blocks for future improvements including a priority based approach to financial and service planning and enhanced performance management. It is beginning to address weaker areas including housing and planning and is introducing measures to deliver its recycling targets through new procurement arrangements.

What evidence is there of the Council improving outcomes?

- 12 The Council is making improvements in delivering national and local priorities but improvement is not happening consistently across all areas.

- 13 Rutland's services for children and young people continue to improve from a very high base. School attainment and achievement levels have improved and in 2006 the Council moved up the Ofsted rankings to the 12th highest in England. The 2006 Joint Area Review inspection was positive with health, safety, education and local services all scoring 3. A Foster Care Service inspection was also carried out which scored 4 with no recommendations for improvement. Young people in Rutland are therefore benefiting from good schools and care services. The Youth Service however scored 1 in its inspection.
- 14 The Council's adult and social care services are improving. The 2005/06 CSCI Record of Performance Assessment found that there has been an increase in the number of people receiving intermediate care and good performance in preventing admissions to hospital. Progress has been made in securing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In May 2006 the Rutland Care Village was opened as a result of a partnership with a private operator. It has made available 40 places for older people through the Council and 32 private places. In the context of a small authority these are significant outcomes which have impacted positively on the lives of local people.
- 15 The Council's housing benefits service is improving from a high base. The service retained its 'excellent' rating in 2005/06 with 4 out of 5 comparable indicators improving against the previous year. Users of the service are experiencing a prompter service with few errors that has a low risk of fraud.
- 16 The Council, through partnership working, is enabling improvements in the area of community safety. Crime rates are falling and the Council has enabled a number of successful initiatives including a new antisocial behaviour officer, an officer focused on vehicle crime and high levels of participation in neighbourhood watch and associated schemes. Overall the Council has contributed to some improved outcomes in an area which is priority to local people.
- 17 Satisfaction levels are showing a small decline in Rutland. The tri-annual 2006/07 satisfaction survey shows that 46 per cent of comparable indicators have improved and 54 per cent not improved compared to 2003/04. However 56 per cent of satisfaction indicators are above the national median.
- 18 Rutland's overall progress is significantly below that of other councils in many areas. The Audit Commission's basket of national indicators (excluding children and young people and adult social care services) showed 48 per cent have improved in 2005/06 against previous year. However this is below the national average band of 66 to 67 per cent. 31 per cent of indicators for 2005/06 are within the top 25 per cent, slightly above the national average. Un-audited data for the first half of 2006/07 show an improved position with 66 per cent of indicators improving. The Council's position has been static when other councils have been improving.

- 19 The Council's housing landlord services are not delivering strong outcomes and the overall Housing CPA score has deteriorated from 3 to 1. A 2007 Audit Commission inspection based on 2005/2006 performance data scored the service as 'poor' identifying weaknesses in the repairs and maintenance service and the time taken to re-let vacant properties. However, the Council has recognised these failings and is starting to address them through a new partnership with a registered social landlord. The partnership has not been running long enough however to develop a sustained track record of improvement.
- 20 Two other statutory services are also not improving adequately. All five comparable planning application turn round time indicators for 2005/06 were below the national median with only two of these improving on the previous year. The Council is not improving its recycling performance which is amongst the lowest 25 per cent of councils nationally.
- 21 Access to services shows a mixed performance. Web site hits have increased from a monthly average of 3,862 in 2005 to over 10,000 in 2006. However, the percentage of interactions with public which are capable of electronic service delivery declined in 2005/06 by eight percentage points (due to a change in the definition). Although the Council engages with some vulnerable groups via existing networks such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and mobile libraries it lacks a robust assessment of the needs of hard to reach groups. This was a key weakness identified by the 2006 Corporate Assessment. Overall, residents have an increasing number of opportunities to access services but the Council cannot be sure it is reaching all vulnerable groups.
- 22 The Council has successfully enabled the delivery of the Oakham by-pass on time and within budget. The £12 million road opened in January 2007 and the Council has supported this by close consultation with local businesses to improve the town centre.
- 23 Value for money is being sustained in Rutland. The Council has achieved level 3 in 2006/07 for value for money within its Use of Resources assessment – the same overall score as last year. There were improvements in the elements that make up the overall score. Overall costs per head of population are low with its main priority services achieving performance levels that are top quartile or above the median.

How much progress has been made to implement improvement plans to sustain future improvement?

- 24 The Council has improved its approach to planning its 2007/08 budget. Revenue finances are being more closely linked to priorities and Councillors and officers have a good understanding of the choices which need to be made to deliver priorities, on the basis of different levels of proposed council tax. The Council has to find in excess of £1 million of additional revenue funding to meet the growing demand for adult and social care services and is finalising plans to achieve this without impacting on other priority services.

- 25 The Council has plans to improve services and address some comparatively weak areas. It has engaged a registered social landlord to manage its housing landlord service which has been scored as having 'promising' prospects for improvement by the Audit Commission. It has addressed staffing shortages within its planning service resulting in planning application turn round times improving in the first half of 2006/07. The Council's Local Transport Plan 2 was assessed as 'Good' by GoEM and this has resulted in additional funding of over £718,000 to make improvements to the A47. The Council is also carrying out extensive preparatory work on for its new 'streetscene' contract with a view to improving key areas such as recycling through better procurement. However the impact of this preparatory work will not be felt until 2008 when the new contract commences. Overall, there are a number of future plans which have prospects of delivering future improvements which will be experienced by residents.
- 26 The Council missed many of its 2005/06 targets but this is starting to improve. The 2006 Best Value Performance Plan shows 31 per cent of reported indicator targets were not met. However Cabinet reports from December 2006 indicate that this has improved in the first half of 2006/07. Un-audited performance indicators show an increase in the overall improvement rate and the majority of key milestones being delivered in service plans. There are early indications that the comparatively static position of 2005/06 is starting to improve.
- 27 The Council is starting to address some key weaknesses identified in its 2006 Corporate Assessment. Through the LAA, which is at an advanced stage, it is seeking to address weaknesses in ambition. It has invested substantially in performance management, a key priority of the new Chief Executive, who was appointed in October 2006, which has resulted in improved quarterly reporting and the development of the new '10' system which it plans to fully populate by March 2007. The Council has also commenced a needs assessment survey for adult social care and plans to do this for children and young people in early 2007. Key capacity building blocks are starting to be addressed to enable future improvements although they are not all in place or embedded.
- 28 The Council has sought to develop capacity through the Welland partnership, involving developing a number of shared services, including emergency planning, legal services and internal audit. More recently the Welland procurement unit has been set up with a view to making significant savings on all aspects of purchasing and external partnerships.
- 29 The challenge for the Council, for the future, is to ensure that the new housing landlord partnership starts to deliver improvements for local tenants and to accelerate the rate of improvement in other areas of service to that achieved by high performing councils.

Service inspections

Corporate assessment and joint area review

- 30 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003 to make an assessment, and report on the performance, of local authorities. Corporate assessment is one element in the overall assessment that leads to a CPA score and category.
- 31 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities.
- 32 Corporate assessments are normally aligned with a joint area review of services for children and young people (JAR). In practice this means that the Council's achievements in relation to children and young people are assessed using the evidence provided from the JAR.
- 33 The corporate assessment and JAR were carried out during 2006 and the main findings were reported to Members in July 2006. The main themes from the reviews are set out below.
 - Rutland County Council is performing adequately. Its performance in the shared priority areas is generally satisfactory with some clear strengths, for example in relation to services for children and young people, but also with some clear weaknesses: such as promoting healthier communities. It has limited longer-term ambitions for the area and faces challenges in its capacity to deliver its priorities. Some internal processes, such as performance management are not fully effective.
 - The Council's clear priorities are education and social care and it has increased resources for these. Its main focus is on statutory duties and the Council struggles to identify non-priorities.
 - The Council delivers good value for money overall, despite having significant financial constraints. Its priority services of education and social services are generally high performing, and 42 per cent of national performance indicators (for 2004/05) are in the top 25 per cent. This focus on value for money is allowing the Council to maximise its limited resources. However, prospects for improving value for money are uncertain.
 - Overall ambitions for the area are short-term, poorly communicated and lack quantified outcomes. Consultation is reactive and the Council's approach to using intelligence about local need lacks rigor. It has developed better ambitions for children and young people and relationships with strategic partners are good.
 - The Council's capacity is limited but it is clearly committed to working in partnership to increase capacity and improve services, for instance via the Welland Partnership.

- Leadership provided by the senior management team is adequate. Relationships between Councillors and officers are good. The active involvement of Councillors is extending the Council's capacity.
- The quality and extent of user focus within the Council is variable. The Council is not fully effective in identifying the diverse needs of all groups of users within the community.

34 Since the publication of the report, the Council has recruited a new Chief Executive, following the retirement of the former Chief Executive. The new Chief Executive and Council are committed to addressing the issues raised in the corporate assessment and are already making some progress.

Landlord services

35 We carried out an inspection of landlord services which reported in February 2007. In that report, we concluded that Rutland County Council's landlord services are poor, no-star services but with promising prospects for improvement. Our detailed conclusions are set out below.

36 A number of the services are of a standard below what we would expect in the sector; customer information is very limited and resident involvement underdeveloped. There are some serious weaknesses in the repairs and maintenance service; a high proportion of repairs are not completed in target time and vacant properties take too long to be repaired and re-let. Clearer guidance for both staff and customers and improved monitoring is needed for tenancy and estate management to ensure that customers receive a consistent response and higher standard of service.

37 However, the Council has recognised that services need to improve and, following a stock options appraisal, has taken the positive step to engage a registered social landlord, Spire Homes, to manage the stock. The Council has invested significant time and resources in developing a comprehensive service specification, in consultation with residents, and in tendering the contract to ensure the service is provided at a reasonable cost.

38 The contract provides for savings of £500,000 over its five-year period and these savings will be used to improve services for tenants. Services are beginning to improve, for instance there has been a reduction in the time taken to re-let homes and increased opportunities for tenant involvement, and the Council is providing support for the changes. A Partnership Board, which includes tenants, oversees and contributes to the planning of service improvements. The capacity and leadership is present to drive further change.

39 The Council, in partnership with Spire Homes, needs to concentrate its efforts on improving core housing management services, particularly the repairs and maintenance service, and ensuring that these are provided efficiently. It needs to develop clear service standards and other customer information. It also needs to focus on making better use of customer feedback and performance information, including comparisons with others, to help to raise the standard of services in line with tenants' priorities.

Other inspections

- 40 An important aspect of the role of the Relationship Manager is to work with other inspectorates and regulators who also review and report on the Council's performance. Relationship Managers share information and seek to provide 'joined up' regulation to the Council. During the last year the Council has received the following assessments from other inspectorates.

Adult Social Care

- 41 The Commission For Social Care Inspection's latest annual performance assessment for 2005-06 has identified a number of improvements.
- The Council has a clear vision about how it plans to deliver Adult Social Care and there is strong political and corporate support to the priorities for social care services. The Council's approach to 'Fair Access to Care' is consistent across all service user groups and it has maintained the eligibility for funded social care services.
 - The Council has maintained good partnership working and maximises opportunities to work with Primary Care Trusts, (PCTs), and key stakeholders in the planning and delivery of services. There is a wide range of joint working arrangements and integrated strategies in place and these are focused on national and local priorities.
 - Performance management strategies have been strengthened and enhanced by establishing improved monitoring and reporting arrangements and by reinforcing the link between the Council's strategic aims and objectives, departmental service plans and individual objectives.
 - There has been an increase in the number of people receiving intermediate care and continued good performance in preventing admission to hospital and securing good discharge processes with no delayed transfers of care.
 - Service user independence has been further promoted by the reduced waiting times for assessments, care packages, deliveries of items of equipment and adaptations to the home.
 - More service users have received a review and a statement of how their needs are to be met and their choice and control has been enhanced through an increase in the use of direct payments.
 - There has been significant progress made in securing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and this has been achieved through an individualised person-centred and creative approach.
- 42 The assessment has also identified a number of areas for improvement.
- With the financial and resource pressures faced by the Council and its strategic partners it is essential that effective governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements are maintained and reviewed on a regular basis to alert the Council to any negative impact on its ability to achieve strategic objectives.

- Performance management strategies need to be fully embedded in practice and monitoring and reporting arrangements implemented to ensure that the required improvements are achieved.
- Strategic commissioning has been a priority area for the Council, however senior management capacity has impacted on its ability to move this forward. The recent appointment of a second tier head of housing and contracting should now enable progress to be made.
- The Council needs to ensure that it has accurate needs analysis data and service mapping information to enable it to fully consider cost effectiveness and to compare value and costs with other authorities and to compare costs with quality outcomes. This is relevant to all service user groups including black and ethnic minority groups and other hard to reach groups.
- The Council should continue to progress its strategies to help people live at home and it should ensure that it is maximising these opportunities in relation to people with physical and sensory disabilities and people with a learning disability. Further improvements in reviewing service users and in providing them with a statement of their needs will help progress this area.
- During 2005 – 2006 the Council experienced difficulties in the provision of advocacy services and should progress its plans to fully review advocacy services. This should consider accessibility and whether the model of delivery is appropriate to the specific needs of each service user group.
- In partnership with the mental health Local Implementation Team (LIT) the Council needs to ensure that it reviews performance to ensure that service users' outcomes are being achieved and the National Service Framework targets met.

Adult learning inspectorate

- 43** Certain aspects of the Rutland Adult Learning Service (RALS) were re-inspected in 2006. The re-inspection focussed on three areas where performance had previously been judged to be unsatisfactory:
- Leadership and management.
 - Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel.
 - Foundation programmes.
- 44** Performance in all three areas has now been assessed as satisfactory. The key findings are set out below.

Table 3 RALS re-inspection findings

Element	Key findings
Leadership and management	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good strategic planning; • good communications; and • good planning to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • declining recruitment of learners; • insufficient attention to safe working practices and appropriate working environments; and • insufficient monitoring of the quality of some programmes.
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel - leisure, sport and recreation	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good retention and achievement rates on programmes leading to a national qualification; and • good development of skills. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insufficient assessment of learners. Progress; and • insufficient specialist support for tutors.
Foundation programmes - Other contributory areas	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good development of learners. everyday skills and confidence; • good achievement on intensive literacy and numeracy courses; and • good support for learners in rural communities. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inadequate target-setting for some learners; and • slow development in meeting some targets in the skills for life strategy.

Benefit fraud inspectorate

- 45 The Benefit fraud inspectorate undertook an assessment as part of the 2006 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) programme.

- 46 They gathered information for their assessment from a range of sources including:
- the self-assessment and evidence provided by the Council;
 - Best Value Performance Indicators and performance measures;
 - discussions with senior officers in the Council; and
 - BFI's CPA 2005 report.
- 47 The report concluded that Rutland County Council met 10 of the 12 performance measures where the Department had set a Standard and 58 of the 65 enablers. The Council has maintained its 'excellent' score.
- 48 Nevertheless, to encourage improvement over its 2004/05 performance, the Council had set some local targets for 2005/06. These included a target to process new claims within an average of 30 days and another, in line with Performance Standards, to process changes of circumstances within an average of nine days. Both these targets were exceeded and reported performance for processing new claims was an average of 26 days and for changes of circumstances was five days, a significant improvement when compared to its 2004/05 performance.
- 49 In its efforts to reduce fraud and error the Council exceeded its targets for interventions and visits and secured 20 sanctions, including one successful prosecution, against a caseload of 1,570.
- 50 Appropriate priority was given to applications for reconsideration and appeals, and as a result the Council exceeded Standard in all 3 Performance Measures in that area.

Financial management and value for money

- 51 Auditors' responsibilities are to review and report on, to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Audit Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice for Local Government bodies (the Code):
- the Council's financial statements; and
 - whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Report to those charged with governance

- 52 We are required by the Code to issue a report to those charged with governance summarising the conclusions from our audit work. Your appointed auditor delivered an annual governance report to the full Council in September 2006 on the issues arising from the 2005/06 audit and has also provided:
- an unqualified opinion on your accounts;
 - a conclusion on your vfm arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate except for arrangements regarding strategic objectives and performance management; and
 - a report on the Best Value Performance Plan confirming that the Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance, and that it contains all appropriate outturns and targets.
- 53 Matters that we reported to you in the annual governance report include:
- collection fund estimates to be taken into account when setting council tax levels;
 - the need for a formal annual review of Internal Audit arrangements; and
 - formal member scrutiny of the Statement on Internal Control (commenting on the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control) separate from the accounts.
- 54 We acknowledge that, since issuing the annual governance report, new strategic objectives have been put in place and the Council has introduced a new approach to performance management.

Use of resources

- 55 The findings of the auditor are an important component of the CPA framework described above. In particular the Use of Resources score is derived from the assessments made by the auditor in the following areas.
- Financial reporting (including the preparation of the accounts of the Council and the way these are presented to the public).
 - Financial management (including how the financial management is integrated with strategy to support Council priorities).
 - Financial standing (including the strength of the Council's financial position).
 - Internal control (including how effectively the Council maintains proper stewardship and control of its finances).
 - Value for money (including an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services).
- 56 For the purposes of the CPA we have assessed the Council's arrangements for use of resources in these five areas as follows.

Table 4

Theme	Assessment
Financial reporting	2
Financial management	2
Financial standing	3
Internal control	2
Value for money	3
Overall assessment of the Audit Commission	2

The use of resources judgements are scored on the following scale:

4 - well above minimum requirements - performing strongly

3 - consistently above minimum requirements - performing well

2 - at only minimum requirements - adequate performance

1 - below minimum requirements - inadequate performance

- 57 The key issues arising from the audit, as reflected in the above judgements where appropriate, are as follows.
- 58 With audit encouragement, officers have made significant strides in improving processes, the quality of information and working papers. Use of Resources work carried out in 2006 saw the overall score remaining at 2 but Financial Reporting has now moved to a score of 2 and the Council only just fell short of an overall score of 3, with score increases in five sub-themes.

- 59 The accounts presented for audit contained just a small number of non-trivial errors, all of which were corrected during the course of the audit, and working papers provided at the start of the audit showed a marked improvement from the previous year.
- 60 A comprehensive and balanced revenue budget has been set and is appropriately monitored and links to corporate priorities have been made more explicit. The Council has an up to date corporate capital strategy but there is insufficient evidence of other good arrangements in place to manage the asset portfolio.
- 61 Member responsibility for corporate risk management is not identified in the terms of reference of any committee or other member group as appropriate, and there are no formal arrangements to ensure that members with responsibility for corporate risk management receive reports on a regular basis and take appropriate action to ensure that corporate business risks are being actively managed.

Best value performance plan

- 62 We have reviewed the 2006/07 Best Value Performance Plan and we are satisfied that it has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance, and that it contains all appropriate outturns and targets. There were no matters to report to the Council nor did we make any recommendations on procedures in relation to the plan.

Vision 2010+

- 63 We have recently looked at the process followed by the Council in proposing the demolition of two primary schools in Uppingham and replacing them with a new building on a new site. We have specifically commented on the lack of a formal option appraisal at any stage of the proceedings, although we accept that circumstances were unusual.
- 64 We acknowledge the report by the Chief Executive in March 2007 which identifies issues that must be addressed in similar projects in future and recommends action regarding expenditure incurred to date. There are implications for our audit of the Council's accounts for 2006/07 so we will continue to discuss progress with officers.
- 65 Members have agreed to an ambitious programme of rebuilding at Vale of Catmose College, with planned expenditure of £17.5 million. We understand that DfES funding is in place for this project. Nevertheless, where there are choices to be made about how to spend the money, we would expect to see appropriate option appraisals presented to members. DfES has published 'Finding the Right Solution - a Guide to Option Appraisal' which sets out circumstances in which option appraisals are desirable.

Conclusion

- 66 This letter has been discussed and agreed with the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services. A copy of the letter will be presented at full Council on 11 June 2007.
- 67 The Council has taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit and inspection I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the Council's assistance and co-operation.

Availability of this letter

- 68 This letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk, and also on the Council's website.

P W Jones
Relationship Manager