

AGENDA ITEM:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

13TH JANUARY 2009

**COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – CORPORATE
ASSESSMENT REPORT – IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present OSB with the results of the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment and to seek OSB endorsement of the Improvement Plan produced in response to the report.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

2. Middlesbrough's Corporate Assessment took place in April 2008. This report sets out the key findings from the Corporate Assessment report and the proposed response to the areas of improvement identified. A summary of the report has been circulated to all Members. A full copy of the Audit Commission's report is available from the Members' library or from Kathryn Warnock upon request.
3. 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. It seeks to answer three headline questions, which are underpinned by five specific themes.

4. The table below sets out the three headline questions, the associated theme and Middlesbrough's score for each theme. Middlesbrough was awarded an overall score of 4; this is the highest score available.

Headline Question	Theme	Score*
What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	Ambition	4
	Prioritisation	3
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	3
	Performance Management	4
What has been achieved?	Achievement	3
Overall corporate assessment score		4
<p>* Key to scores 1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance 2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance 3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well 4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly</p>		

5. Of the Corporate Assessment reports currently published Middlesbrough Council is one of only 22 councils (out of 150 Nationally) to score 4 in the Corporate Assessment. Of the 22 councils scoring a 4 Middlesbrough is ranked as second most deprived area.
6. The Corporate Assessment report highlighted some key strengths for Middlesbrough Council across all service areas; however, the overall strengths included:
- an aspirational vision;
 - an understanding of the needs of the town;
 - strong community leadership;
 - working well in partnership;
 - strong leadership at political and managerial levels with clear accountability;
 - effective operator in the sub region;
 - comprehensive framework for performance management, delivering significant improvement; and
 - delivering improvements recognised by local people.
7. The Corporate Assessment report identified a small number of areas for improvement including:
- improve links between longer-term ambitions and short term targets;
 - develop the medium term financial plan so that it links to priorities more explicitly;
 - build on improvements in local confidence about the Council's willingness to listen and respond; and

- continue to seek to narrow the gap between Middlesbrough and the rest of the country, particularly in relation to health outcomes.
8. The improvement plan, attached at Appendix 1, sets out each area for improvement and the proposed actions needed. Many of the actions proposed were either being addressed at the time of the assessment or have subsequently been responded to. Therefore the timeframe for the implementation plan is unlikely to go beyond March 2009. It is proposed that any outstanding or ongoing actions should be rolled into the relevant strategic or service plan for 2009/10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. That OSB endorses the attached Improvement Plan.

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