

Event Name: LGA conference towards the CAA: a new performance framework for localities

Date of Event: Thursday 26 July 2007

Attended By: Judith Higgins - KFRS

Introduction

Work is now underway across Government and the Inspectorates to develop the new Comprehensive Area Assessment which will be implemented from April 2009. The CAA will replace CPA, Joint Area Reviews, Annual Performance Assessment and Social Services star ratings, by March 2009. The requirements for best value authorities to prepare annual best value performance plans and to conduct reviews will also be abolished.

The introduction of the CAA represents a radical shift from CPA. CAA is a locality approach it will focus on the outcomes secured by the councils working alone or in partnership with others and rather than assessing past performance it will instead assess risk in relation to performance, by drawing on a range of existing data. There are a range of challenging developmental issues to be addressed over the next few months which this seminar will begin to explore.

The CAA is a particular issue for Fire and Rescue Authorities and therefore places at the conference were made available by the South East Fire Improvement Partnership. This notes picks up the key messages, but all presentations will shortly be available on the LGA website.

Learning outcomes

Andrew Campbell: Director for LSPs and performance in the CLG, and responsible for the overall programme. Key messages were:

- Full implementation would not be until 09, with first assessments published autumn 09
- Agreement on the framework was expected by June 08
- Indicators will be published this autumn alongside CSR 07. So far they have had 370 bids for indicators from Whitehall; these have been reduced to 200-250
- They are making strenuous attempts to join the framework up across government departments
- Refreshed LAAs should be signed off by next summer, but not necessarily 100%
- There would be variation between LAAs in approach and this was seen as helpful and creative
- CAA shouldn't be underestimated and is a major public sector reform programme with additional duties including duties to inform, consult and involve
- The national indicator set will be very much citizen perspective indicators, and Authorities need to make sure they are more publicly accessible. The new Prime Minister is very much into real time information.



In response to questions from the floor he acknowledged that District Councils had received insufficient mention, and that there were difficulties in two tier areas. He also said that there was no assurance that any fire targets would be included at LAA level [depends on local priorities] but there was 'likely to be something' in the overall basket of 200.

Gary Bell, Development Manager from the Audit Commission, made the following points about the development of CAA:

- AC is moving away from historic info to a forward-looking, dynamic approach
- Individual authorities would continue to be assessed on individual DoT, UoR, and UoR will include stronger focus on partnership and procurement
- Citizen engagement should be a feature of LAA and CAA development, not just after the fact
- 08 will be used as a planning year for CAA, with full implementation from 09
- Risk assessment would be on the likely achievement of the LAA, not on the risks in the area
- They were not clear yet on the role of peer challenge in relation to the inspection process, but were working with LGA/IDeA to develop this.

Richard Grice, the Head of Strategy from IDeA

The IDeA is working on an early prototype of a self-assessment tool for CAA assessment. They are intending to pilot it for wider publication towards the end of the year, but willing to share it now if asked. They are trying to develop something which reflects relationships as well as processes, and which will work in two-tier areas. SEFIP will be following this up and will keep CFOs informed of developments.

There were general presentations on risk management from PWC and the Social Care Inspectorate, and from Michael Frater and the Government Office for the South West on the challenges for government and the inspectorates.

Further action required

SEFIP will follow up the peer review.

FRAs may wish to use the information on CAA presented here when engaging with other authorities to develop LAAs.

Judith Higgins

30 July 2007

