

**REPORT OF THE
CABINET / LEADER**

PART II

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA): ORGANISATIONAL AND AREA ASSESSMENTS

At its meeting on 21 December, the Cabinet considered the Audit Commission reports on the CAA Organisational and Area Assessments. Both reports were very positive and confirmed that, overall, Hampshire County Council performed excellently and scored 4 out of 4 for managing performance. The assessments highlighted the County Council's innovative approach to securing value for money and its strong track record of delivering efficiency savings which have exceeded government targets whilst maintaining the second lowest council tax at a national level of 1.9 per cent over a two year period. It was also highlighted that the County Council addressed the issues that matter to people. The performance of road safety; waste management; and the reduction of incidents of arson were also noted as well as the strong partnership arrangements that supported these. Sustained progress on tackling inequalities across the county will be an area of challenge for the County Council in the future, particularly around children and young people.

It was confirmed that the Audit Commission would continue a watching brief in some areas, including improvements in efficiency and partnership working; workforce in relation to skills development, young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS), economic issues and cross-border issues; and the rural agenda in particular outcomes of the County Council's Rural Strategy

In conclusion, the Cabinet reiterated the Council's commitment to driving continuous improvement in the matters that were important locally and it welcomed wherever CAA helped to support that. However, the Cabinet was very clear that CAA should not distract the authority from Driving Success and delivering improvements in priority services, achieving greater value for money and taking action on key issues locally. The Cabinet welcomed the results and judgements received in the first round of CAA assessments which were extremely impressive. This would give the authority a strong position from which to influence and inform the further development of or alternative to CAA to ensure that the regime is proportionate; delivers a reduced burden on the ground; and adds value to local government service delivery over and above the inputs from local partners.

The Cabinet agreed that as part of the Driving Success Performance Framework a review of the inspection reports and performance during 2009/10 would be used to inform the refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan which would focus on "hard to move" indicators and outcomes.

Cabinet expressed its thanks for the hard work and commitment of County Council Members and officers in providing excellent services and driving improved performance, and to the Audit Commission team for it's work with the County Council over several months.

This report arises from consideration of a report by the Cabinet on 21 December 2009, which is on Hantsweb at: <http://www.hants.gov.uk/decisions/decisions-index/index-docs-7171.html>

REVIEW OF THE WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2009/10

At its meeting on 25 January, the Cabinet considered the winter maintenance arrangements following the severe weather in February 2009 and December 2009/January 2010.

During the poor weather conditions of February 2009 Hampshire County Council's salt stocks were run low but not critically depleted. However, despite holding full supplies of salt at the beginning of this winter, stocks did fall to critical levels during the severe weather in December 2009/January 2010. With national problems of supply, and the Government taking charge of salt distribution the County Council's stocks had not been replenished and salt stocks have been carefully managed to maintain priority routes. For this reason, the Cabinet agreed an amendment to existing policy to allow for emergency temporary provision of a reduced strategic salting network to be triggered only if salt stocks fall below critical levels.

The Cabinet also agreed the following measures:

- Up to 4000 additional salt bins will be provided, thereby trebling the number of salt bins in Hampshire. Parish councils or other local bodies will be consulted on the location of bins, and will be asked to be the County Council's local agent in connection with management arrangements for these bins and salt stocks.
- An additional 6,000 tonnes of salt will be held in stock, making the county salt stock holding a total of 18,000 tonnes.
- Salt supplies will be procured from multiple suppliers to ensure that the County Council is not reliant on a sole supplier, or road based delivery.
- Further development of support on local winter maintenance activities will be explored with District and Parish Councils to increase collaboration for greater local resilience and mutual aid.
- The Policy and Resources Select Committee will undertake a strategic review of the County Council's arrangements for winter resilience.

Progress on the actions agreed above will be reported to a meeting of Cabinet in July 2010.

Additional funding had already been allocated to the Environment department to deal with potholes and other damage to roads, and this will be fully utilised to address damage caused by the severe weather.

This report arises from consideration of a report by the Cabinet on 25 January 2010, which is on Hantsweb at: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/meetingssummary.htm?sta=0¤tpage=1&tab=1&date_ID=296

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