

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) REPORTS AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (APRIL - SEPTEMBER)

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: ALL
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES: ALL**

Report of the Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose of the report

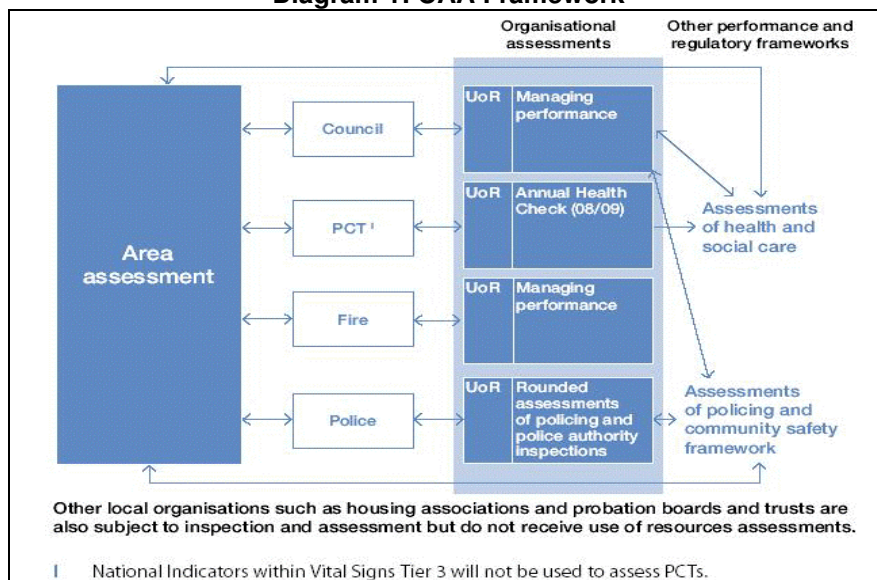
1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee with the findings from the inaugural Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and a performance update which includes those areas identified by the Audit Commission (AC) as being the focus of improvement during 2010.

2.0 Background

2.1 CAA was introduced in April 2009 to provide an independent assessment of how local public services are working in partnership to deliver outcomes for an area. The first results were reported on the new Oneplace website (www.oneplace.direct.gov.uk) on 9 December 2009.

2.2 CAA comprises two main elements namely, an area assessment and an organisational assessment for each of the four main public sector organisations (i.e. council, fire, health and police). This is demonstrated in the diagram below.

Diagram 1: CAA Framework



3.3 Members will recall that a new national performance framework was implemented during 2008/2009. This includes 198 new National Indicators which replaces previous national performance frameworks. As part of this new framework 49 national indicators have been identified as key priorities to be included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Performance against the priorities identified in the LAA and

associated improvement targets have been reported to Scrutiny committee throughout 2009 as part of the quarterly performance monitoring arrangements and are a key consideration in CAA in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people

3.0 AREA ASSESSMENT

3.1 Process and methodology

3.1.1 The area assessment focuses on the prospects for better outcomes on local priorities and is an annual assessment of the work of the public services in the city by a range of inspectorates. It answers three key questions:

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered?
- What are the prospects for improvement?

3.1.2 Between April and September 2009 the CAA Lead (CAAL) assessed the work of the Sunderland Partnership (SP) as part of the inaugural CAA Area Assessment. This was achieved through a series of workshops, interviews and briefing notes and a review of evidence (e.g. key documents, performance indicators, consultation results, etc.). This was an iterative process and the CAAL shared the findings at regular intervals throughout.

3.2 Findings – good practice and areas for improvement

3.2.1 The area assessment is not scored and does not carry a star rating. It is a narrative report providing an overview of progress against key priorities for the area, overall successes and challenges.

3.2.2 Area assessments may award green or red flags. Red flags highlight those areas where there are significant concerns by the inspectorates about outcomes or future prospects, and where more or different actions are required. Green flags highlight exceptional performance or outstanding improvement in outcomes through an innovative approach, from which others nationally can learn. No red or green flags have been identified for Sunderland.

3.2.3 The fact that Sunderland has no red flags demonstrates that the inspectorates have no significant concerns and that the Council and its partners are clear about what needs to be done and has plans in place to secure the necessary impact on outcomes.

3.2.4 Although Sunderland was not awarded any green flags the report recognises the positive impact the SP is making on quality of life. For example:

- There is a good record of attracting new businesses and investment to the city and this is likely to continue helped by an Economic Masterplan.
- The Sunderland Learning Partnership is helping to improve skills in the city and clear plans are in place for it to continue to deliver improved outcomes.

- There is a good understanding of the health, social care and wellbeing needs of the population.
- Easier access to treatment is reducing some health inequalities and this is likely to continue.
- Access to primary health care at a local level is easier and care services for adults are good.
- Overall crime is lower in Sunderland than similar areas in England and Wales and continues to fall and fear of crime is reducing.
- There are positive outcomes from a range of targeted work including drug treatment programmes, a safer homes programme improving quality of life, youth engagement projects and parenting initiatives.
- Sunderland's local environment is currently ranked joint third best of the UK's 20 largest cities. Social housing and transport are good.

3.2.5 The report highlighted a small number of areas for improvement, which are already priorities for the city, namely:

- To reduce the number of young people in Sunderland that are not in employment, education or training (i.e. NEETs) from the current levels of one in young eight young people.
- To meet some key targets around health inequalities, which are not being met, such as reducing death rates for men to nearer the national average; reducing the teenage pregnancy rate; and smoking rates, particularly smoking during pregnancy.
- To continue to address child poverty, which is reducing faster than in other areas but remains high.
- To address the issue of affordable housing in Sunderland, through the implementation of developed plans.
- To ensure that City Region actions deliver improved actions in relation to transport and skills.
- To ensure the Alcohol Strategy delivers the planned outcomes, particularly in relation to alcohol related hospital admissions.

3.2.6 Good practice in relation to the services within the Community and Safer City Scrutiny committee's remit and the council and Sunderland Partnership's own analysis of where we are at in relation to these improvement areas is contained in section 4 and 5. **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the position for relevant national indicators and also any local performance indicators that have been retained to supplement areas in the performance framework that are not well covered by the new national indicator set.

3.3 Improvement planning approach

3.3.1 The Sunderland Partnership's Delivery and Improvement Board considered the draft area assessment report, and in particular those areas identified as being in need of improvement at its meeting on 11 November, as part of a wider discussion on improvement priorities for the next year. Delivery Plans are currently being refreshed to ensure that the work programme is targeting the right issues, and outcomes can be demonstrated, minimising the risk of areas for improvement

becoming red flags in 2010. These Delivery Plans will be presented to Scrutiny committees in February 2010

3.4 2010 approach

- 3.4.1 The CAA Lead has now shared his planned approach to undertaking the evidence gathering for area assessment in 2010, which will differ significantly to the approach undertaken in 2009. There has been an acknowledgement within the inspectorates that the level of resources allocated to the assessment is not sustainable and so a more proportionate approach is now planned.
- 3.4.2 In Sunderland (and the rest of Tyne and Wear) the CAA Lead plans to adopt an approach with two complementary elements, namely:
- A Risk Assessment Matrix
 - A small number of themed probes across Tyne and Wear (the exact nature and subject of the probes have yet to be agreed).
- 3.4.3 The Risk Assessment Matrix will be the primary tool against which the Sunderland Partnership will be assessed and is designed to provide greater clarity and certainty around the final outcome of the area assessment (for example the number of green and red flags that will be awarded in the final report).
- 3.4.4 The Matrix will incorporate those issues that were identified in the first year of the CAA area assessment as having the most potential to become red flags and green flags, as well as any themes that weren't considered in the first year of CAA that the CAA Lead wishes to explore in 2010 (e.g. mental health).
- 3.4.5 Once the Risk Assessment Matrix has been agreed, the CAA Lead will use it to monitor progress against the agreed performance trajectory (up until the end of September 2010) for each issue to arrive at his final area assessment judgement for 2010. Progress will be monitored through the Council and the Sunderland Partnership's performance management and reporting arrangements.

4.0 Audit Commission Findings

- 4.1 In relation to Community Safety the CAA report recognises the following areas of performance.
- 4.2 Overall crime in Sunderland is lower than similar areas in England and Wales and the gap between actual crime rates and perceptions of crime is now closing. There are positive outcomes from a range of targeted work including drug treatment programmes, a safer homes programme improving security for victims of crime, youth engagement projects and parenting initiatives. Strong partnership working and good use of intelligence for clear plans should ensure that these improvements continue.
- 4.3 In 2008/09 recorded crime was down three per cent from the previous year. There have been reductions in every main recorded crime activity. Overall crime, racially or religiously aggravated crime, robbery, vehicle crime, violent crime, sexual

offences and criminal damage are all below average when compared to similar areas. Sunderland had the lowest level of serious acquisitive crime - which means burglaries, theft, robbery and car crime - compared to fifteen similar areas.

- 4.4 People are feeling safer in Sunderland. The partnership works hard to tell people how it is making the City safer. Twenty-five plasma TV screens in community venues around the City are used to provide information to residents. Eighty-one per cent of residents generally feel safe in Sunderland. A 2008 survey shows reductions in perception of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB), drink and drug related behaviour, though all are still above average. Perceptions of ASB as a problem have fallen from 51 per cent in 2003 to 23 per cent in 2008, though this is above national and North East averages and the highest of the five Tyne & Wear areas.
- 4.5 Re-offending by young people in Sunderland is lower than similar areas. Youth crime in Sunderland has fallen by 6 per cent in the last year. There has also been a reduction of 18.3 per cent in the rate of re-offences when comparing offending over a 12 month period for young people in 2008 compared to 2005. The Youth Offending Service works well and there are a number of schemes that provide good support and as a result fewer young people receive a custodial sentence. This includes 120 places on the Fire and Rescue Service Phoenix Project helping young people back into employment. Young offenders in employment, education or training increased from 76 per cent in 2004 to 91 per cent in 2009, well above the national average. In recognition of good work Sunderland City Council and partners were announced as a Beacon Authority for 'Reducing Re-offending' in March 2008.
- 4.6 The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) has, since Jan 2005, seen an overall reduction in drug related re-offending. In the last year there was a 3 per cent reduction. There are however issues of substance misuse by young people. Sunderland has seen a decrease in Class A drug use by young people but an increase in alcohol and cannabis use. These two account for 93 per cent of those in treatment. The use of neutral venues and times convenient to young people has made it easier for treatment services to get in touch with young people with drug problems.
- 4.7 Safe City initiatives improve people's quality of life by reducing crime and the fear of crime. The Safer Homes Initiative offers improved home security to victims and those at high risk of house burglary, hate crime and domestic violence. In Hendon, investment resulted in a significant reduction in crime and fear of crime through actions such as providing a better environment including better street lights. There is targeted work in communities experiencing high levels of crime such as 'Not in My Neighbourhood Week' and Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups (LMAPS) addressing local problems.
- 4.8 Sunderland's balanced approach to tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) through prevention, early intervention, enforcement and support has resulted in improved behaviour and attendance in schools and strengthening communities. For example, a successful 'Youth Village' pilot with 856 young people attending events resulted in a substantial reduction in ASB and a 34 per cent reduction in crime in the pilot area. These types of initiatives have contributed towards the 28 per cent improvement in perceptions of ASB since 2003.

- 4.9 Levels of domestic violence in the City remain high, but are reducing. There is a 24 hour helpline and specialist support workers available and the first domestic violence perpetrators hostel is due to open shortly and will be the first of its kind nationally. In the meantime, hostel staff have been working on an outreach basis. A specialist domestic violence court was introduced in October 2008. The court sits every Tuesday afternoon with trained magistrates presiding over cases. As well as successful prosecutions the court aims to reduce repeat victimisation.
- 4.10 Alcohol related crime rates are higher than the North East average but lower than England. Sunderland is estimated to be the eighth worst area in England for binge drinking. Initiatives to reduce alcohol related crime include work with Licensees to use polycarbonate 'glasses' and deployment of security staff to reduce taxi rank assaults. There is a new Alcohol Strategy being developed by the Safer Sunderland Partnership and significant NHS investment in alcohol treatment services. This includes Alcohol Treatment programmes targeted towards violent offenders with alcohol misuse issues. Since starting, in July 2009, 24 individuals have started the programme.

5.0 Areas for Improvement

In relation to Safer Communities no issues have been identified in the first year of the CAA area assessment as having potential to become red flags

- 5.1 In relation to Safer Communities six national indicators are priorities identified in the LAA and only 2 are collected on a quarterly basis. An overview of performance can be found in the following table.

Ref	Description	2008/09 Outturn	Latest Update	Trend	Target 2009/10	On Target
NI 20	Assault with injury crime rate	8.84	3.92 (14% reduction)	▲	-5 reduction	✓
NI 19	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	0.96	0.27 (June 09)	▲	1.1	✓

There are no key risks in relation to the LAA at this stage

- 5.2 In terms of other national indicators there is only one performance indicator where performance is declining and not on schedule to meet the 2009/10 target

NI 49a Number of primary fires per 100,000 population

- 5.3 Performance has declined and based on current performance of 134.5 per 100,000 population this indicator is not expected to achieve the target of 245.8 per 100,000 population. There has however, been a reduction for the current quarter from 77.1 per 100,000 population to 57.1 per 100,000.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That the committee considers the continued good progress made by the council and the Sunderland Partnership, as described in the CAA reports, and those areas requiring further development to ensure that performance is actively managed.

7.0 Background papers

Area assessment report – Sunderland

Organisational assessment report – Sunderland City Council

Use of resources report – Sunderland City Council