



Wednesday 9 December 2009

Media Release

Praise for Peterborough Partnership

The partners within the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) have jointly welcomed today's publication by the Audit Commission of the first ever Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) for Peterborough, based on the collective assessment of six independent inspectorates.

The report presents a balanced and generally positive assessment of how local organisations and service-providers are doing on the issues that matter most in Peterborough, highlighting key areas of success such as recycling and also identifying those areas where performance needs to be improved, such as crime.

Speaking on behalf of all the partners in the GPP, Richard Astle, GPP Director said, "Peterborough has a strong record of partnership working and we are pleased that this is reflected in the CAA. Overall the picture that emerges of Peterborough is one of genuine progress. It recognises that the partners are working well together to plan and build the new infrastructure for Peterborough, including one of the largest new health care developments in Europe and a new university centre, and to drive forward our ambitious environmental agenda. It also recognises the work we are doing to build a place where people get along together and to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour. We have also been successful in delivering improved services for children and reducing the high numbers of teenage pregnancies as well as improving housing provision and energy efficiency.

"At the heart of that work is a firm conviction that we can achieve more when we work together, breaking down organisational boundaries and focusing on outcomes for people, not organisational agendas."

The report gives Peterborough one green flag, recognising exceptional performance in recycling and reducing waste, particularly commending the work of the RECAP partnership (recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) as a one-stop shop for advice on recycling and waste reduction.

The report also gives Peterborough one red flag, identifying crime as an area where there are significant concerns about outcomes and future prospects.

Richard continued, "Clearly we are disappointed to have received a red flag for crime. We know that we have a particular problem here and have been devoting considerable resource to reducing crime levels over recent years. The report recognises that the partners are now working differently to try to combat crime and that the most recent information shows we are having some success with the levels of vehicle crime theft, robbery and burglary beginning to fall. We are now predicting that we will meet all our crime reduction targets. Equally we do have to recognise that the resources we have to fight crime are limited and the problems we have to tackle are complex."

The CAA also highlights the need to improve performance with educational achievement and health, both areas that the GPP is very aware of. Richard commented, "Education is one of the few areas of the report that we are disappointed with. It uses data from 2008 rather than from 2009 and doesn't therefore take account of the strong improvement in attainment at GCSE this year.

"We will be working now to identify the key areas highlighted in the CAA that we need to focus on in 2010 if we are to continue to improve outcomes for the people of Peterborough. There is much to do and many issues to tackle, but I am pleased that the report recognises just how much we have already achieved."

Ends

Notes to editors

1. What is CAA?

In a sentence, CAA examines how effectively local public services are performing, and how well they are working together, to meet the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. Assessments will be made publicly available, in print and online, and provide an annual snapshot of quality of life in the area.

CAA looks at a number of things, including the strength of local economies and labour markets, affordable housing, children's well-being, crime and safety, support for individuals to improve their health, provision for people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and the quality of the local environment.

CAA is a catalyst for improvement. It will give people information about how well services are delivered locally, and help them make decisions in their communities, in their own use of services, or perhaps where they live.

For those delivering public services it helps encourage improvement by shining a spotlight on those things which need to be improved, and shares practices that are achieving exceptional success.

For government, CAA provides reassurance that public money is being well spent, and assesses how well local services are improving.

2. The six independent inspectorates are:

- Audit Commission
- Care Quality Commission
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
- HM Inspectorate of Prisons
- HM Inspectorate of Probation
- The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).

3. Access the full report online at

www.auditcommission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/CAA/Pages/oneplace.aspx

4. What does a red flag mean?

Red flags are reported where there are significant concerns about outcomes and future prospects for outcomes, which are not being tackled adequately. A red flag means that inspectorates have jointly judged that something different or additional needs to happen to improve outcomes.

5. What does a green flag mean?

Green flags represent exceptional performance or outstanding improvement which is resulting in proven delivery of better outcomes for local people that are sustainable and which we consider others could learn from. Good or very good practice is not sufficient. Nor is rapid improvement that we are not confident can be sustained. We will also use green flags to highlight innovative practice that has promising prospects of improving outcomes for local people that we consider others can learn from.

6. What does no flag mean?

A pre-determined number of flags have not been specified, so it is quite possible that an assessment of a particular area might not lead to any red or green flags.

However, the assessment will provide a brief summary of what has been found in connection with all the important issues in an area. How much is said will depend on how important the issue is locally and what is found.

If current performance is poor but there is confidence in plans to improve it, it will be made clear. Where performance is good and improvements are on track, this will be said too.

Media contacts

For media requests please contact Hannah Barrett on (01733) 207340, or e-mail Hannah@gpp-peterborough.org.uk.