



# CPA Self Assessment Executive Summary

Our People, Our Places



# A Background to Our People and Our Places

## Our Improvement Journey

In helping support the pace of growth and improvement in the district over the last 5 years, the Council has undergone major transformation. Prior to 2003, we were struggling to deliver the outcomes citizens needed and an external inspection in 2002 helped highlight the fundamental areas for improvement. Since this time, we have worked hard to respond to the identified challenges and performance results for 2007/08 are testament to this hard work. GCSE education results are the best ever, crime is falling, our benefits service has received the highest 4 out of 4 score in the CPA and both adults and children's service are performing well, with good prospects for further improvement.

However, we are not complacent and over the next three years, we know there is more to do. We will need to continue to evolve and change shape to ensure the Council remains fit for purpose as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century organisation, capable of meeting the needs of citizens and key challenges of the district. Partnership working and building capacity in local communities will be the key means by which improved services will be delivered in future, helping maximise the use of available Council resources and ensuring value for money.

## Our Story of Place

Our past industries and activities have helped shape both **our people**, in terms of the strong community bonds we share, and **our places** – particularly in relation to the physical and built environment. Large areas of the district are green belt surrounding the main urban settlements. The district has a rich cultural heritage, with sites such as Pontefract Castle, Nostell Priory and the National Coal Mining Museum now popular tourist attractions.

We have an ageing population with a prediction of people aged 50 or over rising to 41% by 2012. We are also rapidly becoming a more diverse district, evidenced by an increase in the black and minority ethnic population from 3.4% to 5% over a three year period up to 2005. The recent Index of Deprivation 2007 indicated that 30% of **our people** currently live in the most deprived areas in England and there are parts of the district where the rate of worklessness is more than four times the district average.

While the health of the population is generally improving, the district has a higher than average proportion of people who describe themselves as feeling in 'poor health'. While there are links between poor health and the legacy of our industrial past, cultural issues encouraging the adoption of unhealthy lifestyles by younger generations, evidenced by high levels of teenage conception, obesity, smoking and substance misuse, are apparent.

The Wakefield economy is growing, particularly in relation to service sector industries such as retail and leisure, which represent 82% of total employment in the district. However, a low proportion of citizens are employed in knowledge-driven sectors and we know this is an area for improvement.

Educational attainment has increased significantly in recent years, particularly at GCSE level, however, Wakefield has high rates of young people not in education, employment or training at 19 (NEETs).

Tackling these issues is the focus of our attention as we move forward and this Executive Summary presents the highlights of the work we either have done or are currently delivering to improve the quality of life for citizens of the district.

We are an ambitious council that continues to improve service delivery through putting citizens at the heart of everything we do. We have been recognised both regionally and nationally as committed to quality services and our CPA rating in 2008 confirmed we are **3 stars** and **improving well**. Our goal is to build on this reputation and deliver our ambition to be among the best performing councils.

For **our people**, we are tackling the causes of deprivation and poor quality of life by improving community safety and reducing crime; raising educational achievement and aspirations; addressing health inequalities; and delivering quality care and support to those who need it. Our plans to further modernise the Council are exciting and innovative and by providing high quality, value for money services, we will ensure the needs of citizens are met.

For **our places**, a strong focus on regeneration and economic growth is transforming our urban centres and neighbourhoods, providing opportunities for new businesses and creating attractive, safe places for people to live, work and play. We remain committed to ensuring that all our communities benefit from this transformation and to championing the interests of Wakefield, both locally and nationally.

The overarching **vision** for the Council is clearly stated in the Corporate Plan, and is:

- **To deliver high quality, citizen focused services.**
- **To work with partners to ensure citizens and communities achieve their full potential.**
- **To be among the best performing councils.**

In delivering our vision, one of our key challenges is to make sure we have the leadership, organisational flexibility and resource capacity (both human and financial) to encourage innovation and maximise the potential that our investment in technology is able to bring. We are committed to being a beacon of good practice, demonstrating corporate and social responsibility and influencing employment, employability, skills and training – both as a service provider and as the largest employer in the district.

### Areas for Improvement

- Retain focus on our stated ambitions and priorities to ensure the district and Council visions are achieved for **our people** and **our places**.
- Continue to ensure our vision and ambitions are fully known understood and communicated across the Council, the community and partners.
- Continue work on the development of 'neighbourhood profiles' and information mapping at a neighbourhood level to ensure ward members and key delivery agents have the appropriate intelligence to support decision making.
- Through our Engagement Framework, ensure we continue to develop mechanisms to better understand the needs of hard to reach groups.

The Council has in place processes to ensure it not only identifies and understands the needs and demands of its citizens, but that its financial, human and other resources are deployed to meet our stated priorities. The results of citizen engagement and other sources of information are used to provide intelligence and inform decision-making.

We are fully aware of the need to balance competing resource demands and proactively manage expectations in a climate of tight, national financial controls and finite resources. We are also aware of the need to communicate priorities and the rationale behind resource allocation and service delivery decisions to citizens and other stakeholders.

The results of citizen engagement such as Wakefield Speaks and other sources of information are used to provide 'intelligence' and inform priority setting and decision making.

### Council Priorities 2002 to 2008

The Council's comprehensive approach to priority setting has enabled a sharp focus on what really matters (and what doesn't). We have clear and challenging priorities linked to the Community Strategy, *Developing Knowledge Communities*. These are:

- **Safer and Stronger Communities**
- **Skills, Enterprise and Work**
- **Healthier Communities**

The Council also has a fourth internal strategic priority, **Organisational Capacity and Transformation (OCT)** which is focused on ensuring the Council continues to develop, mature and transform as an organisation into one that anticipates and meets both current and future citizen needs through pursuing innovation, value for money (VFM) and excellence.

All our stated priorities are evidence-based and citizen led, with a 'line of sight' that cascades directly from the Community Strategy to the Corporate Plan and into service business plans with associated long-term outcomes, delivery milestones and responsibilities. .

### Areas for Improvement

- Embed VFM assessments as part of priority/budget setting processes.
- Continue to improve communication of priorities/non priorities to employees, citizens and partners.
- Work with partners to systematically target further opportunities to mainstream funding to support service delivery.
- Further develop action plans to reflect the delivery of the community and interest groups.

We have continued to develop our internal skills and capacity, modernise our working practices and strengthen our decision-making. Our improved CPA score of 3 for Use Of Resources is a reflection of the progress we have made in utilising our assets, finance and people to increase effectiveness in delivering real results for **our people** and **our places**.

We modernised the Council's structures in 2002 to create a Leader and Cabinet form of governance that includes Scrutiny arrangements, Regulatory and Standards Committees and an Audit Committee. We remain committed to, and are achieving success in, developing members and employees to meet our current and future challenges and ensuring that we retain the resources, infrastructure and systems needed to deliver for high quality services.

Our work programme is driven by our Organisational Capacity and Transformation (OCT) priority and is focused on ensuring **our people**, systems and processes are flexible and adaptable. We have a workforce development framework that focuses on improving employee skills and maximising resources to secure high quality, value for money services that ensure sustainable delivery in the long term. We are committed to increasing our organisational capacity through utilising the skills and resources of others and providing a genuine mixed economy of provision. We continue to be a relatively low-spending authority per head of population by comparison with other metropolitan districts.

Worksmart is helping deliver the cultural change required to develop and retain capacity within the organisation. Driven through the Council's management and leadership arrangements, and supported by our member training programme and competency framework, Worksmart is developing trust and relationships between managers and employees and helping focus on the achievement of outcomes rather than inputs. Evidence shows not only increases in productivity and reductions in cost but also improved morale and job satisfaction from employees adopting new work styles.

### Areas for Improvement

- Embed the revised approach to integrated workforce and service planning as part of refreshed business planning process.
- Continue implementation of Phase II of Customer Relationship Management System.
- Implement Phase 2 of the Worksmart programme to ensure realisation of benefits and efficiency savings.
- Develop more opportunities for collaborative working and capacity building with partners.

## 4.0 Performance Management

Score: 3

A strong and improving approach to performance management has been at the heart of our improvement journey since 2002. This journey is evident in a number of critical areas. The Benefits Service has improved substantially, meeting vulnerable people's needs quicker than before and achieving a CPA maximum score of 4. From being in special measures in 2002, we have now achieved a star rating of 3 for both adult and children's services. Improvements to the way in which we use our resources are reflected in our new score of 3 out of 4.

The establishment of a strong performance management culture was the starting point of our improvement journey. In 2003, we invested in corporate infrastructure, processes and systems as part of our comprehensive Performance Management Framework (PMF); this has been refined and enhanced over the last 5 years and is now well embedded at all levels.

The Framework is used to challenge performance and drive service improvements, including those in partner agencies through use in monitoring progress against the LAA. The Framework is based on best practice and incorporates a range of activity linked to strategic planning, review and evaluation, consultation and independent challenge/assessment processes. The systematic use of information in supporting performance review is core to our approach and links to our Engagement Framework.

Within the PMF, our strategic planning activity supports a strong 'line of sight' that enables improvement targets to be set in line with priorities. Our work on embedding a strong performance management culture has delivered real results **our people** but we are capable of more:

### Areas for Improvement

- Ensure systematic use of complaints information to inform improvements to service delivery.
- Further improve the collection and reporting of relevant performance information to local communities through full implementation of the neighbourhood profiles.
- Maintain the current rate of improvement whilst continuing to focus on innovation to drive efficiency and service improvement.
- Fully implement the data Observatory to support consistent, quality controlled data sharing across all partners.
- Further embed review and evaluation processes to drive improvement.

## 5.1 Summary of Achievement

Score: 3

Our improvement journey over the last 4 years demonstrates the good progress we have made in ensuring high quality services for **our people** and delivering real outcomes for **our places**. We are rated as a **3 Star Council** that is *improving well*.

For **our places**, we have improved the physical and economic wellbeing of the district through:

- Major regeneration activity in the city and other town centres such as Castleford and Hemsworth.
- Increased inward investment and business formation which is creating a more diverse, stronger local economy and reducing deprivation.
- Increased levels of VAT registrations, up by 20.24% between 2001 and 2006, closing the gap on the national rate by 4 percentage points and moving 9 Super Output Areas out of the worst 20%.
- Provision of better housing and housing environments, with low levels of homelessness and strong progress on meeting the decent homes standard (only 32.5% now fall below standard).
- Targeting activity at key geographies and communities in place – particularly deprived communities – to support physical and economic regeneration.

We have improved conditions for **our people** through:

- Creating stronger and more sustainable communities, with 70% of citizens now feeling people from different backgrounds get on with each other.
- Steadily improving skills and delivering a 3.1% increase in the overall employment rate between 2001/02 and 2005/06.
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, overall crime has fallen by 35% since 2003/04, with cleaner environments, less fly-tipping and litter and more green spaces for people to enjoy.
- Tackling health inequalities and encouraging people to adopt healthier lifestyles, with a 14.5% reduction in mortality rates for cancers and 26.27% reduction for circulatory diseases.
- Delivering major improvements in educational attainment and increasing the number of young people moving on to further education – 65.5% of 16 year olds now achieve 5 GCSEs A\*-C.

## 5.2 Sustainable Communities and Transport

A revised Economic Regeneration Strategy for the district was published in May last year for the period 2007/15. The vision, of creating '*a dynamic and growing local economy*' is supported by a strong focus on enterprise and innovation, skills, economic inclusion and quality places and communities. Implementation of the Strategy is supporting delivery of the Skills, Enterprise & Work priority by joining-up flagship regeneration projects to secure safer and stronger communities.

Our emerging Local Development Framework is focused on sustainable economic development and addresses issues around the strategic location of development, transport and climate change. Creating good quality places and spaces is a key theme of our regeneration programmes and the Strategy is driving forward over £400m worth of physical regeneration with projects such as Waterfront, Trinity Walk and Westgate underway that will create more than 200 new businesses and over 4,000 new jobs.

### Areas for Improvement

- Continue to implement actions to reduce the Council's carbon footprint as part of the Sustainability Framework.
- Ensure delivery of Environment and Liveability LAA targets.
- Continue to improve accessibility and tackle barriers to transport exclusion, particularly for those from disadvantaged and rural communities.
- Maintain a focus on tackling congestion as a means of addressing air pollution and improving connectivity.
- Continue to build on good partnership arrangements with Metro and local bus operators to improve quality of public transport.

## 5.3 Safer and Stronger Communities

We are committed to delivering safer and stronger communities. Our journey of improvement has been considerable and we are recognised regionally and nationally as having a high performing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, with a strong problem solving approach to delivery. From a poor position in 2004/05, when the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for the district was failing, it is now one of the best performing in the region, having just achieved the ambitious 35% PSA1 target in April 2008 and is recognised as a regional lead for good practice.

These successes have been achieved during a period of significant change, as our communities have become more diverse. During this period, high levels of trust and cohesion have been maintained, as evidenced by the increasing levels of people feeling they belong.

### Areas for Improvement

- Continue to support capacity building in the voluntary and community sector to create a thriving third sector.
- Agree and implement the Partnership Commissioning Framework.
- Continue work on tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing fear of crime.
- Use evaluation of Neighbourhood Management pilots to drive sustained approach to improving neighbourhoods.
- Continue to address domestic abuse and alcohol related crime.
- Continue to develop our engagement mechanisms for hard to reach groups in the community.

## 5.4 Healthier Communities

The Council has worked closely with the Primary Care Trust to address health needs and is achieving measurable improvements across all communities.

We are taking the lead in promoting a multi disciplinary model of family support which reflect the needs of children and adults in the wider family environment and neighbourhoods in which they live. This 'Think Family' approach links closely to other work targeted at lifestyle issues such as reducing the prevalence of smoking, increasing physical activity, reducing obesity – particularly children's obesity – reducing teenage conceptions and tackling the impact of substance misuse and this joined up approach is being taken forward through the LAA. There has been encouraging progress against key indicators as a result, particularly in increasing life expectancy, reducing the prevalence of major diseases and increasing the number of people stopping smoking, taking up exercise and breastfeeding.

### Areas for Improvement

- Ensure the Council leads by example in developing a strategy for the employment of vulnerable people, with emphasis on people with learning disabilities and mental health problems.
- Continue to reduce teenage pregnancy levels and increase support to young parents and parents to be.
- Continue to develop our approach to tackling the effects of alcohol and drug misuse amongst children and young people.
- Reduce levels of obesity through further initiatives to support and promote healthy and active lifestyles amongst children and young people.
- Ensure systematic use of Health Impact Assessments and mainstream health inequalities across the Council.

## 5.5 Older People

We are working to promote independence and improve the lives of current and future generations of older people and their carers. Work includes promoting healthy and active living, provision of support for people experiencing strokes and mental ill health and developing intermediate tier services. We are focusing on partnership working, promoting choice, embracing diversity, encouraging involvement and enabling personalised services. —The success of our work so far is evidenced in our Social Care (Adults) 3 star rating with excellence prospects of improvement.

The challenges presented by an ageing population for all aspects of service delivery are fully recognised. Working closely with our partners, we have developed a Strategy for an Ageing Population. This builds on our Older Persons Strategy and represents a significant shift towards a more coherent approach to tackling issues of the district's current and emerging over 50s population. It recognises the broader well being issues affecting older people such as transport, housing, income, healthy ageing, employment and skills, lifelong learning, community safety and leisure and will drive all aspects of service delivery over the coming years as our population demographics change.

## Areas for Improvement

- Implement the 'Positively Ageing: A Strategy to Promote Wellbeing in Later Life'.
- Work with the PCT and other partners on further developing the approach to preventative services.
- Further develop services for older people with mental health needs.
- Further develop BME services to meet the needs of a wider range of cultural groups.
- Develop day services for older people to provide rehabilitation.
- Build on intergenerational projects to support creation of stronger, cohesive communities.

## Children and Young People

The Council continues to deliver significant improvements in relation to children and young people, much of which connects with the broader strategic agenda for the district and priorities of the LAA.

We believe every child and young person in the Wakefield district has the right to grow up in a stable, secure environment and aspire to live in a community where they are safe, supported and fulfilled. The safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is central to our vision for a sustainable cohesive community. Agencies work together through the Local Safeguarding Children Board to turn this vision into reality. Our focus on prevention and early intervention is actively promoting operational and cultural change across partner agencies.

Wakefield was recognised as 3 out of 4 in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment with all individual outcomes being scored as grade 3 except 'Staying Safe' which was awarded a grade 2.

## Areas for Improvement

- Reduce the number on non-traffic accidents for children under 15 years of age.
- Increase the number of initial and core assessments undertaken within timescales.
- Review timeliness, school attendance and thresholds for entry to the LAC system and ensure inter-agency agreement and implementation.
- Drive forward the recommendation of the recent fostering inquiry and regulation inspection.
- Raise attainment at Key Stage 1, particularly in writing