

15 January 2008 – Manchester United Football Club: Comprehensive Area Assessment Roadshow

Alan Bunting reports that the aim of the event was to bring together members of local strategic partnerships to talk about how Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) could work and to raise any issues that need to be addressed whilst the framework is being developed.



Alan Bunting

The event was mainly a review of the principles of CAA as highlighted in the CAA Consultation Paper. A copy of the presentation slides is available for further information.

Presentations

Sally Hammond – Audit Commission

The Audit Commission confirmed that CAA is very much still developing, the intention of the assessment being to have a lighter touch regime and a lesser rolling inspection programme. The approach is being driven by LAA proposals. Rather than developing a CAA methodology and then piloting this, the Audit Commission are conducting a series of assimilations in four action learning sites taking a whole systems approach. The

Audit Commission's intention is to streamline working across all inspectorates to avoid duplication of work.

The key components for CAA consist of an annual risk assessment for the area which will assess the prospects for the area and the quality of life for local people and an analysis of performance against the 198 indicators included in the National Indicator Set (NIS). Councils and fire and rescue authorities will also produce an annual direction of travel assessment and these authorities together with police authorities and NHS bodies will receive an annual use of resources judgement from an appointed auditor, with input from other inspectorates also. The annual use of resources judgement will cover all three themes of Managing Money, Managing the business and Managing other resources. The judgement will also include coverage of HR and physical and natural resources as the audit commission recognise resources are not just financial.

CAA is intended to provide an integrated approach to performance reporting. All reports will be available on a single website. Members of the public will be able to click an area on a map and access all the performance information for that particular area. The Audit

Commission want to make CAA as accessible and relevant to local people as possible.

Jude Williams – Healthcare Commission

This is the first time that the Healthcare Commission has been involved in a joined up assessment. The Commission is looking for CAA to include:-

- Effective engagement with citizens
- Information and risk based system moving away from in depth on site inspections
- Coherence between CAA and Healthcare Assessment – similar analysis to be used

In 2009 the Mental Health Act Commission, Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Healthcare Commission will be merging to form the Care Quality Commission. For 2008/09 the Commission will be maintaining the current system of healthchecks. From 2009/10 onwards the thinking is that there will be a publication of 50 "vital signs", 30 taken from the 198 indicators in the NIS. There will be periodic assessments of PCTs but it is not yet clear whether this will include use of resources. There will be registration and inspection of all healthcare providers with periodic assessments of performance. Special reviews



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will also be undertaken of particular healthcare topics.

Peter West – Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

CSCI welcomed the development of CAA. Adult social care is part of the social services agenda and a new vision has been created for adult social care called Putting People First. The reform for Putting People First will be assessed through CAA.

Timetable

February 2008:

CPA results for 2007 published
- First joint CAA consultation closes

April 2008:

AC CAA Leads appointed

June 2008:

New style LAAs agreed

July 2008:

Further joint consultation on CAA published

Summer 2008:

Second round of action learning

Late 2008/early 2009:

CAA framework published

Jan/Feb 2009:

Final set of CPA results

Oct/Nov 2009:

First round of CAA reporting

Further information obtained during table discussions

- The 198 indicators in the NIS will provide context but the 35 indicators chosen will be used as the starting point for the Area Risk Assessment. The Audit

Commission will look at whether the right indicators have been chosen and the rationale behind these choices. Other local indicators will help to inform the Direction of Travel.

- Due to CAA Government Office North West (GONW) won't be doing 6 month/12 month assessments of the LAA.
- The Direction of Travel has been included in CAA in order to demonstrate that in some cases councils may be doing everything possible to make improvements but one "player" may be "letting the side down". The risk assessment will identify who these parties are.

Comments made during table discussions

Scoring assessments can demoralise – there should be a move away from the star rating system with a more narrative approach. Scoring should be simple for the public to understand and be constructive for the organisation.

Concerns were raised in relation to the complexity of CAA and lifting the burdens. Once CAA is rolled out will the process be easier or more complicated?

Concerns were also raised in respect of unclear leadership, who is leading and who will be accountable – especially in two tier authorities.

Conflicts may arise between national priorities and local priorities for local people, these priorities are

not necessarily the same. If focus is placed on government driven targets will this really improve quality of life? There is a concern that another level of bureaucracy will be created.

It was suggested that other partners such as Health Authorities and Police etc. should also produce a DOT as this will present a picture from each partner and will highlight any areas for improvement.

There will be a further joint consultation on CAA published in July 2008 and a second round of consultation events will be held in summer 2008.

Thanks to Alan Bunting for producing this report - Ed

