

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Engagement of partners and partnerships in Area Assessment element

Background

The Audit Commission are keen to agree an approach to engaging partners (those not subject to the organisational assessment element) in the Area Assessment with, as the final assessment regime requires, the ESSP at the heart of the arrangements. The following approach is suggested:

Principles for engagement

1. The approach must maximise the value of the work involved to the residents of East Sussex;
2. The East Sussex Integrated Community Strategy (ESICS) will be the starting point for the discussion about the area;
3. Partners/partnerships will be engaged in all relevant issues - the partners and partnerships (at county and more local level) that need to be engaged when the Audit Commission is exploring an issue will vary depending on the subject and geographical focus of the issue. When an issue is identified (and has been discussed with any relevant "assessed organisation") a proposed approach for engagement with all relevant partners and partnerships (geographic and/or theme based) will be agreed with the ESSP and supporting partnerships.
4. Accountability, roles and responsibilities of organisations subject to assessment, their partners and the partnerships with which they work, are clear and respected. This must include any substantive or critical issues within the remit of any organisation(s) being raised with them by the Audit Commission before discussion with partners to facilitate appropriate and evidence based work.
5. An assumption against creation of CAA specific work unless unavoidable. Existing information, sources, and processes will be used wherever possible. The Audit Commission's commitment to ask for information once and use as many times as needed is welcomed and will be monitored. Audit Commission focus will, where possible, align with planned partnership reviews of specific issues.
6. The extent and nature of engagement will be proportionate to the issue and reflect the capacity of partners and the Audit Commission.

In practice this means:

- a. By end of March Audit Commission team will share initial views on the area's strengths and weaknesses with the organisations subject to assessment and discuss potentially appropriate approaches to engagement. The engagement approach will then be discussed (principle 3 above) with Chairman of ESSP and other partnerships relevant to issue;

- b. At the following ESSP meeting in July the Audit Commission will update on their current assessment of strengths and weaknesses and engagement with partners/partnerships.
- c. To support ESSP partners in their understanding of the process, there will be a standing item on Area Assessment activities so there is clarity about the cycle and progress through the year.

Draft