

from ***Councilwide***, October 2004 (Islington Council staff newsletter)

Message from Helen Bailey, chief executive of Islington Council, re: CPA update - the 11-15 October 2004 inspection

Our corporate assessment is less than a week away. From 11 October the inspectors will be in Islington to evaluate how well the council is performing. They will be attending meetings, visiting working places, running a focus group with top management and talking to residents, councillors and employees.

We think they will like what they find. The fact is we have been doing better and better at delivering the services that residents expect from their local authority. Since our first assessment back in 2002, we have become one of only a handful of councils in the country to move up a category. This year we are anticipating an upgrade from 'weak' to 'fair', and a score of 'good' is a possibility.

This CPA provides us with opportunities. Firstly, if we can demonstrate to the inspectors the improvements we believe we've made in community leadership, corporate management and our ability to deliver quality services to the very diverse needs of the customers, we could be released from rigorous Audit Commission monitoring. This would free us up to invest even more time and energy into building a better community.

But just as importantly, an improving score is proof of the quality service we have delivered over the past 12 months. Assessments have a way of highlighting the bad and masking the good. While we are aware of our shortcomings, and are working hard to correct them, we shouldn't forget the quality services we have delivered. And we should be proud of this. Our Self Assessment document has already been sent to the Audit Commission inspectors with details of the improvements we've made since the original assessment. It includes our reasons why we believe our CPA score should be higher this time around.

As the inspectors will be observing operations throughout the borough, everyone has a part to play in the CPA. Please make sure you familiarise yourselves with the briefing document on the intranet explaining the One Islington story and how the council's vision, priorities and projects fit together. A Q & A section in the document outlines the inspection process, employee roles in it and its importance to the council and its services.

I am confident of what we have achieved and proud to be a part of it. And I hope you are too.