

copy to Paul Swift
Report to Const. Gov. Cttee

12 February 2008

Mr Greg Harlock
Chief Executive
South Cambridgeshire District Council
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Dear Greg

I am writing to let you know about the next steps we are taking to prepare for the introduction of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) from 2009. As we explained in our recent consultation paper on the CAA framework, the Audit Commission's contribution to CAA will be led locally by a new senior post in our regional structure. These new posts have the working title of CAA Lead, but this may change as the framework is finalised in the next 12 months.

Reflecting the area-based approach at the heart of CAA, the CAA Leads will cover geographic areas and will develop an understanding of the way in which partnerships work locally and the particular priorities for the area. For individual local authorities, the CAA Lead replaces the previous role of Relationship Manager. Their main responsibilities will be to coordinate the delivery of the various elements of CAA working closely with our partner inspectorates and to agree a risk-based inspection programme across the inspectorates. They will work closely with your external auditor to ensure that the combined audit and inspection programme is based on the same risk assessment and delivered in an integrated fashion.

Although the new post replaces the Relationship Manager role, the very different nature of CAA will require a different approach from the CAA Lead. They will develop effective working relationships with not just you as a local authority but also your local partners, our partner inspectorates, the Government Office and the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. We are making significant changes in the way in which we support CAA Leads in accessing specialist support, knowledge and information. One of our ambitions for CAA is that we are able to share promising innovation and learning from other areas tackling similar priorities more efficiently than we do currently.

SCDC
13 FEB 2008
Chief Executive

We have completed an initial internal selection process for the new role to a demanding job specification. I am pleased to confirm that Nigel Smith has been appointed as CAA Lead for Cambridgeshire. They will formally take up the new post from 1 April this year, and as well as overseeing the completion of the CPA framework will be working closely with you as the CAA approach is finalised by the end of 2008. The first set of CAA reporting is planned for the autumn of 2009 reflecting progress on the first year of the new Local Area Agreements.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any aspect of our preparations for CAA. As part of the new approach, we will be putting in place arrangements to quality assure the work of our CAA Leads and their teams and as part of that I am always available to discuss any issues you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Fenwick", with a horizontal line underneath.

Susan Fenwick
Head of Operations - Eastern