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9 November 2012

SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 19 November 2012
3.30 pm
Council House, Plymouth (Next to the Civic Centre)

Members:

Councillor Murphy, Chair
Councillor Bowyer, Vice Chair
Councillors Casey, Churchill, Gordon, James, Martin Leaves, Parker, Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

AGENDA

PART I – PUBLIC MEETING

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

To receive apologies for non-attendance by panel members and to note the attendance of substitutes in accordance with the Constitution.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members will be asked to make declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 1 October 2012.

4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

5. GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive an update on the following Government Policy Changes

- Impact on the Localism Act on Service Provision
- Impact of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access and Access to information) (England) Regulations 2012

6. SHARED SERVICES PROGRAMME REVIEW (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive a written update on the shared services programme.

7. GOVERNANCE OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME (Pages 15 - 20)

To receive information on the governance of the Capital Programme.

8. SCHOOL ACADEMY TRANSFER (Pages 21 - 36)

To receive for information a copy of the report on traded services which will be considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2012.

9. REVENUES AND BENEFITS MONTHLY POSITION STATEMENT (Pages 37 - 44)

To receive for information a copy of the Revenues and Benefits Monthly Position Statement sent to Cabinet.

10. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION TARGETS (Pages 45 - 48)

To receive a report on performance against freedom of information targets.

11. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (Pages 49 - 52)

To receive a copy of the panel's tracking resolutions and any feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on issues which concern this panel.

12. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 53 - 54)

To receive the panel's work programme for 2012/2013.

13. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) ... of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PART II (PRIVATE MEETING)

AGENDA

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE

that under the law, the Panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

NIL.

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Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 1 October 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Murphy, in the Chair.

Councillor Bowyer, Vice Chair.

Councillors Aspinall (substitute for Councillor Casey), Churchill, Fox (substitute for Councillor Parker), Gordon, James, Michael Leaves (substitute for Councillor Martin Leaves), Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Casey, Martin Leaves and Parker.

Also in attendance: Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, Malcolm Coe, Assistant Director for Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets, Ann Thorp, Service Manager, Alex Hurth, Carbon Manager, Karen Brindley, Head of Human Resources (Corporate and Community), Simon Arthurs, Lead Officer and Ross Johnston, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 3.30 pm and finished at 5.35 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

25. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

26. **MINUTES**

Members were informed that the reporting mechanism for Finance and Performance information was being reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its next meeting.

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on the 6 August 2012.

27. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

28. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The panel received the tracking resolution document and members commented that they were disappointed and concerned that the information requested on temporary staff employee sickness figures and the make-up of the Capital Programme Board had not been provided and that officers from these departments should be in attendance to explain why this information had not been provided.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the temporary staff employee sickness figures would be provided by email the following day;
- (b) the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would raise the issue of panels not receiving information requested from officers at its next meeting.

Agreed that the Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development be requested to attend the panel meeting to provide an explanation as to why the information on temporary staff employee sickness was not provided.

29. **UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

There were no government policy updates provided but it was commented by members that –

- (a) there had recently been a number of changes in legislation which would have an impact on the Democracy and Governance section of the Corporate Services Directorate, a department the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny panel was responsible for;
- (b) the Localism Act had been implemented some time ago and an update on this should have been provided.

Agreed that -

- (1) an update would be provided to the panel at the next meeting on the impact of the Localism Act and how this has affected the provision of services across the council;
- (2) an update would be provided to the panel at the next meeting on the impact of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

30. **REVENUES AND BENEFITS, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND TRANSACTION CENTRE REVIEW**

Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, Malcolm Coe, Assistant Director for Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets, and Ann Thorp, Service Manager provided the panel with an update reviewing the Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services and Transaction Centre.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) this report was in response to the recommendations agreed at the

Support Services Task and Finish Group in February 2012 which reviewed the impact of the restructure in Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services and the Transaction Centre (previously incomes and creditors);

- (b) the Revenues and Benefits service over the past 12 months had been through huge change including a restructure, with the aim of saving £1m, and a major increase in service demands;
- (c) recent CIPFA 2012 benchmarking information showed that the service was now one of the most cost efficient authorities. Performance had also improved with the time taken to process new claims reduced from 30 to 23 days (which is now on a par with council average);
- (d) the service acknowledged that there was still work to do in further reducing processing times, although it was strongly felt that the service was heading in the right direction;
- (e) the restructure, since its implementation in November 2011, had been successful, although there were still many changes still to be implemented, many of which were suggested improvements from staff.

In response to members questions it was reported that –

- (f) the interim staff survey had not been completed, however, the management were heavily engaged in staff relations throughout the service by way of measures including hot-desking and formal staff consultations;
- (g) in attempting to enable a single and central customer service location the service had been engaged with libraries and were exploring many customer access points;
- (h) the Strategic Manager role, identified in recommendation 10, was due to be re-evaluated along with all other manager posts within the FETA departments and it was hoped that if this post was demonstrated to have been under-valued then the pay scale would be backdated;
- (i) in order to deal with the impending changes to Welfare Reform the department were currently consulting the public on Council Tax Support and working with voluntary organisations to raise awareness of this issue. Internally, the department had been improving staff training, providing updates and guidance on welfare reform, communicating with staff on and investing in new technologies;
- (j) online transactions were an important tool for the department, however, it was acknowledged that there needed to be viable

alternatives for transactions to assist those customers who were not IT literate;

- (k) the impact on the service during school holidays had been reduced by spreading term-time workers across many different teams;
- (l) Cabinet were going to receive a monthly update on the Revenues and Benefits Service and if the panel felt that it would assist this information could be shared;
- (m) the service had to deal with a significant increase in benefit applications but now operated with a nil backlog system on new applications, compared to the 2600 backlog cases when the restructure was implemented;
- (n) processing times for changes in circumstances have been affected by an issue with downloading ATLAS files from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), this was currently operating as a backlog but was being cleared as a priority;
- (o) there was now a clear distinction between Grade D and Grade E posts;
- (p) the service was confident about recovering overpayments and now worked out of hours to assist customers in making payments and offering advice;
- (q) uncollected debt was sometimes written off but the service had clear policies and procedures for dealing with this issue. In recent years the Council had been very successful in recovering Council Tax and NNDR debts.

Members commented that it was concerning that recommendations from a scrutiny panel or task and finish group were not being actioned as necessary, and that officers, if they could not action recommendations, should inform the panel or the Chair of the panel as to the reasons why.

Agreed that –

- (1) the results of the interim staff survey will be submitted to the panel at its next meeting on 19 November 2012;
- (2) Dave Saunders would email all panel members an update of work undertaken on enabling a single and central customer services location;
- (3) Malcolm Coe, would email all panel members an analysis on the make-up of the service structure including numbers of term-time workers, with percentages against the full-time employed service;

- (4) the monthly Revenues and Benefits update report, submitted to Cabinet, would be included on the agenda for all Support Services Overview and Scrutiny panel meetings;
- (5) Malcolm Coe, would email all panel members a full analysis on overpayments made by the council, including figures on how much is written off. In addition the figure of 98 per cent collection of Council Tax is to be provided as a monetary figure.

31. **CARBON MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Alex Hurth, Carbon Manager, provided the panel with an update on Carbon Management.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the Council had produced a Carbon Management Plan, annexed to the Asset Management Plan, which aimed to increase the use of renewable technologies and reduce the impact on increasing energy costs; the Council had a 20 per cent increase on its energy costs over the past 18 months;
- (b) the Council and schools were charged approximately 12 pounds per tonne of CO₂ it produced which was estimated to cost £250k for 2011 – 2012;
- (c) Plymouth had been successful in reducing carbon emissions and compared favourably in a published CRC Performance League Table, which showed which organisations were effectively reducing carbon emissions;
- (d) there was still a lot of work for the Council to do to further reduce carbon emissions and it was focussing on achieving these reductions through –
 - invest to save projects, such as improving school boilers, reducing council properties and reducing energy consumption as part of the Accommodation Strategy;
 - improved energy management by using electronic invoicing which was paperless and more efficient and installing smart meters which accurately report on the energy consumed in council properties;
 - improved awareness, educating school children and staff to reduce carbon footprints and ensuring council department's business plans commit to sustainability;
- (e) the Council had reduced CO₂ by 9.1 per cent since 2010, which was

currently 1.1 per cent up on its projection of 4 per cent per year;

- (f) at present a programme of plans and projects on carbon management and green energy was being worked on; this would be submitted to Cabinet in the near future.

In response to members questions it was reported that –

- (g) the Council aimed to take advantage of currently low interest rates on borrowing money to purchase and incorporate green energy improvements within its buildings with which the savings generated would then pay for the borrowing in the long term;
- (h) the Council's measuring standard ISO14064 was an internationally recognised measuring standard and showed that the Council was ahead of most other local authorities on carbon reductions;
- (i) the Council offered on an ad-hoc basis energy and carbon management advice to schools, including academies, at no cost, although this would be reviewed in the 'services for schools' work which was currently being undertaken;
- (j) the Council reduced its air travel spend from £111k in 2009/10 to £36k in 2010/11;
- (k) the Energy from Waste plant, being constructed in the Dockyard, was estimated to reduce the city's carbon emissions by approximately 70 thousand tonnes, due to transport and methane gases from landfill being significantly reduced;
- (l) approximately 90 per cent of the Council House's and Civic Centre lighting was provided by energy efficient light bulbs;
- (m) there was the potential to improve carbon reductions through increased use of public transport and reducing traffic congestions and pollution.

Agreed that –

- (1) Alex Hurth, would email all members of the panel with a breakdown of the air travel spend of £111k in 2009/10 and the £36k in 2010/11;
- (2) Alex Hurth, would email all members of the panel with a report on how the Council aims to work with other organisations, responsible for highways and transport management, to reduce traffic congestion;
- (3) the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive a further update on carbon management following the Cabinet receiving a report on the Council's plans and projects on carbon management and green energy.

32. **HR UPDATE - TEMPORARY STAFF EMPLOYEE SICKNESS UPDATE**

In response to the agreed resolution in minute 28, Karen Brindly, Head of Human Resources (Corporate and Community) attended the meeting to update the panel on the reasons as to why the temporary staff employee sickness information had not been provided.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the information had recently been provided by Pertemps, the company who provided temporary agency staff to the Council, and the Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development was analysing the data before sending it out to members the day following this meeting;
- (b) the Council was working closely with Pertemps to tighten up on the reporting of temporary staff sickness data.

Agreed that the information requested would be emailed to all panel members the day following this meeting.

33. **CIVIC CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The panel received a report on the Civic Centre Development Project which was presented by Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance.

The panel were informed that –

- (a) a new timetable for the Civic Centre Redevelopment Project had been prepared, which set a revised contract award date for June 2013;
- (b) a recently held ‘bidder’s day’ had been very successful with 22 separate companies attending;
- (c) Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) had been issued to interested parties and it was hoped that following submission of the PQQs the four highest scoring submissions would be invited to participate in the detailed tendering exercise;
- (d) it was hoped that as part of the redevelopment the Civic Centre car park would be released for construction so that it further added to the city’s landscape. The car park would not be used as a pay and display car park by developers.

In response to members questions it was reported that –

- (e) in order to relocate staff appropriately following the sale of the Civic Centre, the Council were working towards finding a solution that

would see staff from Ballard House, on a lease until 2014, and staff from the Civic Centre be relocated at the same time, preferably into a current Council property; this was an area that scrutiny could assist in the future;

- (f) the Council were aiming to lease back some of the thirteen floors in the Civic Centre from the eventual successful bidder;
- (g) the Council House was not part of the Civic Centre sale and as such would remain as freehold owned by the Council and would not be part of the procurement exercise;
- (h) the previous administration in 2007 sought legal advice on the decision to Grade two list the Council House by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Agreed that, if possible, the legal advice provided on the listed status of the Council House in 2007 is provided to the panel.

34. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel received its draft work programme for 2011-2012 and recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that -

- (1) Freedom of Information Targets is added to the work programme for 19 November 2012;
- (2) Revenue and Benefits monthly position statement is added to the work programme for every meeting.

It was agreed that –

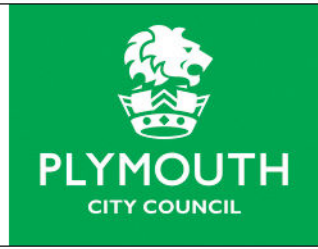
- (3) School Academy Transfer update is provided at the next meeting;
- (4) Membership for the Shared Services Task and Finish Group, subject to the PID being approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, is Councillors Murphy, Ian Bowyer, James and one more Labour member.

35. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY/LEGISLATION

9th November 2012 - Update



| Government Policy / Legislation | Impact | Response to date | Implications |
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| <p>Welfare Reform Act 2012</p> | <p>This Act introduces fundamental changes to the way welfare assistance is provided. Whilst some of the direct impacts are apparent and can be calculated, such as reduction in benefit amounts, others are more difficult to identify and quantify and will take some time to filter through to our front line services.</p> <p>There are very clear financial implications for households with reduced incomes and the Local Authority will likely see this reduction reflected in its ability to collect debts and generate income for services and an increase in crisis support services such as homelessness.</p> <p>More subtle impacts are likely to show in demand for our front line services in areas such as customer support, adult social care and children's social care.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Tax Scheme to be agreed by Cabinet in January 2013 before going live in April 2013; ▪ Social Fund Development to be agreed at Cabinet in January 2013 in order to go live by April 2013; ▪ A rolling Benefits campaign starts in November 2012; ▪ Staff training started October 2012; ▪ Welfare Reform has been identified as a strategic risk. | <p>There are many implications that arise from the changing nature of benefit work Local Authorities are expected to carry. Some of these have very clear financial implications, for example the cut in budget for schemes such as the Council Tax and Social Fund replacement. In other areas it is less easy to estimate the costs associated with the rapid change that is occurring, e.g. the amount of training we need to deliver to ensure staff have awareness, specialist and technical competence to deliver services.</p> <p>Work in anticipation of welfare reform in Plymouth indicates that this is a significant risk which is likely to have a negative impact on the achievement of our citywide priorities - raising aspiration, reducing inequality value for communities and growth - by increasing vulnerability and placing increased demands on already stretched services.</p> <p>A city wide review of the impact of the reforms to be organised in June 2013 to involve Health, Police, Job Centre Plus and advice service providers</p> <p>We will need to monitor trends closely over the coming year to ensure we are responding to this need and being proactive in preventing escalation of crisis for customers who will then need to access expensive intervention services.</p> |

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| <p>Localism Act 2011</p> | <p>Five Key Measures:</p> <p>1. Community Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The public will be able to nominate assets maintained by the Council; ▪ Community Right to Challenge gives community and voluntary sector organisations and groups of council staff opportunity to put forward expressions of interest to run Council services. <p>2. Neighbourhood Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify Neighbourhood Area; ▪ Create a Neighbourhood Forum; ▪ Produce a Neighbourhood Plan. <p>3. Housing</p> <p>Councils can decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how to best manage homeless people; ▪ how to manage waiting lists; and ▪ the length of tenancy that best fits a households needs. <p>Councils will get back control of the revenue raised by council rent.</p> <p>4. Empowering Cities - City Deal</p> <p>Requires cities to demonstrate ‘strong, visible and accountable leadership and effective decision-making’, and taking on some of the risk (of the investment and returns). In return, the City Deal sets out a menu of powers, flexibilities and resource which government are prepared to devolve to empower cities to use to develop areas, improve services and increase competitiveness in order to promote economic growth and</p> | <p>1. Community Rights</p> <p>Managing the assets of community value has been identified as an administrative process. Residents will be signposted via the website to land charges team who will start the process.</p> <p>The process for Community Right to Challenge was presented at Cabinet on 16 October 2012.</p> <p>A local code of conduct has been developed and is available, a register of members interest is about to be available via the website and shortlisting has occurred for the independent reviewing of complaints about members.</p> <p>2. Neighbourhood Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Neighbourhood Planning Team leader is in post and a team will be in place by beginning of November 2012. ▪ A survey of the community and neighbourhood groups in Plymouth has been carried out; ▪ Community groups have completed an online survey about the opportunities the new changes will offer and what support they may need; ▪ ‘Planning Aid’ workshops have enabled local people to learn how to ‘do’ Neighbourhood Planning; ▪ Six expressions of interest have been received from groups who would like to Neighbourhood Plan and two of these are progressing; <p>3. Housing</p> | <p>1. Community Rights</p> <p>Community Right to Build presents a real opportunity for the council to support local communities in accessing funding to improve their area.</p> <p>One or more expressions of interest from staff groups or other organisations regarding Community Right to Challenge will divert significant resources from the local authority.</p> <p>2. Neighbourhood Planning</p> <p>We have a statutory requirement to support any Neighbourhood Plans and there is funding attached when these plans reach a particular stage. If a Neighbourhood Plan is approved it will hold statutory weight in the planning process, this will give local communities such as Barne Barton real opportunity to influence development of their area.</p> <p>3. Housing</p> <p>The ability to stimulate growth and develop in an area is pertinent to Social Housing Landlords, such as Plymouth Community Homes. Utilising the Partnership Forum and PCH services such as the Tenant Involvement Team will be an aid in delivering other key elements of the Localism Act (Right to buy/build/challenge).</p> <p>4. Empowering Cities - City Deal</p> <p>Need for consideration of wider implications for local/regional approaches to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ leadership and governance; ▪ local economic growth; and ▪ devolution of central powers and local decision making. <p>The City Deal will have a direct influence on how ‘localism’ is delivered locally in practice.</p> <p>5. General Power of Competence</p> |
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| | <p>to set their own distinct policies.</p> <p>5. General Power of Competence Provides Councils with the legal capacity to do anything an individual can do which isn't specifically prohibited.</p> <p>This replaces and build upon the wellbeing powers in the Local Government Act 2000 and specifically allows town and Parish councils and Local Authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ carry out any lawful activity; ▪ undertake any lawful works; ▪ operate any lawful business ; and ▪ enter into any lawful transaction. | <p>Tenancy strategy due to release for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consultation in January 2013. ▪ The council will utilise the new ability to discharge the homelessness duty to the private rented sector. ▪ The changes to the Devon Home choice policy which supports ex-service men is contained within the Housing Strategy. ▪ Right to buy receipts from Plymouth Community Homes, are being used to stimulate growth and develop area in building new homes. <p>4. Empowering Cities - City Deal Plymouth City Council, in partnership with other local agencies and neighbouring areas will develop creative solutions with which to cultivate City growth. Meetings are taking place with the Cabinet Office to put forward ideas for Plymouth with regard to enhanced devolution and local decision-making,</p> <p>5. General Power of Competence This new power still needs to be considered amongst the council's other powers and duties i.e. Planning. However where the Council wants to undertake activity we look to see if this new power will assist us.</p> | <p>The local authority will need to consider the impact that this new power may have as it become more widely used.</p> <p>If something in a neighbourhood, town or village needs to be changed i.e. providing missing services or to correct market / public service failures, the natural first port of call will no longer be central government but local authorities. In short, the powers will provide local authorities the ability to provide whatever it may be that local people want or lack and are prepared to pay for.</p> <p>There is real opportunity to undertake innovative activity to drive efficiency.</p> |
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SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

19 November 2012



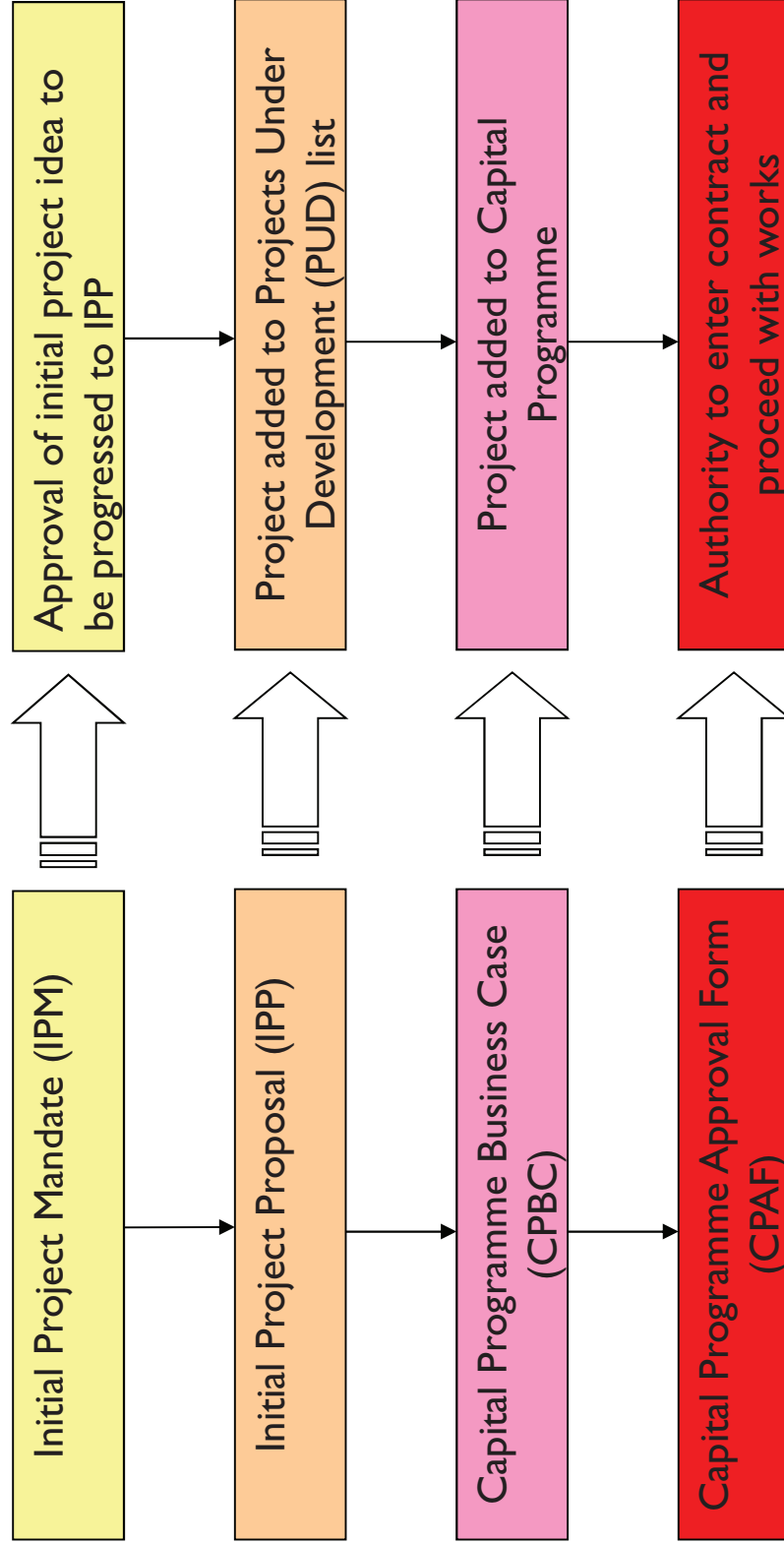
SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

We continue to make good progress with establishing a shared service. Three local authorities have agreed to help us develop the business case, Exeter, Teignbridge and East Devon. We are also looking to conclude discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Groups across the wider Devon area, and hoping to include Plymouth Community Healthcare. Devon Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is considering its strategic options including joining us.

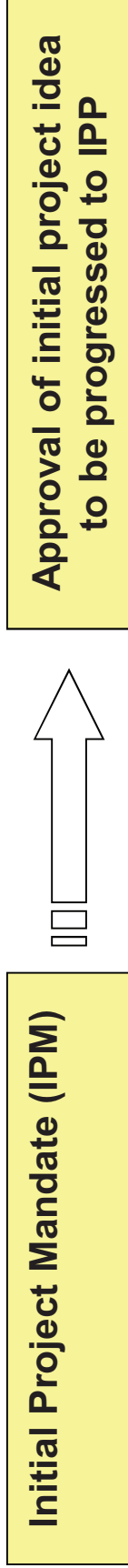
With our partnership working with KPMG other links are being made with other potential, UK-wide, partners. We have also stretched out across the Tamar to see if we are able to establish a working relationship with Cornwall. The data centre work is progressing and will be operational early in the new year.

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Capital Scheme Approval Process



Initial Project Mandate (IPM)



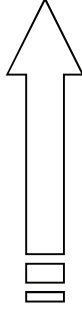
1st Stage of Process

- ❖ Very little detail but outlines initial proposal for DMT to accept or reject

Initial Project Proposal (IPP)



Initial Project Proposal (IPP)

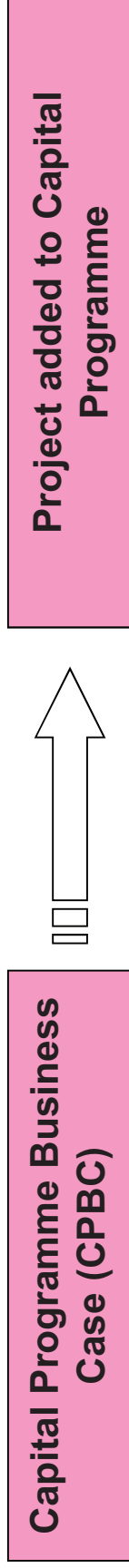


Project added to Projects Under Development (PUD) list

2nd Stage of Process

- ❖ If DMT are happy with the proposal then more detail is required for the IPP that is then taken to Capital Delivery Board (CDB)
- ❖ This often gives approval to bid for resources
- ❖ When agreed at CDB it can then be worked up to next stage

Capital Programme Business Case (CPBC)



3rd Stage of Process

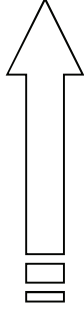
- ❖ Business Case is much more detailed and gives all details of the scheme or project to be worked up incl detailed funding, cashflow etc.
- ❖ CPBC taken back to CDB and, if approved there, is added to the capital programme awaiting approval at next Cabinet / Full Council
- ❖ No capital spend until CPAF received and approved

Capital Programme Approval Form (CPAF)



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Capital Programme Approval Form (CPAF)



Authority to enter contract and proceed with works

Final Stage of Process

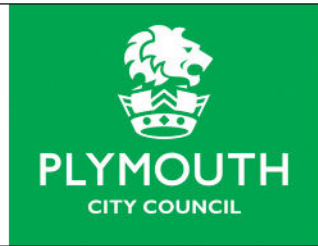
- ❖ Once tender prices have been received then the CPAF is completed and taken back to CDB for approval to start with the project.
- ❖ At this stage the project or scheme is given a capital code and capital expenditure can then be charged against it.

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TRADED SERVICES

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

19 November 2012



INFORMATION ON TRADED SERVICES

The attached report will be considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2012 and contains the information requested by the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Traded Services with Schools (Maintained schools and academies)
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 November 2012
Cabinet Member: Councillor Williams and Councillor Lowry
CMT Member: Carole Burgoyne (Director for People) and
Adam Broome (Director for Corporate Services)
Author: Anita Martin, Group Accountant (Education, Learning and Family Support)
Contact: Tel: 01752 307433
email: anita.martin@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:
Key Decision: Yes
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

The Services 4 Schools directory formerly known as Trading Fair is the reference source of traded services for headteachers and governing bodies. It lays out details of services that the Council offers to support leadership, management and raising attainment in schools. The directory, which is prepared annually, also includes services which can be subscribed to for a three-year contract period.

With the changing educational landscape and further delegation of funding to schools directed through national school funding reform, an analysis of the services offered to schools is necessary to ensure that the services the Council offers can demonstrate value for money, generate significant income and/or have strategic benefit for the Authority.

The prospectus of Service 4 Schools must be published in December 2012 to enable the Authority to enter into an increasingly competitive market for the period April 2013 to March 2014.

Corporate Plan 2012-2015:

Provide Value for Communities:

The review will lead to better value services being delivered by driving improved internal efficiencies and generating income in line with cost to ensure the Council does not inappropriately subsidise services offered to schools.

Deliver Growth:

Traded services with schools directly supports the employment of more than 80 full time equivalent staff in the Council. Expanding the services outside of the City boundaries has the potential to generate additional income for the City and create additional employment opportunities.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

Offering traded services to schools currently generates income in excess of £3.6m per annum and directly employs more than 80 full time equivalent staff in the Council. Whilst the majority of services generate adequate income to cover the direct cost and make a contribution to the Council's overheads, some services are currently operating at a loss. Continuing to offer services to schools, in line with the agreed charging policy, will help to secure this significant source of income and employment opportunities whilst ensuring that the Council does not inappropriately subsidise the services offered.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

None known

1. Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

1. The principle of continuing to offer services to schools through the Prospectus of Services 4 Schools should be agreed.
2. The prospectus should be simplified to cover a core offer of services which provide value for money, generate significant income and/or have strategic benefit for the Council. Other services could still be offered direct to schools on a pay as you go basis and should be priced appropriately using a full cost recovery rate according to the work required.
3. A charging policy should be agreed which expects services to cover the marginal cost of selling services to schools and make a contribution towards the Council's fixed costs wherever possible. The relevant Director should review and approve exceptions to this policy if the service is considered to have significant strategic benefit to the Council or where a robust business plan indicates that an incremental charging policy is required to support the longer term viability of the service.
4. Services which cannot recover cost and do not have significant strategic benefit to the Council should be discontinued.
5. The Council should maximise the value of good quality and efficient services by expanding the offer outside of the City boundaries.
6. The simplified prospectus of services covering the period April 2013-March 2014 should be published in December 2012 to enable the Council to fully establish its position in the market.
7. The proposed core offer, pay as you go options, commercially available services which will be signposted from the prospectus and services which will be removed from the prospectus shown in Annex A should be agreed. Cabinet note the risk and mitigating action for each service.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

The alternative option would be to discontinue offering all services to schools which would have a significant impact on the Council and its employees and schools.

Background papers:

Services 4 Schools – Analysis of local authority services traded with schools (Confidential – exemption paragraph 3 applies)

Sign off:

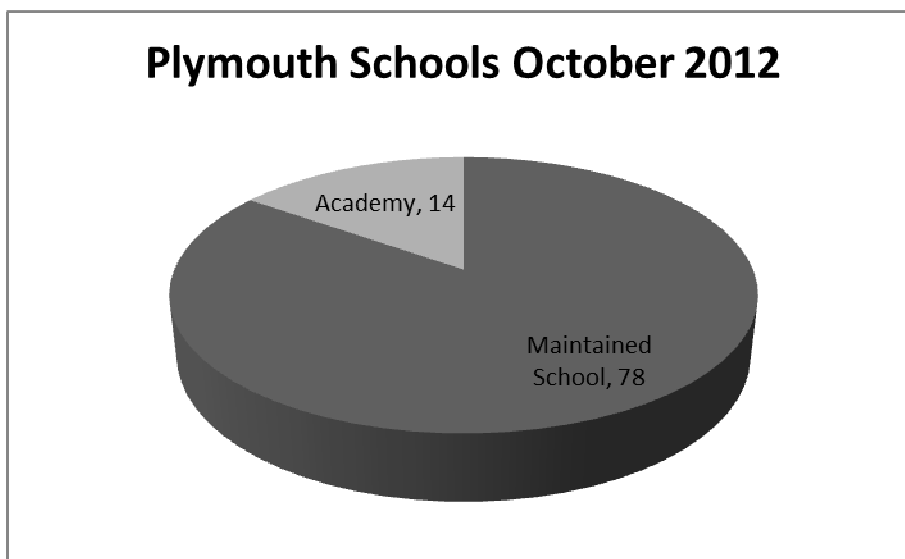
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----|-------------|----|--|--------------|--|----|--|---------------|--|
| Financ e | People FEC12 13009 SA 251012 | Leg | LTI 5948 | HR | | Corp Prop | | IT | | Strat Proc | |
| Originating SMT Member Maggie Carter | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes | | | | | | | | | | | |

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Services 4 Schools directory formerly known as Trading Fair is the reference source of traded services for headteachers and governing bodies. It lays out details of services that the Council offers to support leadership, management and raising attainment in schools. The directory, which is prepared annually, also includes services which can be subscribed to for a three-year contract period.
- 1.2 With the changing educational landscape and further delegation of funding to schools directed through national school funding reform, an analysis of the services offered to schools is necessary to ensure that the services the Council offers can demonstrate value for money, generate significant income and/or have strategic benefit for the Authority.

2.0 Plymouth Schools Context

- 2.1 In 2008, Plymouth set in place its policy direction for all schools to develop autonomy, either through the formation of a trust or academy status. This strategy for change, known as Investment for Children, outlined the Council's plans for maintaining the school estate. The strategy was adopted by Full Council in December 2008 and it remains the Council's policy for all schools to develop independence through vertical networks of schools serving their localities.
- 2.2 Since 2008 the school estate has changed significantly by the conversion of schools to academy status and the transfer to charitable trust.



- 2.3 Despite these changes, which are expected to continue over the next few years, Plymouth has treated all schools as part of the 'family' irrespective of their category as the vast majority of schools teach Plymouth children.

3.0 Trading Position 2012/13

| Service | Projected Income (2012/13) £m | No of Maintained School Customers | No of Academy Customers |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Building Cleaning and Caretaking | 1.088 | 21 | 0 |
| Risk Management and Insurance | 0.883 | 78 | 11 |
| HR&OD – Payroll and Pensions | 0.243 | 77 | 7 |
| HR&OD – Advisory Services | 0.199 | 77 | 0 |
| HR&OD – Health and Safety/Other | 0.027 | 21 | 2 |
| Schools Library Service | 0.371 | 65 | 9 |
| Schools Accountancy Team | 0.192 | 78 | 2 |
| Education Welfare (Academy only) | 0.124 | 0 | 12 |
| Copyright and other licences | 0.099 | 78 | 14 |
| Transactions Centre – Creditor Payments | 0.048 | 77 | 0 |
| Transactions Centre – Cash Collection | 0.040 | 71 | 0 |
| Transactions Centre – Income and Debt Recovery | 0.007 | 77 | 0 |
| Plymouth Leadership Advisors | 0.085 | 47 | 4 |
| Governor Development Team | 0.057 | 78 | 12 |
| Devon Audit Partnership | 0.051 | 77 | 0 |
| Plymouth Life Education Centre | 0.048 | 41 | 3 |
| Legal Services | 0.042 | 73 | 3 |
| School Admissions (Academy only) | 0.025 | 0 | 12 |
| Corporate Communications | 0.018 | 55 | 4 |
| Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity | 0.017 | 49 | 9 |
| Fischer Family Trust Data Subscription | 0.017 | 68 | 13 |
| Early Years Advisory Service | 0.012 | 33 | 2 |
| Smaller services generating less than £0.010m | 0.028 | | |
| Total Traded Services Income | 3.721 | | |

4.0 Streamlining of Traded Services Offer

4.1 Currently in excess of 94 services are offered through the Prospectus of Services 4 Schools. Of the 94 services offered:

- 22 services have more than 50% take-up by maintained schools
- 16 services are collecting less than £5,000 income per annum
- 49 services have no annual subscription income but could be charging schools outside of the prospectus arrangements

- 4.2 The prospectus is over complicated and includes services which have no or little buyback. The current offer creates an unnecessary administrative burden and causes confusion for schools as the customer.
- 4.3 Consideration has been given to how the prospectus could be simplified to cover a core offer of services which provide value for money, generate significant income and/or have strategic benefit for the Council. Other services could still be offered direct to schools on a pay as you go basis and priced appropriately using a full cost recovery rate according to the work required.
- 4.4 The proposed core offer, pay as you go options, commercially available services which will be signposted from the prospectus and services which will be removed from the prospectus are shown in Annex A.

5.0 Analysis of Top Services

- 5.1 A detailed review of the top services which are generating income in excess of £0.045m per annum has been undertaken which included:
- a) Overview of the service offered to schools
 - b) Take-up rates
 - c) Summary of income, expenditure and staffing
 - d) Contribution to the Councils overheads
 - e) Strategic value
 - f) Competitor/market evaluation
 - g) Proposals for the 2013/14 service offer

The review of each service is included in the report titled: Service 4 Schools – Analysis of local authority services traded with schools. The detailed review will be expanded to cover services generating income below £0.045m as part of finalising the 2013/14 offer.

- 5.2 The summary of the income, expenditure and staffing of the services analysed is shown in the table below:

| | £m |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|
| Expenditure | 3.503 |
| Income | 3.653 |
| Trading Surplus/ (Deficit) | 0.150 |
| Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff Employed | 80.00 |

- 5.3 The Council offers a number of good quality services to schools which is evidenced by the buyback levels and the income generated in an increasingly competitive market.
- 5.4 Many of the services offered have a strategic benefit for the Council. Without the traded service element it would be increasingly difficult for the Council to carry out its statutory and regulatory duties.
- 5.5 Whilst the majority of services are charged on a full cost recovery basis, some services are currently making a loss.

- 5.6 Other local authorities and commercial entities are actively promoting their services to Plymouth Schools. Good quality and efficient services could be expanded outside of the City boundaries.

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| Service | Sub-Service Area | Directorate | Risk and Mitigation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core Services | | | |
| Building Caretaking and Cleaning Services | Not applicable | Corporate Services | Reducing school buyback and impact on overhead recovery. Options appraisal for future service delivery and overhead apportionment |
| Children's University | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/13 |
| City Youth Council and Junior Life Skills/Model United Nations | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Communication Skills Resource Bank (CSRB) and Dyspraxia Resource Base (DRB) | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Copyright and other Licences | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Corporate Communications | Not applicable | Executive Office | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Devon Audit Partnership Financial Services | Internal Audit | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| Early Years' Service Advisory Support, Childcare 0 - 19 and Children's Centres | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Education Welfare | Academies only | People | Service not yet recovering cost. Review statutory responsibilities for academy pupils and amend pricing accordingly |
| Ethnic Minority Achievement Team Support | Not applicable | People | New service offer to be developed in line with school funding reform. Buyback levels will determine staff restructuring and possible redundancies |
| Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Data Subscription Offer | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/13 |
| Governor Development Team | Governor Development | People | None assessed |
| | Clerking Service | People | Service not yet recovering cost. Develop business plan to show the viability of the service and discontinue if necessary |
| Human Resources and Organisational Development | Payroll and Pensions | Corporate Services | True overhead costs not yet established. Service currently makes a small contribution to overhead costs. |
| | Advisory Services | Corporate Services | Future pricing to be reviewed. |
| Legal Services | Not applicable | Corporate Services | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/13 |
| Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/13 |

| Service | Sub-Service Area | Directorate | Risk and Mitigation |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Plymouth Leadership Advisers – Leadership Offer | Not applicable | People | Prices will be increased to cover estimated shortfall. Risk that schools will not pay increased fee which could lead to service reductions. Trading outside of city boundary will also be explored |
| Plymouth Life Education Centre | Not applicable | People | Service not yet recovering cost. Prices will be increased. Explore opportunities to work with public health to expand offer to more schools |
| Plymouth Schools Library Service | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Plymouth Youth Music Service | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Risk Management and Insurance | Balance of Risks Insurance for Maintained Schools | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Main Programme for Maintained | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Playground Inspection Service for Maintained Schools | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Motor Insurance Maintained Schools | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Brokering and claims management for Academies | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| School Accountancy Team | Not applicable | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| School Admissions | Academies only | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| School Meals | Free School Meals Eligibility Checking - Academies | People | None assessed |
| | School Meals Service | People | School buyback will impact on overhead recovery. |
| Transaction Centre | Cash Collection and Processing Service – Cashier Service | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Cash Collection and Processing Service – G4S | Corporate Services | Service is currently not recovering the G4S collection charges. Assess options to reduce the G4S cost or increase charges to schools |
| | Creditors Payments Services | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| | Debt Collection | Corporate Services | None assessed |

| Service | Sub-Service Area | Directorate | Risk and Mitigation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pay as you go | | | |
| Armed services schools – pre-school settings and cadet groups | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Building Surveying | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Carbon Management | Not applicable | Corporate Services | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Children's Integrated Disability Service (ChIDS) | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Coaching to Improve Teaching and Learning | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS) - Academies | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Diggin' It in the park | Not applicable | External | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Human Resources and Organisational Development | Equal Pay Audit Toolkit - Academies | Corporate Services | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14. Some pay as you go services support the Council to fulfil its statutory and regulatory duties |
| | Equality Toolkit - Academies | Corporate Services | |
| | Occupational Health | Corporate Services | |
| | Recruitment and Retention | Corporate Services | |
| | Reward and Remuneration | Corporate Services | |
| Wellbeing | Corporate Services | | |
| Outdoor Education Advisory Service - Academies | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Outdoor Education Advisory Service - Maintained Schools | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Plymouth Music Zone (PMZ) | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Plymouth Psychology Service | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Plymouth Schools Healthy Child Quality Mark | Not applicable | People | Service currently not recovering cost but working with health to improve viability in 13/14 or discontinue if necessary |
| Project Services | Not applicable | Place | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Raising Aspiration and Achievement across the Arts and Linking to Value in the Community | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| Safeguarding Business Team | Not applicable | People | financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |

| Service | Sub-Service Area | Directorate | Risk and Mitigation |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School Admission Appeals | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |
| School Exclusion Appeals | Not applicable | People | Smaller service not yet subject to full financial review. Complete prior to setting prices for 2013/14 |

Commercially Available Services (Signposted from Prospectus)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Design Studio | Not applicable | Executive Office | None assessed |
| Events Team | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Mount Batten Centre | Not applicable | External | None assessed |
| Parks Services | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Plymouth Community Homes Services | Not applicable | External | None assessed |
| Plymouth Transport and Highways | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Print and Document Services | Not applicable | Executive Office | None assessed |
| Public Buildings and Conference Facilities | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Recruitment and Other Advertising – Euro RSCG Riley | Not applicable | External | None assessed |
| Waste Collection Service | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |

| Service | Sub-Service Area | Directorate | Risk and Mitigation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Services to be removed from prospectus | | | |
| Architectural Design | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Assessment Advice and Support | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Corporate Premises - Fire Safety Advice and Training | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Curriculum Development – Primary Support | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Customer Relations Team | Not applicable | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| E-Learning and E-Safety | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Facilities Management Training, Advisory and Consultancy Services | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Human Resources and Organisational Development – Online Recruitment Toolkit | Not applicable | Corporate Services | None assessed |
| International Education | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Premises Legislation Compliance | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Primary Support to Improve Teaching and Learning | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Teaching and Learning in Religious Education | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Disabilities (SEND) – School Improvement Service | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Strategic Capital and Buildings | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Strategic Property Services | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Subject Leader Network Support – Modern Foreign Languages | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Support for Positive Play | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Sustainable Development | Not applicable | Place | None assessed |
| Translate Plymouth | Not applicable | People | None assessed |
| Workforce Development | Not applicable | People | None assessed |

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PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subject: | Revenues and Benefits Performance Update |
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 13 November 2012 |
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Lowry |
| CMT Member: | Adam Broome (Director for Corporate Services) |
| Author: | Martine Collins (Strategic Manager Revs and Benefits) |
| Contact: | Tel: 01752 304118 email: martine.collins@plymouth.gov.uk |
| Ref: | |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Part: | I |

Purpose of the report:

To provide Cabinet with an update on the performance of the Revenues and Benefits service.

Corporate Plan 2012-2015:

The Revenues and Benefits service significantly contributes to the Inequalities Agenda ensuring that the most vulnerable residents of Plymouth receive the appropriate benefit entitlement. Also strong links into Value for Communities.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

The Revenues and Benefits service undertook a major restructure in 2011/12 which reduced overall funding by c.£1m and fundamentally changed working practices. The Council administers Housing Benefit subsidy of c.£100m per annum and processes Council Tax Benefit of circa £22m

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

- An effective Revenues and Benefits service helps address inequalities through ensuring that vulnerable residents receive appropriate benefit entitlement.
- The service undertakes annual benefit take up campaigns which are targeted to areas of greatest need.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Cabinet are asked to note the progress made by the service since the implementation of a new structure in November 2011. The service now benchmarks as being 'below average' costs with improving service delivery.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

The restructure of the Revenues and Benefits service was undertaken in response to benchmarking information which demonstrated that the service was performing below standard and above cost.

Background papers:

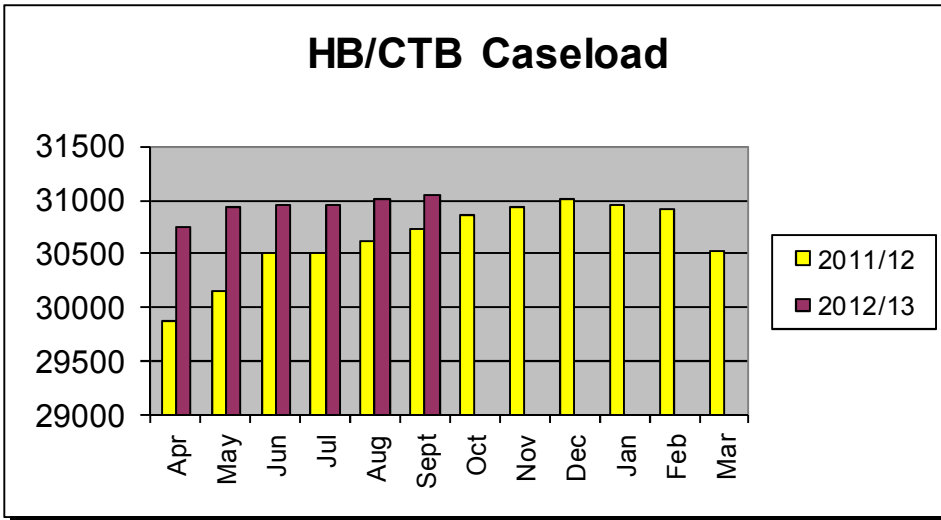
None

Sign off:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----|------------|----|--|--------------|--|----|--|---------------|--|
| Fin | MC 1213. 016 | Leg | TH 0059 | HR | | Corp Prop | | IT | | Strat Proc | |
| Originating SMT Member: Malcolm Coe | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes | | | | | | | | | | | |

Housing Benefit

Number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claimants:



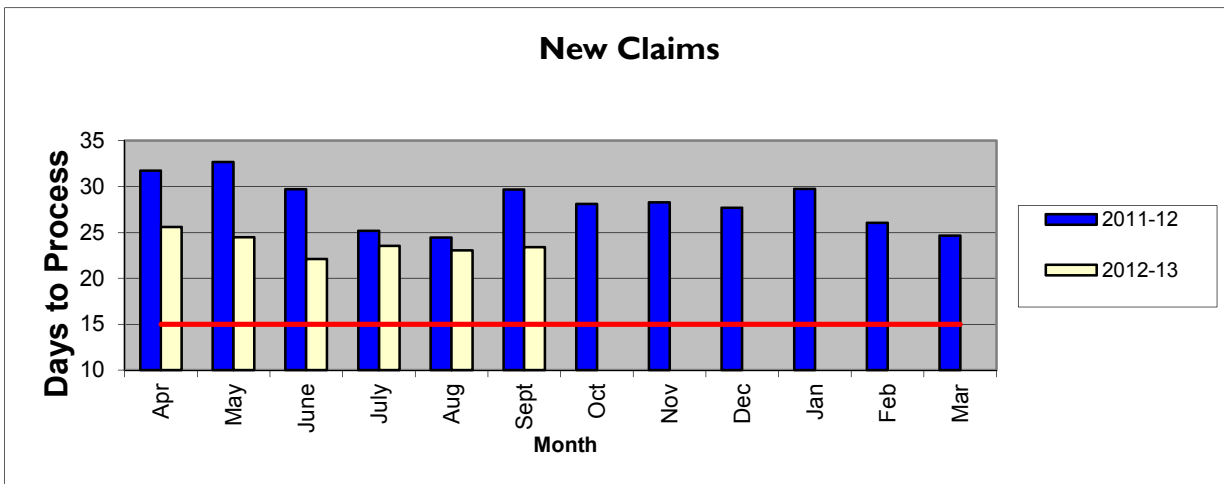
| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2012/13 | 30754 | 30945 | 30953 | 30952 | 31015 | 31040 | | | | | | |
| 2011/12 | 29879 | 30165 | 30505 | 30504 | 30621 | 30737 | 30853 | 30929 | 31004 | 30952 | 30923 | 30528 |

Caseload figures continue to rise. The average caseload per Plymouth City Council FTE staff member is now more than 1,000 which is above average compared with other Councils (Appendix A)

Processing times New Claims ■

Target 15 days

The average time to process new claims in September 2012 was 23.73 days (23.05 Aug). This is in line with the figure as projected in the August '12 report. CIPFA 2012 benchmarking verifies that our performance is now in line with Council average. This compares with an historical figure of 30+ days which the service has performed at for many years. There is still further progress to be made, but overall there is a notable improvement in performance.



| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2012 | 25.62 | 24.49 | 22.09 | 23.54 | 23.05 | 23.73 | 22.00 | 21.00 | 20.00 | 22.00 | 20.00 | 18.00 |
| 2011 | 31.74 | 32.70 | 29.74 | 25.19 | 24.47 | 29.70 | 28.13 | 27.71 | 27.71 | 29.77 | 26.05 | 24.68 |

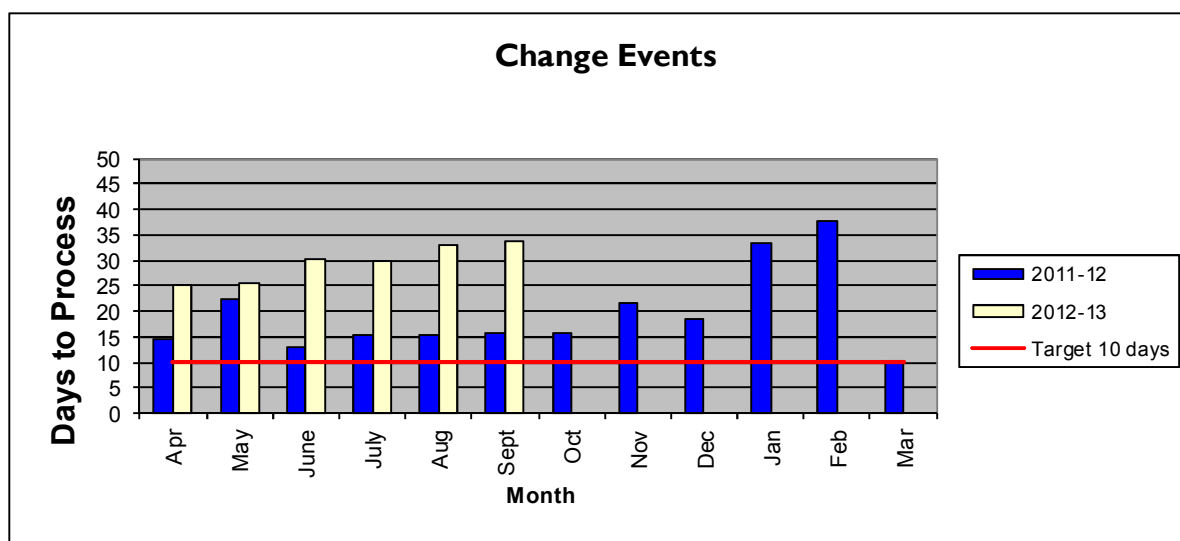
Forecast Processing Times (new claims)

The build-up of claims throughout the summer continued to be cleared during September. Processing times have remained stable and are in line with forecasted outturns. We are confident that processing times will continue to improve over the coming months through the introduction of new processes and wider system functionality. Self-service continues to be rolled out which will provide clearer information to claimants earlier in the process and reduce the volume of low complexity queries to the service.

Processing times - Change Events

Target 10 days

The processing times for September were in line with forecasted outturns and as we clear the oldest ATLAS work the processing times will begin to reduce over the coming weeks.



| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2012 | 25.05 | 25.41 | 30.23 | 29.73 | 33.08 | 33.86 | 29.00 | 26.00 | 24.00 | 22.00 | 19.00 | 15.00 |
| 2011 | 14.58 | 22.57 | 12.94 | 12.12 | 15.15 | 15.62 | 15.73 | 18.34 | 18.34 | 33.36 | 37.82 | 25 |

Forecast Processing Times (change events)

Throughout September there have been on-going problems downloading ATLAS files from the DWP which have impacted on overall processing times for changes.

Issues surrounding these files are an on-going national issue with processing times for 'changes in circumstances' significantly increasing, (in the short term), across all authorities. The official national housing benefit information website states that delays of between 6 to 8 weeks are common due to pressures brought about by ATLAS.

A dedicated team has been set up to clear the backlog of ATLAS files, clearance plans are in place and progress is being monitored weekly. Staff have engaged in initiatives to drive improved performance and tackle backlog volume. For example, approx. 20 volunteers have recently participated in an after hours evening club – focussed on clearing ‘changes in circumstances’ cases combined into a team building environment which ran up to midnight on a Friday evening. Feedback from this event was very positive and it is possible that we will re-run this again in the near future.

Income Collection Rates

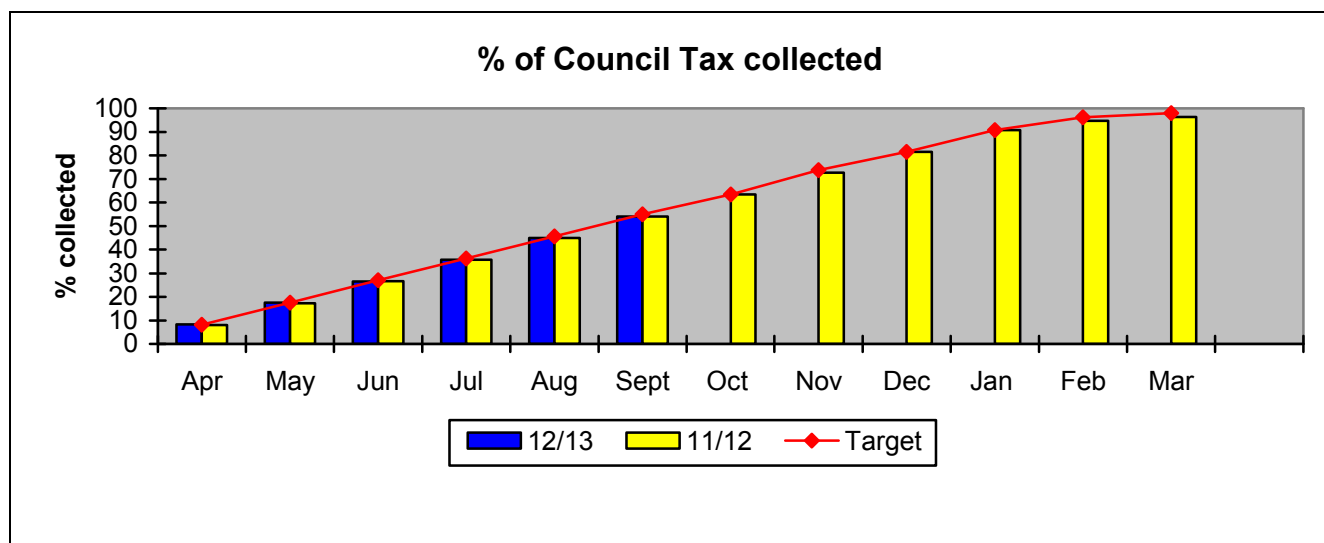
Council Tax



- Net Collectable Debt 2012/13 £93,653m
- Collection Target 2012/13 98.00%

Monthly Target = 54.90%
Collection Rate = 54.07%

| | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 12/13 | 8.25 | 17.53 | 26.53 | 35.70 | 44.95 | 54.07 | 63.38 | 72.72 | 81.68 | 90.91 | 94.93 | 96.6% |
| 11/12 | 8.07 | 17.31 | 26.62 | 35.61 | 44.85 | 54.04 | 63.34 | 72.60 | 81.54 | 90.71 | 94.68 | 96.30 |
| Target | 8.22 | 17.61 | 27.06 | 36.19 | 45.57 | 54.90 | 63.34 | 73.74 | 81.54 | 90.71 | 96.24 | 98.00 |



Council Tax collection rates have continued to improve at 54.07% for September against a collection rate of 54.04% for the same point last year. This is slightly under the target of 54.90%.

To maximise collection and in preparation for welfare reform changes, staff have received updated training in collection techniques. The aim of this is to connect with the customer earlier to avoid court action and bailiff action and maximise payments to the Council earlier in the process.

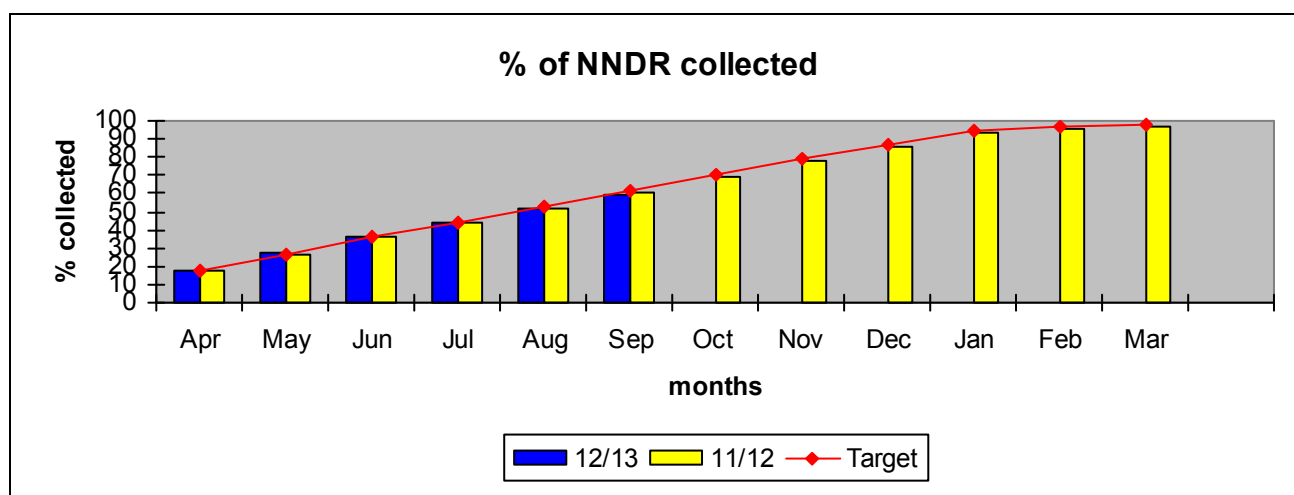
The percentage of payers who pay by DD has increased to 66.65% from 60.58% at the same point last year. Our trend in improving income collection is positive compared to other authorities. However, maintaining this upward trend will be a significant challenge with the introduction of welfare reform changes (such as localised Council Tax Support scheme)

National Non Domestic Rates ■

- Net Collectable Debt 2012/13 £88,024m
 - Collection Target 2012/13 96.90%
- Monthly Target = 61.31%
 Collection Rate = 59.66%

| | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 12/13 | 17.82 | 27.46 | 36.11 | 43.95 | 51.20 | 59.66 | 68.85 | 77.92 | 86.13 | 95.42 | 95.75 | 96.63 |
| 11/12 | 17.63 | 26.48 | 36.17 | 43.80 | 51.84 | 60.85 | 69.23 | 78.14 | 86.19 | 93.52 | 95.49 | 96.21 |
| Target | 17.74 | 26.69 | 36.48 | 44.22 | 52.28 | 61.31 | 69.73 | 78.66 | 86.73 | 94.09 | 96.08 | 96.90 |

NOTE: Target of 96.90% is a revision from 97.50% after taking into account the business rates deferral scheme where businesses can defer payment of their rates for 2 years.



Business Rates collection has shown a slight drop at 59.66% for September, against 60.85% for the same point last year.

Many authorities are seeing a reduction in collection due to local businesses looking at options to avoid paying rates. In Plymouth we are experiencing difficulties collecting empty property rates from landlords where properties become vacant. Where properties become vacant landlords are entitled to 3 months exemption and then the full charge becomes due. Landlords are now signing leases over longer periods and making tenants liable, therefore when a property becomes empty the tenant is remaining liable but may be in receipt of benefits impacting on collection.

In order to improve collection we have revised our recovery timetable to ensure the recovery process is taken through to conclusion more quickly.



Benefits Administration Benchmarking Club 2012

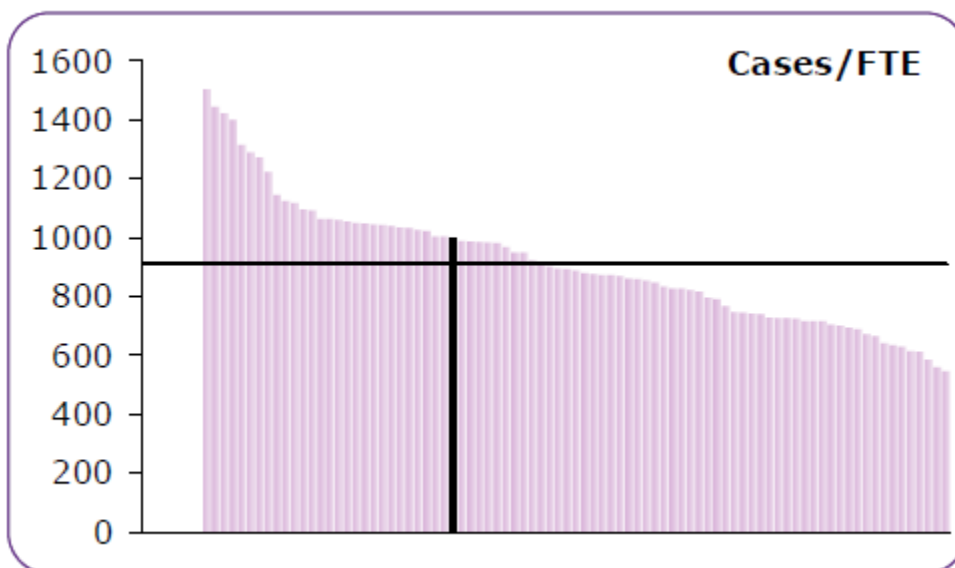
Plymouth City Council

compared with

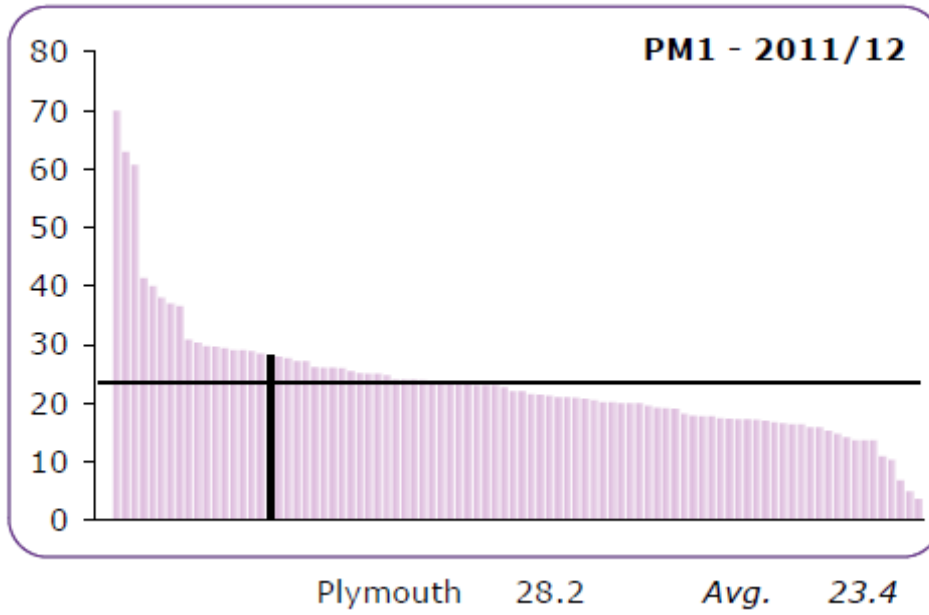
91 other club members

The following graphs, extracted from CIPFA 2012 benchmarking, shows the relative performance of Plymouth City Council:

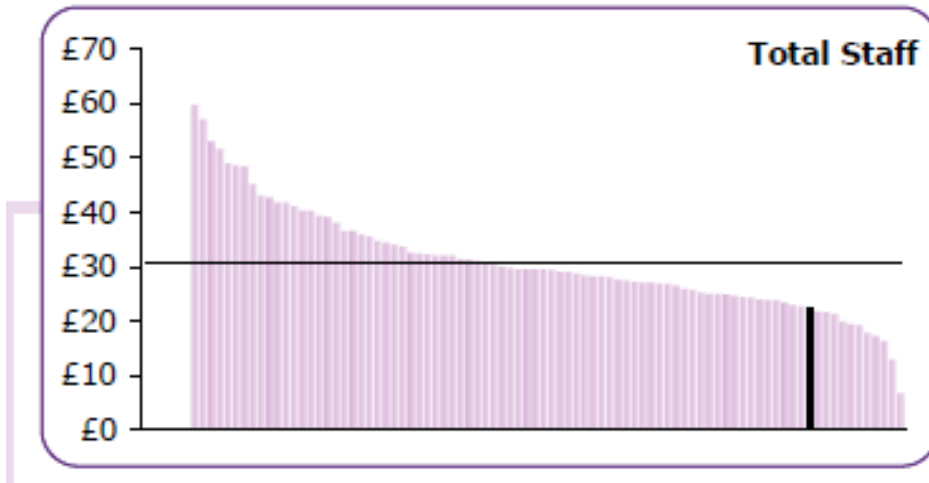
1. Average number of cases per Full Time Equivalent post



2. Number of days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims

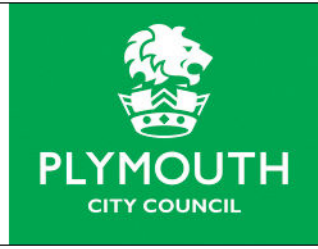


3. Total Staff Cost – Gross cost per weighted caseload



SUPPORT SERVICES OSP

Information Management



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSE STATISTICS

Introduction:

The Freedom of Information Act (Fol) became operational from 2005 and provides the right to request data or information held by the Council and for the applicant to be told whether the information is held and to receive a copy of the data or information (not documents) unless an exemption to release applies.

Other legislation also allows information to be requested i.e. the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the small numbers of environmental requests under the EIR are included in the Fol figures.

However the EIR also allows 'property search' requests to be made to the Council which are dealt with separately by the Land Charges team, but all of these are completed within the statutory 20 working day timescale.

Information requests are varied and where they can be answered quickly with readily available data or information, or the applicant pointed towards an information source, such as a web page, then a particular request is not formerly recorded.

When the application is more detailed, difficult to answer, or is requesting sensitive information, then the request is formerly recorded in the 'Flare' system and it is from these more difficult requests that the statistics are provided. Each Directorate has staff that oversee the application process and log the outcome.

The number of formal requests dealt with by the Council has increased each year and is currently more than twice the number received in 2005. The annual numbers of requests that went through the formal process has been shown on the Council's web site since July 2012 and will be updated at the end of this year.

Please see the web page:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/councilanddemocracy/information/inforequestsandanswers.htm>

Issues in respect of information requests:

1. The regulator – the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) expects that 85% of applications should be answered within the statutory 20 working day response time. The ICO has served statutory undertakings on low performing public authorities which bind them to ensuring that applicants are dealt with according to their rights.

However the calculation of the response time for the Council is not accurate, as not all applications for information are currently logged, or included in the published response time.

- a. The recording system is being upgraded to 'Dynamics' and this should allow more comprehensive logging and calculation of response rates.
2. Under the 'transparency agenda' more data and information is being published by the Council on our web pages and through reports to Committee e.g. we publish expenditure of over £500 spend each month. This has led to more detailed enquires as businesses seek to identify what services they could supply and as other requestors try to find out the 'facts behind the published information'.
 - a. The ongoing project to improve the Council's web site should lead to more publishing of data and cross referencing of published information, so that requestors will be able to 'self-serve' and not need to make a formal application for information.
3. Applications can be unrelated to current activities being undertaken by the Council and thus the information is not readily available and needs to be retrieved from storage, which takes significant staff time.
 - a. There is currently a rationalisation of physical storage space which includes a review of whether hard copy documents need to be held and is having the effect of making more documents 'findable'. There is also a plan to introduce electronic document and records management (eDRMS) across the Council, which when funded will enable much more efficient and effective obtaining of the data and information that is held.
4. Where requests are about current issues, the applicant is often seeking information that is contentious or very detailed; so the response requires careful consideration.
 - a. The introduction of eDRMS will allow different files held by different business teams to be accessed very easily and make information concerning a particular subject easily available for both staff and enquirers.

Performance rate for Fol

The following table shows the response rate by each Directorate to the formal applications for information that they have dealt with during the current financial year.

| 2012 / 2013 Financial Year cumulative figures | Fol Total that should be completed for OCT report | Fol Number over limit or not completed | Fol over limit % | Fol statutory achievement % |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Executive Unit | 1 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| People | 149 | 51 | 34 | 66 |
| Place | 132 | 25 | 19 | 81 |
| Corporate Services | 149 | 29 | 19 | 81 |
| All Directorates | 431 | 105 | 24 | 76 |

Indication of applicants for information during the current financial year:

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Councillor or MP | 3% |
| Media | 14% |
| Business/Corporate | 27% |
| Individuals | 52% |
| Other | 4% |

In order to improve the current achievement rate, all Assistant Directors have been asked to improve the flow of information within their Directorate and to ensure that applications for information are progressed in a timely manner. In particular the People Directorate have recently recruited to assist with responding to requests for information. As the initiatives described above are implemented, then the visibility and availability of information and our response rate will also be improved.

Richard Woodfield

Corporate Information Manager
Customer Services

TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date/Minute Number | Resolution | Explanation/Minute | Officer | Progress | Target Date |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 06.08.12 19 | that the costs of temporary staff to cover employee sickness is distributed to the panel. | | Mark Grimley, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development | This recommendation was superseded by 01.10.12 32 (below) | |
| 06.08.12 20 | to request that final shared service business cases are presented to the panel for pre-decision scrutiny. | | Neville Cannon, Programme Director for ICT Shared Services | Panel updated on 19 November 2012. | |
| 06.08.12 21 | request a further update providing information on the take up by academy schools of services provided by the council. | | Jayne Gorton and Mark Grimley | Report received at meeting on 19 November 2012 | |
| 01.10.12 29 | update provided to the panel at the next meeting on the next meeting on the impact of the Localism Act and how this has affected the provision of services across the council | | Simon Arthurs | Update provided at meeting on 19 November 2012 | |
| 01.10.12 29 | update provided to the panel at the next meeting on the impact of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. | | Tim Howes | Verbal update to be provided at meeting on 19 November | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 01.10.12 30 (1) | the results of the interim staff survey will be submitted to the panel at its next meeting 19 November 2012 | | Mark Grimley | The staff survey is currently underway and so the results are not yet available. The outcome of the survey will come to the panel on 11 February 2012. Results will be shared with the Chair and Vice Chair at the earliest opportunity. | 11.02.12 |
| 01.10.12 30 (2) | Dave Saunders would email all panel members an update of work undertaken on enabling a single and central customer services location | | | Information e-mailed 05/11/2012. | |
| 01.10.12 30 (3) | Malcolm Coe would email all panel members an analysis on the make-up the service structure including numbers of term-time workers, with percentages against the full-time employed service | | Malcolm Coe | Information e-mailed 05/11/2012. | |
| 01.10.12 30 (4) | The monthly revenue and benefits update report, submitted to Cabinet would be included on the agenda for all Support Services Overview and Scrutiny panel meetings | | Malcolm Coe | Democratic Support will attach the relevant reports to each agenda | |
| 01.10.12 30 (5) | Malcolm Coe, would email all panel members a full analysis on overpayments made by the council, including figures on how much is written off. In addition the figure of 98 per cent collection of the Council Tax to be provided as a monetary figure | | Malcolm Coe | Information e-mailed 05/11/2012. | |
| 01.10.12 31 (1) | Alex Hurth, would email all members of panel with a breakdown of the air travel spend of £111k in 2009/10 and the £36k in 2010/11 | | Alex Hurth | Circulated by e-mail on 09.01.12 | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 01.10.12 31 (2) | Alex Hurth would email all members of the panel with a report on how the Council aims to work with other organisations, responsible for highways and transport management, to reduce traffic congestion | | Alex Hurth | Circulated by e-mail on 09.011.12 | |
| 01.10.12 (31 (3) | The Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive a further update on carbon management following the Cabinet receiving a report on the Council's plans and projects on carbon management and green energy | | Alex Hurth | | |
| 01.10.12 32 | agreed that the information requested would be emailed to all panel members the day following this meeting | The information referred to in the resolution is temporary staff employee sickness update | Mark Grimley | The information was e-mailed to panel members on 02.10.12 | |
| 01.10.12 33 | agreed that, if possible, the legal advice provided on the listed status of the Council House in 2007 is provided to the panel | | Mark Lowry | Legal advice was provided at the time of the Council House listing. This advice given was in relation to a complex dispute between Plymouth City Council and English Heritage and it would not be appropriate to circulate this advice. Plymouth City Council would need permission from the QC to distribute any advice given at the time. If there is a specific issue which the panel would like more information consideration can be given on whether or not it is appropriate to share this information and how best to share it. | |
| 01.10.12 34(3) | School Academy Transfer update is provided at the next meeting | | Simon Arthurs | Update provided at meeting on 19 November 2012 | |

Grey = Completed (once completed resolutions have been noted by the panel they will be removed from this document)

Red = Urgent – item not considered at last meeting or requires an urgent response

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Work Programme 2012 - 2013

| Proposed work programme | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|
| Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Shared Services Programme Review | | | 6 | | | 19 | | | | | |
| Carbon Management update | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Civic Centre update (Accommodation Strategy) | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| ICT improvements update | | | 6 | | | | | | | | |
| Customer Services | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Revenues and Benefits Monthly Position Statement | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Human Resources and Organisational Development | | | | | | | | | | | |
| School Academy Transfer update | | | 6 | | | 19 | | | | | |
| Review other authorities' occupational health services and sickness (referred by Audit Committee on 16.12.11) | | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Human Resources Workforce Update | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sickness Policy Review | | | 6 | | | | | | | | |
| Interim Staff Survey | | | | | | | | | 11 | | |
| Democracy and Governance | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Corporate Communications | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Media Strategy | | | | | | | | | 11 | | |
| Policy, Performance and Partnerships | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Engagement update | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Issues | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Proposed work programme | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A |
|--------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|
| Government Policy Changes | | | | | I | 19 | | | 11 | | 8 |
| City and Council Priorities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value for Communities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task and Finish Groups | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Council Tax Scheme review (Welfare Reform) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Shared Services (DELT ICT Shared Services) | | | | | | | | | | | |

Key

* **New item**

N.B – items will be automatically deleted from the work programme once they have been considered by the Panel.