

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Registration Service – Service Delivery Review
Committee: Audit Committee
Date: 23 July 2010 (deferred from 28 June 2010)
Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance
CMT Member: Director of Corporate Support
Author: Tim Howes, AD Governance and Democracy
Contact: tim.howes@plymouth.gov.uk; (01752) 305403
Ref: TH/Registration
Part: 1

Executive Summary:

The delivery and administration of civil registration is a partnership between local government and the General Register Office (part of the Identity and Passport Service).

The General Register Office Delivery Partnership Unit (DPU) works with local authorities to review and improve service standards and to progress the modernisation of civil registration. The Unit also seeks to identify innovation and good practice within the service and to encourage its wider dissemination. In February 2010 a Service Delivery Review was undertaken at Plymouth City Council's Registration Service. The review evaluated Plymouth's services against the standards in the national Good Practice Guide, and provided an assessment of service performance (together with a summary of strengths and areas for improvements).

The review assessed the Statutory and Technical Standards within the service, together with Customer and Business Focus and evaluated the customer journey around accessing and utilising the service. It also examined the five underpinning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the GPG and the local authority's associated monitoring systems.

The overall assessment shows that Plymouth is performing to a "Good" standard with regard to service provision, where the potential ratings are Excellent, Good, Fair or Weak. In terms of statutory standards the district has achieved a good overall rating against the Good Practice Guide which is underpinned by a sound technical knowledge of all registration activities and a good understanding of the associated legal requirements. While business planning is evident it is not currently informed by formal consultation with stakeholders and customers.

Corporate Plan 2010 - 2013:

The report and the Registration Service assist in the delivery of CIP 1 Improving customer service; CIP 4 Reducing inequalities between communities; CIP 13 Supporting council staff to perform better; and CIP 14 Providing better value for money.

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

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

There are no direct implications arising from this report

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

The Committee notes the achievement of “good” in the service delivery review and the creation of a draft action plan to address the areas for improvement raised in the report.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

None.

Background papers:

The background paper is the report which is attached hereto.

Sign off: comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert initials of Finance and Legal reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):

Fin		Leg		HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In February 2010 the General Register Office Delivery Partnership Unit undertook a service delivery review of the Council's Registration Service. The report resulting from that inspection is attached.
- 1.2 The overall assessment of the service is a "Good" standard with regard to service provision, where the potential ratings are Excellent, Good, Fair or Weak. This assessment is derived from a marking frame which assesses performance against the Good Practice Guide for registration services and the associated technical quality. The underpinning marks for statutory and technical standards and customer and business focus show a rating of 'B' meaning that performance is good with a few minor improvements required.
- 1.3 The key strengths and innovations of the service were identified as:
- Timely birth and still birth registrations
 - Prompt turnaround of all certificate applications
 - A professional well organised workforce, which understands customer needs and delivers work to a good technical standard
 - Effective marriage procedures with a robust checking system

The following were identified as areas of improvement since the last review in July 2007:

- Provision of a reception point on the ground floor
- A visible complaints and suggestions procedure is in place
- Offices locked when vacant and informants accompanied at all times
- Cashbook control and record procedures standardised across the office
- Nominated officer duties documented

1.4 The key recommendations from the review are:

- Improve the timely registration of deaths by engaging with the coroner and other stakeholders
- Introduce mechanism to assess availability of appointment times, and of waiting times on arrival at the register office
- Arrangements to ensure the prompt registration of coroners inquests need to be put in place. Additionally all incoming correspondence should be date stamped and associated actions documented so that a clear audit trail is in place
- Arrears of quarterly copy returns including outstanding uncertified entries on RON, need to be brought to order as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, procedures need to be established to ensure regular certification and submission takes place
- Emergency out of hours arrangements should be put in place
- The local authority should further develop the Service Delivery Plan which should be informed through customer and stakeholder consultation

- 1.5 A draft action plan has been created to address the key recommendations. Further work will be required to match the issues against resources to set appropriate timescales for implementation.