

CITY OF PLYMOUTH



LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee

2nd September, 2003

‘Overview and scrutiny is potentially the most exciting and powerful element of the entire local Government modernisation process. It places members at the heart of policy-making and at the heart of the way in which Councils respond to the demands of modernisation. In addition, overview and scrutiny is the mechanism by which Councils can achieve active community leadership, good governance and by which Councillors can become powerful and influential politicians.’

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: ‘The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government’, September 2002

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Portfolio and Holder: Leader, Councillor Evans
Best Value & Performance, Councillor Purnell

CMT Member: Acting Director of Development

Subject: Local Public Service Agreements

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 9th September, 2003

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Ref: 5/CWB/KJ

Part: I

Executive Summary:

This report informs the Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken with the Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee on development of the Council's Local Public Service Agreement.

Strategic Choices:

A close link has been drawn between Strategic Choices and the Recovery Plan in drawing up the list of PSA targets for Plymouth City Council. They reflect the broad, and in some instances, specific priorities set out in the majority Group manifesto. Strong emphasis has been placed on areas which require a boost to their performance in the above three documents. These targets have been endorsed by CMT and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as broadly consistent with the Council's Recovery Plan priorities.

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

A pump priming grant of around £1m will be awarded to Plymouth City Council to assist in the delivery of its twelve selected LPSA targets. The end result of the successful LPSA Programme will be a Performance Reward Grant of around £6.2m, equivalent to £520,000 for each successfully delivered LPSA target. At this stage no extra funding has been identified from Plymouth City Council's budget for this financial year to support delivery of these targets. However, the need to ensure successful delivery will have to be a factor in determining future year's spending priorities. In addition, there will need to be a commitment of officers time from each Department involved in the PSA Programme to monitor, review and keep their individual PSA on track to achieve its outcomes. At corporate level the Performance Management system must be capable of providing CMT, Cabinet and individual Portfolio Holders with regular reports on overall progress.

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety etc.

With regard to the Section 17 Programme, the Section 17 Officer will be very much involved in supporting and giving advice to the police on the Crime PSA. This PSA will also have links to the Parking Division. There will also be partnership working on the Social Services PSAs in relation to reducing the under 18 conception rate, increasing the proportion of drug users in drug treatment programmes, systems for monitoring and working in partnerships are being put in place.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

The Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee resolved that -

- (1) the QPR software be implemented as soon as possible with the full support of management to ensure the timely and accurate input of data;
- (2) training on the QPR software should include both officers and Members;
- (3) that bi-monthly monitoring reports be submitted to CMT in a user-friendly format;
- (4) a 6-month review be undertaken following activation of the QPR system;
- (5) an internal and external publicity launch be organised simultaneously when the system goes live;
- (6) Members be advised of the availability of statistics via QPR, and that in any case statistics be made available to them;
- (7) in respect of Target 5, Activity, paragraph 2 the words "in the worst 5 wards" be deleted and replaced with "in the most deprived 5 wards";
- (8) the Local Public Service Agreement be published to the web in a user-friendly format and that it be updated on a regular basis to reflect the current status of PSA targets;
- (9) in order to ensure thorough and proper scrutiny in future on such projects, Scrutiny Committees should be involved in the process far earlier, and access to information/reports must be provided in accordance with the timescales set out within the City Council's Constitution;
- (10) the key officers be thanked for their input.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action

None.

Background papers:

- (1) Local Public Service Agreement report to Cabinet on 9th September, 2003.
 - (2) Plymouth City Council's Potential Targets and Freedoms 12th August, 2003.
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REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) are voluntary agreements between Government and local authorities intended to improve public service outcomes. They cover a wide range of the authority's activities and reflect its overall vision for the community and its priorities over the medium term.
- 1.2 An Agreement typically covers 12 individual targets and, of these, at least one must relate to each of -
- Education
 - Social Services
 - Transport
 - Crime
 - Cost Effectiveness
- 1.3 Plymouth City Council has been working hard on the development of its Local Public Service Agreement and, to this end, has produced a report identifying selected baskets of PSA targets for approval by the Cabinet.
- 1.4 The Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee met on 2nd September, 2003, in order to consider the development of the Council's Local Public Service Agreement and make recommendations, if any, to a meeting of the Cabinet on 9th September, 2003.

2.0 Committee Structure

Councillors

Councillor T. Wildy, in the Chair.
Councillor Mrs. Ford.

Witness

Councillor Purnell - Portfolio Holder for Best Value and Performance

Officers in Attendance

Ian Sherriff - PSA Project Manager
Christine Crown - Democratic Support Officer

3.0 Objectives

- 3.1 The Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee consider development of the Council's Local Public Service Agreement, ensuring that -
- (i) proper consultation has taken place;

- (ii) the Committee's findings and recommendations, if any, are submitted to a meeting of Cabinet on 9th September, 2003.

4.0 Detail

4.1 The PSA Project Manager attended the meeting in order to consult members of the Select Committee on his report to Cabinet on 9th September. The report -

- (i) provided a brief background explaining the context in which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) expects LPSAs to be developed;
- (ii) included the links made within the LPSA with Strategic Choices and Recovery Plan Priorities;
- (iii) set out the City Council's selected basket of PSA targets;
- (iv) detailed the timetable for completion, submission and negotiation of the LPSA.

Members were informed that the main drivers behind Local Public Service Agreements were the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Local Government Authority (LGA) and Treasury. An explanation on how the Local Public Service Agreements would operate and how services would be delivered was also provided.

4.2 The consultation exercise focused its attention on the City Council's current basket of potential LPSA targets.

5.0 The Committee's Findings

5.1 The Committee found that -

- (i) as a result of meetings with the ODPM and the LGA it was agreed in July that, in light of the commitment to other Recovery Plan activities, Plymouth City Council's LPSA programme would move from Batch 11 into Batch 12 and submit its proposals on 22nd September, 2003;
- (ii) the actual PSA Programme for Plymouth City Council will start in April, 2004, and conclude in April, 2007;
- (iii) an Agreement typically covered 12 individual targets, however, Plymouth City Council had identified 14;
- (iv) all targets have been checked against Best Value;
- (v) Plymouth City Council was progressing well and in many respects was well ahead of schedule. However, negotiations were still ongoing in some areas;
- (vi) all PSA targets need to be sustainable and should be linked to the Recovery Plan;

- (vii) as a result of Plymouth City Council having been classed as a “weak” authority, the ODPM was keeping a close watch on its activities;
- (viii) in respect of Crime targets, the City Council had picked Vehicle Crime and were aiming for a reduction of 30%. The Police would be the lead officers on this issue;
- (ix) in respect of Customer Care, negotiations would be ongoing until Christmas;
- (x) in respect of Direct Services targets, street cleaning and graffiti were two areas identified for improvement by maximising the efficiency of the current workforce;
- (xi) in respect of Finance targets, Plymouth City Council was awaiting ODPM to construct a formula that was clear and which would work. It was proposed to select 25 baskets out of the 40 targets for this category and to focus on improving efficiency by 2%;
- (xii) in respect of Culture and Leisure, performance was currently good but needed monitoring;
- (xiii) investigation into sickness and absence was required but advice from the ODPM was that this could not be done as a PSA target. However, Plymouth City Council would be supported in trying to improve it;
- (xiv) in respect of Health targets, drugs misuse had been identified as a key issue particularly the effect on the foetus during pregnancy. Plymouth City Council would be working in partnership with the Police and Drug Action teams;
- (xv) a new software package ‘QPR’ was being purchased to assist in managing and monitoring the PSA.

6.0 Written Material

The Committee received the following written material to assist with the consultation -

- (1) Local Public Service Agreement report to Cabinet on 9th September, 2003, containing Plymouth City Council Potential Targets and Freedoms 2003.

7.0 Resolutions and Recommendations

The Community Well-being Scrutiny Select Committee resolved that -

- (1) the QPR software be implemented as soon as possible with the full support of management to ensure the timely and accurate input of data;
- (2) training on the QPR software should include both officers and Members;

- (3) that bi-monthly monitoring reports be submitted to CMT in a user-friendly format;
- (4) a 6-month review be undertaken following activation of the QPR system;
- (5) an internal and external publicity launch be organised simultaneously when the system goes live;
- (6) Members be advised of the availability of statistics via QPR, and that in any case statistics be made available to them;
- (7) in respect of Target 5, Activity, paragraph 2 the words “in the worst 5 wards” be deleted and replaced with “in the most deprived 5 wards”;
- (8) the Local Public Service Agreement be published to the web in a user-friendly format and that it be updated on a regular basis to reflect the current status of PSA targets;
- (9) in order to ensure thorough and proper scrutiny in future on such projects, Scrutiny Committees should be involved in the process far earlier, and access to information/reports must be provided in accordance with the timescales set out within the City Council’s Constitution;
- (10) the key officers be thanked for their input.

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