



CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Interim Report on the Post Inspection Action Plan for the Adult and Community Learning Service

Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Select Committee

July 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 modernization. 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: Schools and Colleges: Councillor Camp

CMT Member: City Solicitor

Subject: Post Inspection Action Plan for the Adult and Community Learning Service – Interim Report

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 28th August 2003

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Ref: 5/LL/SC

Part: I

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to submit an interim report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission following meetings of the Select Committee responsible for reviewing the Post Inspection Action Plan for the Adult and Community Learning Service.

Strategic Choices:

Meets the Broad Policy Priority of improving and promoting opportunities for learning and cultural activities and Corporate and Service Priority of improving education services.

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

None

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

None

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

- (1) the mission statement be accepted;
- (2) a draft service level agreement be sent to Members;

- (3) a further meeting of Members and Officers be convened on 8th October 2003, commencing at 1.30 p.m. to review the progress on the Plan, with a further review to take place in February 2004 prior to the inspection;
- (4) the meeting of the Select Committee scheduled for 23rd July 2003 be cancelled.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action

None

Background papers:

- (1) Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Report – PIAP April 2003 (LL 08 03/04) *(private and confidential document)*
- (2) PIAP draft report 2003 (LL 09 03/04) *(private and confidential document)*
- (3) LEA Inspection Report January 2003 (LL 13 03/04)
- (4) Plymouth Adult & Community Learning Post ALI Inspection Action Plan (LL 14 03/04) *(private and confidential document)*
- (5) Updated PIAP (Adults) report (LL 22 03/04) *(private and confidential document)*
- (6) Mission Statement (LL 21 03/04)

Sign off:

Fin		Leg		HR		L.P.		IT	
Originating CMF Member									

INTERIM REPORT OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN FOR THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE

1.0 Introduction

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed a work programme for the Scrutiny Committees. It was agreed that one of the topics to be considered by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee would be the Post Inspection Action Plan for the Adult and Community Learning Service.

2.0 Committee Structure

Councillors

Councillor Weekes, in the Chair
Councillors Jordan and Kirk.

Statutory Co-opted Representative

Mr. Willis (Parent Governor representative)

Lead Officers

Graham Peck – Principal Adult Education Officer
Pauline Robins – Education Advisor

Democratic Support Officer – Christine Crown, City Solicitor's Department (for meeting on 1st July)
Scrutiny Support Officer – Nicola Kirby, City Solicitor's Department (for meeting on 16th July).

3.0 Objectives

- 3.1 To review the Mission Statement for the Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service and to consider the Post Inspection Action Plan with a view to ensuring that the milestones are being met prior to the next inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

4.0 Hearings

- 4.1 The Committee met on Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 16th July 2003, to hear from Lead Officers and formulate a report of recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with an interim report to be submitted on 31st July, 2003.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) had been written in response to the inspection report published on Plymouth LEA in January 2003. The PIAP will be implemented by the Department of Lifelong Learning in partnership with other City Council Departments and key stakeholders over a twelve month period and will provide an effective framework for co-ordinating the full range of responses to be made

5.2 The Adult Learning Service was funded from 2 strings from the Learning Skills Council: non accredited learning and learning leading to qualifications and basic skills.

5.3 The Inspection related to non accredited learning only, of which there were 12 areas of learning in Plymouth although 75% of the work was concentrated in the following 4 areas –

- Hospitality, sports and leisure;
- Visual and performing arts and media;
- English language and communication;
- Foundation programmes.

5.4 In addition to the specific areas, the Inspectorate also looked at Leadership and Management with Quality Assurance and Equal Opportunities as subsidiary areas.

5.5 The gradings achieved were as follows –

Area	Grade	Rating
Hospitality, sports and leisure	4	Unsatisfactory
Visual and performing arts and media	3	Satisfactory
English language and communication	3	Satisfactory but strategic and structural weaknesses
Foundation programmes: Parent and families	2	Good
Leadership and Management with Quality Assurance and Equal Opportunities	4	Weak

5.6 From the outset the LEA had maintained close contact with the Lead Inspector who would be undertaking a further inspection in March 2003. He was able to comment on early drafts of the plan and give guidance.

5.7 The LEA has welcomed the external scrutiny of the service and has accepted the content of the report which has enabled the authority to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses identified and re-focus the available resources to support further improvement. It is envisaged that the PIAP would provide an effective framework within which adult and community learning would continue to improve and develop.

5.8 The Plans will be finalised in September when, it was emphasised, some of the milestones may change.

6.0 The Committee's Findings

6.1 On unitary status, the service had been transferred to the City with little management support. The service attempted to continue with leadership and support but a recent review established that the service would now come under the management of an Education Advisor.

6.2 The PIAP had clearly identified areas that required further improvement, these areas were also highlighted by the Inspection Team as areas of concern. Within the plan, milestones had been identified with specific target dates some of which had slipped but were all now on target.

6.3 External processes were being examined to raise the quality assurance standard.

6.4 There was a need to examine ways of increasing daytime delivery of learning and of drawing in learners with few or no qualifications. Outreach work was considered the best way to reach new learners but this was expensive and staff intensive. A joint scheme with employers on the provision of basic skills could be investigated but there were difficulties with regard to the use of funding from the Learning Skills Council for this purpose.

6.5 A number of new key appointments were due to be made in the forthcoming week which would enable the plan to progress more fully.

6.6 Arising from the Inspection Report –

- better signage was being addressed;
- regular risk assessments would be required to ensure safe working practices in sport;
- the review of staff qualifications was being undertaken to ensure that tutors had coaching awards;
- evaluation of courses was becoming more consistent with the introduction of a general satisfaction survey and in the future, a form to enable improvements to be suggested by students and tutors.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring would be accomplished through regular and rigorous checking mechanisms identified in the Action Plan. These would ensure that action points are completed on time.

8.0 Summary

8.1 The Select Committee heard that the milestones were all on target and therefore deferred further scrutiny until October 2003 following the plan being finalised.

9.0 Chairman's Summary

9.1 The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, would like to thank the officers concerned for their contributions to this Select Committee.