
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD (SPECIAL)

A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 11 May 2004.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Brunton, Mawston, Robson, Ward and Wilson.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, C Burnham, P Clark, G Field, T Gilling, K Robinson, K Stokes, C Taylor, and E Williamson

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cole, Dryden and Sanderson.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 4 May 2004 were submitted and approved.

NOTED

LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT - SECOND GENERATION

The Principal Corporate Performance Officer gave a presentation on the progress of the second round of the updated Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2).

As part of the introduction an indication was given of the main similarities and differences to LPSA 1. Agreement would be necessary between the Authority and central Government (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) on a minimum of 12 'stretched' measured targets from across the organisation focussing on both national and local priorities. A themed approach and partnership working both internal and external were important elements to the process.

The presentation focussed on the following areas:-

Main Differences to LPSA1:

- More emphasis on local priorities for improvement;
- More flexible approach to the use of Local Performance Indicators (PI's);
- The ability to negotiate Wide Area Targets with other authorities and Explorer Partnerships to help identify more innovative targets;
- The ability to negotiate longer-term targets up to 5 years;
- The need to justify omissions in cases which were considered to be a Council priority but where significant funding had been allocated from other sources such as that relating to crime reduction .

Benefits for Authority:

- A pump priming grant (PPG) payable at the beginning of the agreed term to assist in the achievement of targets (flat rate of £750,000 plus £1 per head of population- £880.000) although it was noted that there were some anomalies which were the subject of negotiation relating to the census figures;
- The possibility of receiving up to £4.1m in Performance Reward Grant;
- By focussing on specific areas of service delivery and utilising the funding available including that from Partnerships it was considered that greater achievements in performance could be attained.

Current Position

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- Approval in principle had been given to the broad approach to be taken by Corporate Management Team (CMT), Executive, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Government Office for the North East (GONE), Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM);
 - The theme was Raising Hope to complement the Mayor's agenda;
 - In consultation with Service Areas priorities for improvement had been identified in respect of Public Access; Education, Skills and Training; Promoting the Independence of Vulnerable People; and Improving the Public Realm.

Future Action

- An initial combination of targets would be considered by CMT with a view to determining the most significant, overall to the Authority prior to consultation with the LSP and GONE;
- Once a maximum of 15 targets had been agreed negotiation could commence with ODPM and a definite timetable for completion agreed;
- Discussions would take place both internally and with ODPM with regard to appropriate division of PPG;
- The anticipated date for signing an agreement was reported as early October 2004.

Political Involvement

- Services Areas would be expected to inform both Executive Members and respective Ward Councillors about the inclusion of possible targets;
- The Executive would be involved at every stage throughout the process where a key decision was needed;
- It was considered crucial that the scrutiny process was involved in both the development and implementation stages of LPSA2 to help ensure that the momentum and accuracy were maintained.

Consultation

- It was acknowledged that LPSA2 was a more open and transparent process;
- It was expected to negotiate a maximum of 15 targets all of which would be the subject of detailed discussion;
- Effective consultation and partnership were regarded as high priorities both locally and nationally;
- As part of the arrangements for raising awareness to the programme a Members' briefing and a series of staff workshops had been organised.

Members sought clarification on a number of points including the ability of an authority as to how to utilise Performance Reward Grant and the possibility of negotiating interim award grants.

The Board was advised that no suggestions had been put forward so far for longer-term targets of up to five years although one was expected from Education (three years). It was confirmed that no bids had been submitted in relation to Wide Area Targets but a suggestion had been put forward in respect of Explorer Partnerships in terms of the Register Service regarding the issuing of certificates.

Although no authority in the LPSA1 pilot scheme had achieved all 12 targets it was acknowledged that it had been a new concept, prescriptive and organisations had tended to set unachievable targets.

Members discussed the overall procedure and in particular the extent of the involvement of the scrutiny process and the consultation process, which was considered to be difficult given

the time constraints, involved. Whilst negotiations would be undertaken with the LSP it was considered crucial to ensure Member involvement in the process.

The monitoring procedure to ensure if targets and if the benefits of such targets to the community were being achieved was considered to be an important element of the overall process.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the Principal Corporate Performance Officer be thanked for the presentation and contribution to the meeting.
2. That the comments of the Board as outlined in particular the consultation and monitoring procedures be forwarded to the Corporate Management Team.
3. That arrangements be made for a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider the selected targets for the LPSA2, the outcome of which to be submitted to the Executive at its meeting to be held on 22 June 2004 when the matter is to be considered.