

Sheffield First Partnership

A Second Generation of Local Public Service Agreements: headline priorities for improvement locally

What is this?

Sheffield City Council has been invited to apply to be a pilot authority for the second generation of Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA) in advance of the formal joint launch by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association in December 2003. This paper briefly describes the 2nd generation of Local Public Service Agreements and outlines potential headline priorities for improvement locally for submission to the Government's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the City Council.

What is the Partnership Board being asked to do?

- a. To consider the suggested headline priorities for improvement locally and how each partner might contribute to a stretch in performance beyond what might have happened anyway.
- b. To support the Council's initial submission of headline priorities to Government and commit to engaging in the development and delivery of 'stretched' performance targets.

Background and Purpose

1. Sheffield City Council has been invited to apply to be a pilot authority for the second generation of Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA). The LPSA is designed to provide a framework in which local councils, other local organisations and government departments can work together to develop and implement local solutions and to develop innovative ways of tackling the issues that matter most to local people.
2. In essence, central and local government voluntarily agree stretching performance targets to deliver real improvements in outcomes for local people, and contribute towards the achievement of national aims over a three-year period. Following agreement on what the headline priorities should be and specific outcome targets, the government relies on the local bodies to decide how best to achieve that result. This may also involve the government offering some freedoms and flexibilities in what is required of the council or its partners. Under the set of headline priorities, up to 12 specific targets can be negotiated. Success can attract a reward grant of up to £12 million, and there is a contribution at the outset to "pump-prime" the improvements of up to £1 million.
3. LPSA2 is likely to function in a similar way to the first generation though with a focus on:
 - Local priorities for improvement rather than national targets
 - Real outcomes (rather than processes)
 - Partnership working, within and beyond local government
 - Innovation

4. Under the compressed timetable for the LPSA2 pilots, the City Council, supported by the Local Strategic Partnership, is required to submit headline priorities for improvement locally and supporting evidence to the government in November 2003. Following consideration by the Government of the headline priorities, negotiations about measuring outcomes and setting stretching performance targets will take place in the new year with the aim of signing a three year agreement to commence in April 2004.
5. The first stage of the application process requires a submission of headline priorities identifying of key strategic outcomes that the City Council and its partners, through the Sheffield First Partnership are committed to, and which may be suitable for further development of second generation LPSA.
6. Key determinants in identifying our headline improvement priorities include:
 - tackling specific challenges outlined in the City Strategy and associated plans and strategies published by Sheffield First and key issues identified as part of this month's review of the City Strategy.
 - delivering the vision outlined in the City Council's corporate plan 2003-2005 and addressing key priorities identified within the plan and focusing on areas where a marked improvement is essential if the Council is to progress its rating from 'good' to 'excellent' under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime
 - targeting activity in order to meet the City Council's commitment to addressing the need to 'close the gap' between the better off and the less well-off communities within Sheffield and to create and sustain a 'cleaner, greener and safer' city.

It is important to note that the Local PSA is not the sole vehicle for addressing all the city priorities. Many already have appropriate plans and initiatives in place and not all of the areas where improvements are needed fit well within the LPSA framework.

7. Discussions within the City Council have yielded a number of ideas which could be grouped under the following headline priorities for improvement:
 - Improving learning and attainment
 - Improving neighbourhoods
 - Improving health

Improving learning and attainment

8. Based on supporting evidence including the City Strategy, the Education Development Plan, Transforming Sheffield Plan, Standards Audit, and Ofsted Action Plan proposed areas for focus include:
 - **Maximising engagement at 16**
This involves potential target areas relating the development of Key Stage 4 vocational curricula, increasing work placements and increasing e-learning and e-accreditation. It could involve a partnership of Sheffield's schools, Sheffield College, South Yorkshire learning and Skills Council and Sheffield LEA. In addition there is the potential to include a focus on young people leaving care and of other vulnerable young people.
 - **Improving the quality of schools through the Assessment framework**
With a potential focus on primary schools, areas for development include: a

revised Assessment Framework for schools; use of new Pupil Assessment Tracker; and improvements relating to school, teacher, and governor use of data and parental access to data via 'SIMS Parents' Gateway.

- **Maximising post 16 participation and retention**

With a potential focus in the North East of the city potential areas for development include: closer partnership working between schools and colleges; DFES Pathfinder projects; targeting pupils via closer involvement of Sheffield Futures; and increasing in Modern Apprenticeship places

- **Improving attendance**

With a potential focus on secondary schools this would also provide the opportunity for partnership with health e.g. GPs and school nurses to do contribute in raising school attendance.

Improving neighbourhoods

9. This headline priority covers a range of sub-themes including cleanliness, recycling, crime and disorder and meeting the decent homes standard. Based on supporting evidence from the City Strategy, Draft Environment strategy, CPA Improvement Plan, Best Value Review, the Cleaner Sheffield Strategy, and major concerns expressed in resident surveys, areas for development include:

- **Improving the cleanliness of the City's streets and neighbourhoods**

Overall we are looking to improve the general appearance of the street scene where opportunities arise. A Local PSA would enable the Council to focus on improving community awareness, empowerment and enforcement to complement the extra cleaning under the Cleaner Sheffield Strategy. Possible activities include: environmental education in schools; communication and campaigns; partnership working e.g. Graffiti Charter with Business; Voluntary Clean Ups by Community Groups; Litter Pledges with Businesses and schools; and enforcement against offenders

- **Improving waste recycling**

Potentially focussed on developing home composting and diversion of biodegradable waste, outcomes would be achieved through education awareness activities combined with innovative composting schemes.

10. Based on the crime reduction strategy, the council's approach to successful neighbourhoods, crime statistics and residents concerns, two key areas of focus around reducing crime and disorder include:

- **Reducing levels of anti-social behaviour**

Complementing work underway as part of Trailblazer status and building on existing initiatives and practice, potential activity areas include: improving multi-agency approaches at an earlier stage; developing innovative diversionary and preventative activity amongst specific age groups or in specific neighbourhoods. A partnership approach with agencies such as Connexions, Children's Fund, Sheffield Futures, Police, and Youth Justice would be essential.

- **Reducing domestic burglary**

Building on the successful approach in the first round of LPSA at Foxhill, a potential focus would be the Sharrow area covering both the public and private housing sectors with a possible sub theme around student accommodation.

11. Based on evidence from the City Strategy and the social inclusion strategy, the Corporate Plan and the CPA Improvement Strategy the following area would centre on accelerating progress towards the Decent Homes Target.

- **Improving the standard of homes in the social rented sector**

Key areas for focus are the creation of arms length management arrangements for the delivery of services and a 3 star housing management rating. The aim of the LPSA would be to seek freedoms around the existing inspection regime and impact on Sheffield's incremental approach to the development of an ALMO with the intention of: simplifying the inspection framework; minimising the resource implications for the Audit commission and the cost of inspection on the council; and ensuring that capacity is being directed towards developing the quality of the service.

12. Based on supporting evidence from the Corporate Plan, CPA Improvement Plan, Cabinet report on First Point roll-out, and customer surveys the key outcome is to improve the customer experience from the first point of contact to the delivery of the service. Partnership working will be a key factor and proposed areas for focus include:

- **Improving in-person access**

This involves supporting the further development of First Point, improving links with partners in localities, and meeting the access needs of specific communities. A Local PSA offers the potential to create further local First Points in line with the existing strategy towards priority neighbourhoods with the ultimate aim of a greater % of the population being within an easy distance of a First Point office.

- **Improving telephone access**

The Local PSA could be used to support the next phase of the contact centre development. In particular there is a need for process analysis, service re-engineering and standardisation across a range of services including both those already involved with the contact centre and services yet to be brought into the process. As with the in-person access strand of our approach to improving customer access channels, innovative work around service re-engineering could also assist the development of shared intelligence to support multi-agency response and shared outcomes.

A additional area for further development under a Local PSA would be to build on the electronic access to services developed as part of the previous LPSA based on a stretched target to e-enable services with a particular focus on improving take-up and use of web enabled services

Improving health

13. Based on the City Strategy, the Social Inclusion Strategy, Health Inequality Action Plan and evidence that health inequalities are growing, a key aim is to improve health in the poorer sectors of the population. The Local PSA offers the opportunity for health

and the local authority to focus on areas related to the 6 new Sheffield First for Health priorities for narrowing the health divide:

- Improve maternal health
 - Improve school attendance and support from primary to secondary
 - Improve uptake and appropriate, effective use of preventative services
 - Tackle fuel poverty in order to promote independence and reduce incidence of ill health
 - Develop community enterprise and social economy to support disadvantaged communities and promote inclusion
 - Improve access to NHS training and employment activities
14. A related option is to include sports participation as a means of improving health. Based on evidence relating to the health impact of inactivity and local sports participation, new and existing strategies including the sports strategy, and the forthcoming physical activity strategy, this area could involve inter agency working between Health, Social Services and Education. Key outcomes would relate to improving the health of targeted groups and communities, and reducing health and care costs related to physical inactivity.
15. A key area indicated within the recent review of the City Strategy, along with neighbourhoods and improving health relates to strengthening the city's capacity to progress economic development. The Council is clear that this is an area we must improve upon though the limitations of the pump priming funding and practicalities around outcome targets suggest that the LPSA is not the most appropriate route through which to progress this agenda.

Conclusion

16. During November and December further work between the Council and partners will take place to evaluate the proposals and examine the practicalities of working up the specific activities and targets.
17. In the first instance, the Council is looking to Sheffield First Partnership to provide a steer on the headline priorities for improvement prior to submitting proposals to the Government. Towards the end of November, the Council will meet with Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside as part of the consideration stage and will feed information back to the Partnership on the discussions held.

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