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Plymouth Proactive

Improving Third Sector Commissioning

July 2009

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1. Summary

Many national and local reports and strategies suggest that commissioning to deliver public services is, and will continue to be, a significant opportunity for the Third Sector. Furthermore, recent consultation work in Plymouth found that funding and commissioning was one of the most important areas where local Third Sector organizations needed support¹. This was thought to be particularly important during a recession. A need was identified for support for medium to large groups to participate in the whole commissioning agenda.

This short piece of research is not intended to be a comprehensive investigation into the world of commissioning but it is a snap shot of the state of affairs and highlights some important issues and practical steps that could make a positive difference to improve the experience of commissioning and procurement for all, and ultimately increase the Third Sector's chances of winning more contracts. This work looks mainly at the relationships between Plymouth City Council and the Third Sector. Unfortunately, we were unable to interview anyone from the Primary Care Trust during the time-frame for this work and surveying other Public Sector agencies was outside the scope of this study.

Our research has found that in the financial year 2008-2009 Plymouth City Council awarded approximately £12 million to Third Sector organizations (not-for-profit, charities, social enterprises, IPSs, etc²) to deliver a variety of services. These services include work in areas such as:

- Housing
- Care services
- Business Skills
- Young people's services
- Play schemes
- Financial inclusion
- Befriending
- Counselling
- Skills development
- Drugs and alcohol support
- Information and advice
- Domestic violence
- Music
- Support for ex-offenders
- Environmental projects

The council states that they award over £250 million yearly³ so the £12 million figure equates to about 5% of the budget. This is a good start, but much more could be

¹ Lin Whitfield - The Infrastructure Needs of Frontline Third Sector Organizations in Plymouth for the Plymouth Change Up Consortium - page 8.

² The Office for the Third Sector defines this as: "...voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals..." - www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.

³ How to do Business with Plymouth City Council - page 3.

done to improve the chances of the sector winning contracts from a wider range of departments in the council and to make the whole process easier.

Overall, we found that many of the organisations we interviewed enjoyed positive relationships with the council and most had received commissions and contracts to deliver work. This was, however, a small sample of fairly well developed organisations and further, more detailed research into commissioning across the whole sector is needed to get a much fuller picture. The City Council interviewees stated that they were committed to the principles of the Compact and were happy to look at programmes of work to support the Third Sector with commissioning.

Our research has found that the following key areas would make a positive difference to the Third Sector's chances of winning more contracts:

- Better engagement of the Third Sector by the Public Sector throughout the commissioning cycle and consistency across all departments.
- Removing jargon and improving the language contained in tendering documentation.
- Recognition of Full Cost Recovery and training for all on this important issue.
- Improved business planning for Third Sector organisations.
- Training on commissioning for Third Sector organisations.
- Support for policy development, implementing quality systems and other management processes to improve chances of success.
- Partnership development along key themes and capacity building. Both of these could help engage smaller community groups, where appropriate, in the commissioning agenda.
- Developing links with the Private Sector - particularly through initiatives like Sell 2 Plymouth.
- More detailed research into commissioning strategies, policies, case study development with a wider range of Public Sector agencies.

In summary, our research shows that although the Third Sector is enjoying some success in commissioning with the City Council, more work is needed on all sides to build on this. Smarter, more effective and innovative commissioning, improved procurement language and processes and deeper engagement with the Third Sector throughout the commissioning cycle could help to deliver better outcomes for individuals and communities in Plymouth.

2. Background to Research

As part of their recession resilience activities, the Plymouth Third Sector Consortium (PTSC) decided to begin preliminary investigations into how the sector and local authority could work better together to improve opportunities for the sector through tendering and commissioning. The new business plan for PTSC also highlights commissioning work as a key priority⁴.

PTSC asked Perfect Moment to undertake a very targeted and brief piece of research to consult key commissioning and procurement officers in the City Council and Primary Care Trust to establish what their strategic approach to working with the Third Sector is and to interview members of the consortium and other Third Sector organizations, identified by the consortium, to get a picture of the state of commissioning in Plymouth.

The aims of the research work are:

1. To provide a snap shot of the state of commissioning in the city mainly from the Third Sector's point of view.
2. To provide some practical suggestions for both Public Sector and Third Sector to improve the processes of commissioning.
3. To analyse the main reasons for voluntary organizations failing in tendering processes.
4. To provide some practical steps that PTSC could take to improve the chances of Third Sector organizations being successful in commissioning.

This was not intended to be a large scale study into commissioning policy and practice. Further work including: desk research; a literature review of the many relevant contexts, strategies and policies; detailed surveys of the Third Sector and Public Sector and exploring relevant case studies would be helpful to move this agenda along. We have explored some wider contexts in this report to add some important, high-level, background information.

Contexts

*National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning*⁵

The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is managing the 'National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning'. The programme is a critical strand of 'Partnership in public services: an action plan for Third Sector involvement'.

The IDeA programme's vision is:

"Better public outcomes for individuals and communities, which yields efficiency gains and community benefits, through smarter, more effective and innovative

⁴ Plymouth Third Consortium Business Plan 2009-2011 - page 2.

⁵ Following text is from www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=6583598.

*commissioning, and optimal involvement of the Third Sector in public service design, improvement, delivery and holding the Public Sector to account.*⁶

The programme operates in conjunction with existing training and support for commissioners. The five outcomes of the programme are:

- Co-ordinated specialist guidance and support on commissioning services from the Third Sector.
- Increased understanding of the Third Sector among commissioning and procurement officers.
- Provision of awareness training for councillors and Public Sector officers on the benefits of third-sector involvement in the shaping and delivery of public services.
- Provision of awareness and skills training for the most significant 2,000 commissioners concerned with correctional services, employment services, children's services, education and training, health and social care services, and other local services.
- Improved third-sector bidding capacity, particularly among smaller organizations.

IDeA has outlined eight key principles of commissioning that, if embedded in commissioning practise, could help to achieve this vision and these outcomes⁷:

1. Understanding the needs of users and other communities by ensuring that, alongside other consultees, you engage with the Third Sector organizations, as advocates, to access their specialist knowledge.
2. Consulting potential provider organizations, including those from the Third Sector and local experts, well in advance of commissioning new services, working with them to set priority outcomes for that service.
3. Putting outcomes for users at the heart of the strategic planning process.
4. Mapping the fullest practical range of providers with a view to understanding the contribution they could make to delivering those outcomes.
5. Considering investing in the capacity of the provider base, particularly those working with hard-to-reach groups.
6. Ensuring contracting processes are transparent and fair, facilitating the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate.
7. Ensuring long-term contracts and risk sharing, wherever appropriate, as ways of achieving efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Seeking feedback from service users, communities and providers in order to review the effectiveness of the commissioning process in meeting local needs.

National Third Sector Agencies

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NVCO), National Association for Community and Voluntary Action (NAVCA) and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations (ACEVO) are all undertaking work on commissioning and public service delivery. There is a huge range of policy information, strategies,

⁶ IDeA - National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning - page 2.

⁷ *ibid* - page 3.

research and other information available. Researching all of this was not in the scope of this work but we think that leading Third Sector support agencies in Plymouth could make good use of this information.

NCVO

The NCVO has a wide range of dedicated resources to this subject. Visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publicservicedelivery/ for more details.

NAVCA

NAVCA's Local Commissioning and Procurement Unit was set up to provide support to Third Sector infrastructure organizations on the commissioning agenda. Their booklet: "Need Help With Commissioning and Procurement" and other information and support is available from: www.navca.org.uk/localvs/lcp.

ACEVO

ACEVO has a range of resources, research documents and other guidance. This is available at: www.acevo.org.uk. They have set up a Personalisation Commission to explore what the Third Sector's role could be within this important agenda.

The Compact

The Compact is an agreement between the Government and the voluntary and community sector in England that sets out key principles, commitments, values and guidelines for how parties should work together. The PTSC Business Plan states that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has endorsed the Code of Good Practice for Funding and Procurement and two other codes - Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organizations and Consultation and Policy Appraisal⁸. There are five codes of practice in total. The other two are the Community Groups Code and Volunteering Code.

The Compact Code of Good Practice for Funding and Procurement states that:

*'The Government recognises that the voluntary and community sector can make a significant contribution to achieving the vision of a fair society, with strong communities and opportunity for everyone. Many voluntary and community organizations enter into a financial relationship with Government to deliver outcomes on its behalf. It is important that the financial relationship is constructed in such a way that allows outcomes to be maximised.'*⁹

The key principles of the Compact should, therefore, be followed by all sides in future commission, funding and procurement processes and procedures.

⁸ *ibid* - page 2.

⁹ Compact Code of Good Practice Funding and Procurement - page 1.

3. Methodology and Definitions

Methodology

We have conducted eleven telephone interviews with senior managers from Third Sector organizations and three interviews with officers from Plymouth City Council. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 1.

Unfortunately, we were unable to interview anyone from the Primary Care Trust for this study. The findings therefore, are primarily related to the City Council and its engagement with the Third Sector. Further research with a wider range of Public Sector bodies would add value to this work.

We also undertook desk research to review Plymouth City Council's contract register to see how much work was being delivered by the Third Sector and analysed a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to establish any key areas which could cause problems for Third Sector organizations.

Definitions

We have adopted these definitions from the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO):

- **Contracting** involves earning income from payment for goods and services delivered according to the terms set out in a contract between an organisation and a third party known as a purchaser.
- **Commissioning** means the entire cycle of assessing the needs of people in a local area, designing services, and then securing them.
- **Procurement** covers the specific activities within the commissioning cycle that focus on the process of buying services, from the initial advertising through to the final contract arrangements.
- A **tender** is a written bid outlining a supplier's desire, capacity and plan to deliver a piece of work, service or supplies. Exact contents will be determined by the requirements outlined in the service specification and must demonstrate how a supplier will meet these requirements.
- **Tendering** is the process of bidding and negotiating for a contract.

4. Success or Failure?

On the whole, Third Sector respondents to the interviews had been reasonably successful in securing resources from the Public Sector with some exceptions. Some organizations had secured contracts but failed in others. Some had not received any income this way. Several organizations were in the middle of tendering or contracting for services.

Public Sector respondents felt that the Third Sector were generally good at getting through the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) stage, particularly where they had a good track record and had managed contracts and delivered services in the past. It should be noted that this feeling was anecdotal. There were no statistics on application or failure rates and no data on common reasons for rejection was available. Public Sector respondents recognised that new organizations may struggle with proving an ability to deliver without a track record. Plymouth City Council did state that they were looking at parcelling up contracts into smaller chunks to, hopefully, help smaller organizations engage with commissioning.

The Public Sector respondents also felt that, where Third Sector organizations were competing with the Private Sector, they were doing quite well, particularly in Adult Social Care, where a significant number of contracts had gone to the Third Sector. Several respondents mentioned that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) were hard to engage with. We were unable to interview anyone from the PCT to establish their approach to working with the Third Sector in Plymouth and to get their side of the story. Further work to consult with the PCT (and other Public Sector agencies) is clearly vital to complement this research.

Several Third Sector organizations said that the feedback they had received when they had failed to win a contract could have been much better.

Factors for Success in Winning Contracts

Several Third Sector respondents stated that they felt their organization's successful track record and reputation were main factors in successfully winning contracts. Other organizations felt that doing innovative work was important for success.

Many respondents from both the Public and Third Sector mentioned the importance of business planning and that having accurate budgets was also an important factor for success.

Some Third Sector organizations felt that the Public Sector recognised their expertise, innovative work, creative solutions and risk management processes and that these were important reasons for winning contracts.

Another interesting comment was that several organisations felt that they had a particular niche in the market and that this was an important factor for their success. This was also something that others mentioned as an important part of business planning and marketing.

Plymouth City Council provides some important documents that they hope will improve organizations chances of being successful with tenders. All these documents are available on the council's website¹⁰:

1. PCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2007-2010 sets out their strategic approach to procurement.
2. Their document 'How to do Business with Plymouth City Council', outlines a range of actions which organizations looking to work with the council can take to improve their chances of winning tenders.
3. PCC has also produced a 'Concordat for Small Medium Sized Enterprises' which outlines some principles to encourage effective trade between the local authority and small businesses.
4. The 'Contract Standing Orders' document sets out key principles, processes and PCC's duties when it comes to commissioning and procurement.

¹⁰ <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/business/doingbusinesswiththecouncil.htm>

5. What Could the Public Sector Do Better?

The most common areas that Third Sector respondents suggested that the Public Sector could improve when it came to the whole process of commissioning were with the engagement of the Third Sector, the language and jargon found in tender documents and with regard to IT issues.

Many people stated that they thought that the Public Sector should engage the Third Sector more effectively throughout the commissioning cycle. Several organizations did feel engaged and able to contribute to consultations, strategy development and the commissioning agenda; some felt that although they themselves could contribute, the Public Sector should do more to engage with the wider Third Sector. A small group did not feel very well engaged with the process at all.

Some City Council departments had run 'meet the buyer' type events. The council stated they would look at rolling these out across other departments and could help to deliver tendering training if needed, which our research suggests would be useful. Several organizations mentioned that Third Sector support agencies could help facilitate these in partnership with the council.

The complexity of the language and jargon contained in tender documentation was mentioned frequently. For example, people felt the tone often created unnecessary anxiety and legalistic phrases seemed threatening. Many thought that this could be significantly improved. There was also a request for greater consistency of language throughout the commissioning cycle, procurement phases and evaluation.

Several respondents felt that the Devon Tenders website could be improved as a portal, and again, simplifying language would help. Also, there was a request for more consistency in this website's use - some people suggested that not all opportunities were on the site, so a chance to tender could be missed. This may be due to different contract sizes and the requirements for tendering and exemptions.

Other common themes where Third Sector respondents thought that the Public Sector could improve the process were:

- A request for more transparency in the process. Respondents felt that information flow about opportunities, exemptions, decisions and feedback could be improved.
- Several people mentioned that management of timescales could be better. Frequently, organizations found that deadlines were very tight with little time to develop ideas or respond to tendering opportunities. Partnership bids were often hindered because of a lack of time to develop joint work in response to the tender.
- Make a proper commitment to Full Cost Recovery (FCR) and ensure that all commissioners and procurement teams understood what this meant and its importance to the Third Sector. There were several people who suggested FCR was not being followed consistently and that they were getting, what they felt, was an unnecessary level of questioning about their budgets. Many respondents felt that Third Sector support agencies also had a role to play here to provide

leadership and support on the issue and to work with Public Sector bodies to educate relevant staff about FCR.

- Explore a passporting scheme for PQQs, i.e. once a PQQ is passed for one tender, it is passed for all subject to being within a reasonable timescale.
- Create a new Third Sector Strategy with a much clearer vision for both the public and Third Sector.

The City Council said they:

- Were looking to rationalize and simplify process, e.g. having Expression of Interests before the PQQ stage to save time.
- Had made a commitment to pay providers more quickly.
- Were committed to longer term contracts of 3-5 years.
- Were committed to the Compact - they said that they wanted to see this work successfully. Interestingly, only one respondent mentioned that they thought the Compact was not being followed effectively.

6. What Could Third Sector Organizations Do To Improve Their Chances of Success?

The most common response to this question from Third Sector organizations that had been successful in winning tenders was that the sector should try to get engaged at all stages of the commissioning cycle. In practice, this meant engaging with consultation and strategy development and working with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other structures. One respondent said: “Be there at the beginning to help shape the services you want!”

The flip side of this is that some organizations felt excluded from the processes of commissioning and felt that they did not get the chance to engage in this way.

Other areas commonly mentioned by both Third Sector and Public Sector respondents were:

- Organizational and financial management was seen as important. Nearly all respondents agreed that all organizations should be able to prove the value and quality of what they do. Linked to this several people said it was important for Third Sector organizations to prove their expertise if they wanted to win contracts.
- Improving business planning and research was seen as a significant issue. For example, one respondent stated quite plainly that organizations should review the Council’s Corporate Plans, so that if you can meet the council’s needs there is a good chance you can get resources. In some cases, it was felt that the right approach to the council could unlock resources without the need for a formal tendering approach.
- Having robust policies and procedures in place was seen as critical by many people. The PQQ asks several questions about some of these policies and without them organizations are unlikely to be successful in tendering.
- Accurate costings were seen as essential. Third Sector respondents who had been successful said that they knew their costs and budgets inside out and had set full cost recovery levels transparently and defendably.
- Both Public Sector and Third Sector interviewees said that developing personal and professional relationships with commissioners was important to help improve chances of success.

7. What Could Third Sector Support Agencies Do To Help?

The most important area that respondents felt that sector support agencies could deliver was training on all aspects of commissioning. We take this to mean the whole cycle of consultation, strategy development, commissioning, procurement, delivery, evaluation and everything in between. The City Council did state that they were happy to look at helping out with this kind of training work. Our research suggests that consistency of delivery of these types of events across all council departments would be useful.

Another common theme was that many in the Third Sector felt more should be done to educate the Public Sector about Full Cost Recovery (FCR). Sector support agencies would appear to have a key role in providing leadership and information about this issue and working with Public Sector officers to ensure that FCR is understood and followed. This is an important objective of the PTSC's business plan¹¹.

The other steps that respondents suggested that Sector support agencies could take (and may already be taking) were:

- General facilitation of Third Sector and Public Sector relationships.
- Facilitation of collaborative working amongst the Third Sector itself. A recent example of a Community Interest Company of providers was mentioned as a good example of collaboration in the sector. The Neighbourhood Learning Consortium was also referenced. Developing partnerships along themes, for example, youth work, housing, sports, arts, training, crime, etc, could provide a useful strategic way of increasing capacity in the sector, creating mechanisms to engage with the Public Sector and enable more, smaller organizations with specific expertise to potentially access resources. Further research into what clusters exist; which have the potential to grow and engage with commissioning and how capacity could be built would be useful.
- Facilitate partnerships and collaboration between the Private Sector and Third Sector. In particular, PTSC could explore more Third Sector engagement with the 'Sell 2 Plymouth' initiative which is a partnership between Plymouth's Public Sector buyers, local business support agencies and both the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses¹².
- Promotion of quality systems and provision of training on these to help pass PQQ and enhance service delivery.
- Provide targeted support services for smaller community groups.
- Work with the council to improve commitment to the Compact and explore instances where this had not been followed and others where good practice had been used as case studies.

Some respondents called for the sector infrastructure to work harder to engage with the wider Third Sector to ensure it is representative, inclusive, transparent and accountable.

¹¹ Plymouth Third Sector Consortium Business Plan 2009-2011 - page 3.

¹² See www.sell2plymouth.co.uk.

8. Review of Plymouth City Council Contract Register

In the financial year 2008-2009 approximately £12 million went to Third Sector organizations (not-for-profit, charities, social enterprises, IPSs, etc¹³). PCC state they award over £250 million yearly¹⁴ so this equates to about 5% of the budget. In total, since 2005, approximately £21 million has been awarded to the sector. Many of the contracts are still operational, some contracts are for more than one year and several organizations have received extensions to existing contracts.

The Council directorates where the Third Sector appears to do well are 'Children's Services' and 'Community Services', but nothing is awarded to the sector from 'Corporate Contracts' 'Corporate Resources' or the 'Development' directorates.

Further research work is needed to establish what percentage of the economy the Third Sector represents in Plymouth to see if this level of service delivery is commensurate with the sector's size.

By way of comparison, across the country in 2006-2007 it is estimated that of the Third Sector's £12 billion income from the government, £7.8 billion was from contracts and £4.2 billion was from grants¹⁵. Total government spending in this period was approximately £565 billion¹⁶. The sector's contracts were, therefore, just under 1.5% of the total.

More analysis of the Contract Register could elicit some important information about what type of organizations are winning contracts for what type of work, average contract size, average contract length and other factors. This was outside the scope of this research but would provide useful information for the sector.

¹³ The Office for the Third Sector defines this as: "...voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals..." - www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.

¹⁴ How to do Business with Plymouth City Council - page 3.

¹⁵ Office of the Third Sector - www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third-sector/research_and_statistics/facts_figures.aspx

¹⁶ HM Treasury - Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2009 - page 26.

9. Review of Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

We reviewed a PQQ to analyse:

- The key questions asked.
- Factual and objective information needed.
- Other basic requirements that, in our judgement, could make a significant difference in the success of an application.

The questions on the PQQ are grouped as follows (with sub-questions):

Organization Identity

- Name, contact details etc
- Organization information - company/charity etc
- Organization structure chart
- Directors
- History

Finances

- Finances - accounts usually needed
- Cash flow statement - current and previous
- Insurances - Employers Liability (£xm); Public Liability (£xm); Professional Indemnity (£xm)

Quality Assurance

- Quality Assurance - ISO 9001 or equivalent?
- If not - do you have a quality management system/policy?
- Environmental Management - ISO 14001?
- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- If not statement of commitment to reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Health and Safety

- Health and Safety Policy
- Nominated H&S representatives and qualifications
- H&S communications
- H&S risk assessments
- H&S strategies, training and monitoring
- H&S and sub-contractors

Equalities and Diversity

- E&D Policy
- Findings of any tribunals against you

- Investigations
- Promotion of E&D
- E&D communications
- E&D strategies, training and monitoring

Disputes

- Disputes/Court Actions

Business Capability

- Membership of professional bodies
- Number of staff
- Staff skills
- Staff turnover
- Staff qualifications
- Experience
- References - usually three

The findings from the telephone interviews suggested that Third Sector organizations were not being rejected very often at the PQQ stage. However, what is not clear is how many organizations are being put off tendering in the first place by these requirements.

A lot of the information above is factual and reasonably objective. There appear to be some areas where more subjective answers could prove important. These key areas are:

- Quality Assurance - ISO 9001 or equivalent
- If not - explain your own quality management system/policies

- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- If not - provide a statement of commitment to reducing waste, reusing and recycling

- Health & Safety communications
- H&S risk assessments
- H&S strategies, training and monitoring
- H&S and sub-contractors

- Promotion of Equalities & Diversity
- E&D communications
- E&D strategies, training and monitoring

- Staff skills
- Business Experience

Our research suggests that some support to help answer these questions would be useful, for example, training sessions, seminars or workshops on quality systems,

how good environmental, health and safety and equality and diversity policies are shaped, developed and function and how to promote an organisation's own skills and experience.

The findings from the telephone interviews suggested that Third Sector organizations often passed the PQQ stage. However, we were interviewing mainly fairly well developed organizations which had mostly been in existence for some time. We have not been able to establish failure rates at PQQ stage and no information or analysis of PQQs was available from the Council. We also do not know how many organizations are simply put off by the PQQ stage and did not engage. Further research into these issues would be useful.

10. Options for Action

The following tables detail potential actions that all partners and parties could undertake to improve the Third Sector's involvement in the commissioning and public service delivery agenda. Ultimately, this work should increase sector organisations' chances of winning contracts. We have grouped the actions into areas for training and direct delivery; policy, partnership and strategy development and research activities.

Training and Delivery Activities

Action	Resources Required	Responsibility for Delivery	Timescales/Milestones
Deliver training/education for all on Full Cost Recovery	2-3 seminars, several meetings with key stakeholders	PTSC	
Deliver training on commissioning	6 events over year, 10 days to run and manage = c£3-4k	PTSC	
Provide training or information on quality systems	4 events over year, 6 days to run and manage = c£2-3k	PTSC	
Provide training, support and information on business planning, policy development, governance and management	4 events over year, 6 days to run and manage = c£2-3k	PTSC	
Provide one-to-one organisational support on business planning, policy development, governance and management	PTSC Development Officer/Team	PTSC	

Development Activities (e.g. Policy, Strategy, Partnership Building, etc)

Action	Resources Required	Responsibility for Delivery	Timescales/Milestones
Explore improved Private Sector/Third Sector relationships	PTSC officer time - consultation with organisations like Chamber of Commerce and initiatives like Sell 2 Plymouth.	PTSC	
Explore collaborative work within the sector itself - researching and developing partnerships	Exploring partnerships and matching to opportunities. Capacity building partners. 15-20 days work = £5-9k	PTSC	
Review engagement mechanisms with the wider Third Sector around commissioning	PTSC officer time - consultation	PTSC	
PCC - explore methods to improve engagement with the Third Sector (in partnership with PTSC)	PCC officer time - consultation event or discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	
Explore improvements to language and de-jargonization of tender documentation	PCC officer time - consultation event/discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	
Review IT systems - explore ease of access and usage	PCC officer time - consultation event/discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	
Explore how to improve transparency of decision making	PCC officer time - consultation event/discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	
Improve time management of tendering and procurement stages	PCC officer time - consultation event/discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	
Explore passporting for PQQs	PCC officer time - consultation or discussion	PCC + Other Public Sector agencies	

Research Activities

Action	Resources Required	Responsibility for Delivery	Timescales/Milestones
Detailed study into state of commissioning in Plymouth	Research Study estimated c£25-30k	PTSC/PCC + other Public Sector agencies	
Develop a set of case studies of good practice commissioning	Estimate 2-3 days work: c£1k	PTSC/PCC + other Public Sector agencies	
Research PQQ failure rates and reasons for rejection in more detail	Could be incorporated in research study	PTSC/PCC + other Public Sector agencies	
Undertake further analysis of contract register and benchmark work with national/regional figures	Could be incorporated in research study	PTSC	
Discussion with wider range of Public Sector agencies about their approach to Third Sector commissioning	Could be incorporated in research study	PTSC	

Appendix 1 - List of Interviewees

- William Woyka - CEO, Routeways
- Keith Bell - Business Director, The Zone
- Sam Swabey - Executive Director, Granby Island Community Centre
- Zoe Campbell - Business Manager, Plymouth REC
- Gill Tishler - Director, Plymouth CAB
- Barbara Duffy - Director, Plymouth Age Concern
- Peter Graham - East End Manager, East End Partnership
- Martin Clay - Partnership Development Manager, North Prospect Partnership
- George Plenderleith - Director, Plymouth Guild
- Desanne McAllister - General Manager, Colebrook Housing Society
- Judith Reynolds - Director, Co-Active
- Jane Keeley - Acting Head of Strategic Procurement, Plymouth City Council
- James Coulton - Assistant Director of Community Services, Plymouth City Council
- Craig McArdle - Commissioning Manager, Adult Social Care, Plymouth City Council