Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – March 12, 2024

REPORTS

Item No. 5 Plain Language Key Performance Indicators

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee laid the matter over and further directed the Public Service to report back within 90 days on the following:

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and any additional performance metrics to evaluate the success of the Plain Language Policy as it applies to the other public-facing written materials noted in section 3.1, namely:

    - Advertisements
    - Correspondence
    - Presentations
    - Publications
    - Signage
    - Social media
    - Website content
    - All 311 Services

2. Confirmation that the directions outlined in section 4 of the Policy have been satisfied.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Lukes,

WHEREAS the administrative report includes performance metrics to measure the success of the Plain Language Policy as it applies to Administrative Reports (executive summaries only);

AND WHEREAS the policy includes a number of other materials to which the plain language guidelines apply;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the matter laid over for 90 days and the Public Service be further directed to report back on the following:

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and any additional performance metrics to evaluate the success of the Plain Language Policy as it applies to the other public-facing written materials noted in section 3.1, namely:

    - Advertisements
    - Correspondence
    - Presentations
    - Publications
    - Signage
    - Social media
    - Website content
    - All 311 Services

2. Confirmation that the directions outlined in section 4 of the Policy have been satisfied.

Carried

COUNCIL DECISION:

On September 29, 2023, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, and adopted the following:

1. That the Plain Language Policy, attached as Appendix A, be approved with the following amendments:

    A. In Section 3.1, add the following:

        i. “i. All 311 Services”

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

ii. "The Public Service will mandate a plain language training program for all staff who write public facing materials as part of their job. The current training programs offered by the city will need to be modified to incorporate ISO standards."

B. In Section 4:

i. Delete Section 4.1 in its entirety and replace with the following:

"4.1 Director of Customer Service & Communications

The Director of Customer Service & Communications is responsible for administering this policy, including ongoing reviews every two years. The Director shall post the Plain Language Policy on the Customer Service & Communications webpage, along with an online mechanism to accept feedback on the policy."

ii. In Section 4.2, delete the period after the words "follow this policy", and replace with the following:

", within 90 days. This position is also responsible for providing clarity on the requirements of this Policy."

iii. In Section 4.3, delete the period after the words "follow this policy", and replace with the following:

", within 90 days."

iv. In Section 4.4, delete the period after the words "follow this policy", and replace with the following:

", within 90 days."

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

v. In Section 4.6, add the following:

"Responsible for identifying a key contact in their department that will be fully versed in plain language practices. They will help ensure that their departments are adhering to the updated plain language policy.

Complete mandatory training for staff who write public facing materials as part of their job."

C. Delete Section 5 in its entirety and replace with the following:

"5. The Policy will be reviewed, at minimum, every two (2) years via an administrative report brought forward to City Council. Performance will be reviewed using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/ and or performance metrics that will be developed by the public service within 6 months upon the adaptation of the plain language policy.

This will ensure public-facing written materials will be at a grade 8 reading level or lower so that most individuals can understand the information."

2. That the Public Service report back with a review on the effectiveness of the Plain Language Policy no later than July 2028.

3. That the Public Service be directed to report back to Executive Policy Committee within 6 months of adoption of the policy, outlining what Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and or performance metrics have been developed, as outlined in section 5 of the policy.

4. That any new costs associated with the training referred to in section 3.1 of the policy be referred to the 2024 Budget Review Process.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City of Winnipeg be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Plain Language Key Performance Indicators

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Driedger	F. Wiltshire	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service must measure the success of the Plain Language Policy every two years.

The grade level readability score of executive summaries will be measured.

A random sample of administrative reports will be used in our assessment.

The Public Service will compare those written before and after the policy to measure success over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On September 29, 2023, Council approved the Plain Language Policy, directing that it be reviewed every two years using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure its success.

Council further directed the Public Service to report back to the Executive Policy Committee within six months of the adoption of the Plain Language Policy, outlining what KPIs and/or other performance metrics have been developed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If approved, the Public Service will report back to Council in 2026 on the success of the Plain Language Policy using the Key Performance Indicators outlined in this report.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

On September 29, 2023, Council approved the Plain Language Policy (Policy).

The purpose of the Policy is to guide members of the Public Service on the use of suitable language in the City's public-facing written materials to ensure the intended audience can understand what is written, be better informed, and act on important information or participate.

The Public Service was directed to report back to the Executive Policy Committee within six months of the adoption of the Policy outlining the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) it intends to use to measure the success of the policy.

The KPI the Public Service intends to use is a grade level readability score.

The Public Service will measure the success of the Policy by comparing the grade level readability score of the executive summaries of administrative reports written before and after the Policy was approved by Council.

While the Policy applies to various public-facing materials produced by the City, the Public Service is focusing on executive summaries in administrative reports for measurement. This is because plain language was not necessarily a consideration in administrative reports before the Policy was approved, compared to other written materials which would have more closely aligned with plain language principles, even absent a policy.

As a first step, the Public Service needs to assess the grade level readability score of executive summaries written before the Policy was approved.

To do so, the Public Service will:

- Access the Council meeting agendas from January 2023 to December 2023.
- Review and assign a readability score of the executive summaries of all even-numbered administrative reports on the Council agendas.
- Calculate a monthly average readability score for the even-numbered administrative reports on the Council agenda.

Thereafter, the Public Service will:

- Access the Council meeting agendas from January 2024 onwards.
- Review and assign a readability score of the executive summaries of all even-numbered administrative reports on the Council agendas.
- Calculate a monthly average readability score for the even-numbered administrative reports on the Council agenda.

The data gathered will be used to determine the change over time. This will help the Public Service measure the success of the Policy.

The metrics gathered will be shared as part of the bi-annual review of the Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: February 2, 2024

Project Name:
Plain Language Key Performance Indicators

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Randy Bernard

Randy Bernard, CPA, CMA
Manager of Finance & Administration (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Goal: Leadership and Good Governance

1.4 Integrated Knowledge and Resources
Coordinate inter-departmental systems, projects and resources, making the best use of internal and external expertise to better understand service needs, find the most appropriate solutions, optimize resources, and maximize community outcomes.

1.19 Equitable Service Access
Achieve best practice standards in equitable customer service and communications, enabling all community members to understand and navigate municipal service-delivery systems and decision-making processes, in the official language of their choice.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Customer Service & Communications
Division: Corporate Communications
Prepared by: David Driedger
Date: February 2, 2024