

ANGUS COUNCIL
POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

ITEM No 16

8 MAY 2001

STRATEGIC CALENDAR AND REVISED SERVICE PLANNING GUIDELINES

Report by the Chief Executive

ABSTRACT

This report sets out for consideration by Elected Members, a strategic calendar for Angus Council and a set of revised Service Planning Guidelines.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approve the adoption of the Strategic Calendar and the revised Service Planning Guidelines as set out in this report.

2. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the revised Angus Council Corporate Plan 2000/2003 was recently approved and published by the Council.

In an effort to provide even closer integration between the Corporate Plan, Service Planning Guidelines, Senior Officers' Personal Action Plans, and appropriate measures to monitor and review all of these, an initial Strategic Calendar has been developed for the Council along with a revised set of Service Planning Guidelines.

The Strategic Calendar sets out dates for the production, updating, monitoring and review of the Council's Corporate Plan, departmental Service Plans, and Senior Officers' Personal Action Plans. A note is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It will be noted that developments are still being considered regarding longer-term budget strategy and the implications thereon to bring about a more integrated linkage between the strategic plans of the Council and the budget process. A comprehensive Strategic Calendar including a matrix of milestone dates in the process will be prepared at that time.

Members will recall that service plans are produced on a 3-year basis (with annual updates).

Members will also be aware that Angus Council, as with all local authorities in Scotland has for the past two years been required to produce a corporate Performance Management & Planning Audit as part of the Best Value audit processes undertaken by Audit Scotland. The most recent corporate Performance Management & Planning Audit (which is the subject of a separate report) demonstrates that Angus is at the forefront of Performance Management & Planning arrangements across Scotland but also makes specific reference within the implementation plan to the need to ensure greater integration between the service planning process, the Corporate Plan, Personal Action Plans for senior officers, and the regular monitoring and review of these. A revised set of Service Planning Guidelines has been developed and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

3. CONSULTATION

All Chief Officers have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

A B Watson
Chief Executive

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this paper.

ANGUS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CALENDAR

CORPORATE PLAN

It is suggested that the Council's Corporate Plan should normally be reviewed within the first three months of the life of a new Council, in order that it reflects the political vision of the Council. It will also clearly be influenced by external stakeholders, whether the Scottish Executive or Community Planning partners.

The current corporate plan which was launched in December 2000 should be monitored and updated annually in time for any amendments to be reflected in the next year's departmental service plans and the budget exercise. A formal committee report providing an update on progress with the plan should be submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee in November of each year.

The review should be led by the Policy & Performance Unit, with the review being considered by:

- Strategic Issues Team
- Financial Review Team
- Strategy and Review Group and the Best Value Chief Officers Group
- Management Team
- Member/Officer Groups

Service Plans

Three year service plans should be updated annually following consideration of progress on the Corporate Plan and the annual budget exercise. The updates should take place between January – March each year.

In addition a progress report should be prepared by each service by October of each year, in order that progress being made can be taken into account in both the update of the Corporate Plan, and in readiness for the beginning of the annual budget exercise.

This mid year update should not be an onerous exercise, but should simply be an update of how the plan is progressing.

As the various services across the Council adopt and integrate the Balanced Scorecard, they should find it much easier to monitor progress.

Personal Action Plans for Senior Staff

Personal Action Plans, particularly for senior staff, relate to the Service Plans, and should be prepared following the appraisal, which should take place after the annual update of the Service Plan, and certainly between April and May.

It is suggested that there might be merit in a mid-year progress review of Personal Action Plans taking place in the October of each year.

The Director of Finance has indicated that he would wish to instigate a review of the various elements in the budget process as a consequence of greater integration of

the strategic planning process and the budget, and three year grant settlement figures.

It will be necessary to undertake work/training with senior managers across departments in order that they are fully aware of these processes and timeframes.

ANGUS COUNCIL

3-YEAR SERVICE PLANNING: GUIDELINES FOR CHIEF OFFICERS

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since its inception Angus Council has adopted a systematic and methodical way of doing business through a development planning approach. It has been concerned to use this approach effectively by translating political vision into operational terms to the benefit of the whole Angus community.

The Council's Corporate Plan should be the subject of revision within the first three months of the election of a new Council in order that the political view of the new Council is at the forefront of the Corporate Plan.

The Angus Community Plan and its various constituent sub-strategies, all of which are developed on a partnership basis, are also central to the Corporate Plan.

- 1.2 A strategic calendar has been produced which sets out the timeframes and inter-relationship between the development, monitoring, updating and reviewing of the Corporate Plan, Service Plans and Personal Action Plans for senior staff, and these guidelines are designed to assist departments in their preparation of 3-year Service Plans in that context.
- 1.3 The Council is responsible for an enormous range of public services and has, quite rightly, operated on the basis of decentralisation of service delivery, coupled with devolved responsibility and accountability. One specific corollary of this approach has been that some differences in presentation have developed in the Service Plans prepared by different departments of the Council. These guidelines are intended to ensure that consistent but flexible parameters can be applied by all departments of the Council in the documentation and presentation of future plans.
- 1.4 The Best Value ethos has highlighted the need for ready access of 3-year Service Plans by customers, and by the Council itself for analytical purposes. In these circumstances these guidelines for Chief Officers have the following aims:
- to ensure that members of staff can relate their own activities directly and readily to an appropriate 3-year Service Plan
 - to ensure that Members of the Council can readily access all 3-year Service Plans for their own benefit and that of their constituents
 - to ensure that members of the public can readily access all 3-year Service Plans in user-friendly ways

- to enable the Council to demonstrate clear linkages between 3-year Service Plans and Corporate Plan, and between 3-year Service Plans and individual Personal Action Plans - as a key strand in establishing more effective Performance Management & Planning Systems (PMPs)
- to simplify and support any attempts to undertake appropriate analyses of the work of the Council as a whole (including Public Performance Reports - PPRs)
- to provide a genuinely supportive framework within which 3-year Service Plans themselves can be seen as being of assistance to staff, elected members, customers and citizens alike
- to enable the Council to demonstrate the progress being made on integrating the service planning and budgeting processes over the medium to long term

It is also recognised that much of the work of the multitude of service providers throughout the Council is effectively maintaining the service to the public. Services should have mechanisms in place to manage this work. It should not be set out in detail in the Service Plan.

2. PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 There is now significant experience of service planning within Angus, and it is not the function of these guidelines to dwell at great length on first principles. However, some general headings may be helpful.

2.2 Context

Service planning cannot take place in a vacuum. It should be set firmly within the context of the vision and themes detailed in the Corporate Plan, and the resources available to the Council (see also 3 below). It must also take full account of the Council's statutory obligations, and of relevant priorities set by central government, including the objectives and tasks now set out in the Council's BV New Implementation Plan (1998/2000). However, it is at least as important that it takes account of customer perception and of the views of front-line staff.

2.3 Audit and Balanced Scorecard

There is therefore a need for regular auditing to take place in order to ensure that Service Plans are reviewed systematically and that the outcome of audit/review is reflected in future plans. The use of the Balanced Scorecard will prove invaluable in this regard.

2.4 SMART Targets

The aims outlined above in 1.3 are likely to be most readily accomplished if all plans consist of targets which largely meet SMART criteria, namely:

Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Time-limited

3. CORPORATE PLAN

- 3.1 The Council has recently published its 2nd Corporate Plan, which comprises a vision and a range of themes covering the period 2000/2003 (up to the next Council elections).
- 3.2 On balance, there would seem to be some merit in attempting to produce a Corporate Plan, which should be a plan which relates to the timespan of life of a particular Council, updated annually. The strategic calendar sets out the phasings of review and updates.
- 3.3 The Corporate Plan sets priorities which must be reflected in each Service Plan - policy decisions on Local Agenda 21 offer a good example of how such a process could operate.

4. CORPORATE PLAN/SERVICE PLANS - Specific Issues

- 4.1 Name of Plan
All Departments should adopt the nomenclature "Service Plan."
- 4.2 Format of Plan
- 4.2.1 **There is thought to be merit in producing different sections of the plan for ease of access for readers/users.**
- 4.2.2 The plan should normally have 4 sections
- Introductory Section
 - Statement of contribution to the Corporate vision and themes
 - Progress Report on Previous Plan
 - Priority Service Areas and Targets
- 4.2.3 All Service Plans will include a small number of appendices. The appendices will provide budget summary and additional detail for key staff, or may describe specific outcomes which will appear in the Council's PPR. The following appendices will be included.
1. 3-year revenue budget projections.
 2. 3-year capital budget projections
 3. 3-year Manpower Plan.
- Where practical it is suggested that the following also be included:-
1. 3-year Property Plan; and
 2. 3-year I.T. Plan.
- 4.3 Frequency of Plan Updates
- 4.3.1 Each Service Plan should provide outline priority areas for a 3-year period with specific SMART targets for the following year only.

4.3.2 The Service Plan should therefore be reviewed and updated annually.

4.3.3 **Much of one annual Service Plan will be similar to the previous year Service Plan, and indeed there should be an expectation of significant continuity from one year Plan to the next.**

4.4 Introductory Section

This should provide:

- an outline context
- possibly an outline service profile
- the key **aims** being pursued within each Priority Service Area (Note: these **aims** are unlikely to vary from year to year)
- any other relevant information (in outline form, including context within which the service is operating - eg legislative framework)

This should also include brief outlines of major developments proposed, with clear statements as to the financial, staffing and property assets to be used.

4.5 Statement of contribution to the Corporate vision and themes

This should:

- Provide examples of how services have changed to reflect the corporate vision and themes.
- Not simply reiterate the range of statutory work undertaken by the service.
- Include a section on any planned research or consultation exercise that the service wishes to pursue.
- Reflect any cross departmental/agency boundary work being undertaken.

4.6 Progress Report on Previous Year Targets

Brief statements should be provided evaluating progress made in relation to the previous year targets. This section should be seen very much as a **summary** of the previous year achievements, and should be evaluative and qualitative rather than purely descriptive. Detailed performance reports should - if necessary - be included as appendices. Again the Balanced Scorecard should assist in this process.

4.7 Priority Service Areas and Targets

- 4.7.1 Careful thought requires to be given to the structure of this section: ideally it should be sub-divided into **approximately** five service areas (normally between 2 and 8 different Priority Service Areas should appear). If at all possible, there should be a clear link between Priority Service Areas and BV Service Reviews, with explicit reference made to each and every current BV Service Review within an appropriate Priority Service Area.
- 4.7.2 **A possible template is appended for use to describe each Priority Service Area (Annex 1).**
- 4.7.3 For each Priority Service Area, a broad statement of context should be provided, together with possibly a position statement (which could draw on comments from the previous section's Progress Report) - see top section of pro forma.
- 4.7.4 In column 1 of the pro forma, specific objectives should be set out for each Priority Service Area. Each objective should be identified as a developmental issue (D), or a "maintenance" task (M).
- 4.7.5 Column 2 of the pro forma should provide an indication of the post title of the lead officer with principal responsibility for ensuring this objective is attained. Some departments may wish to add reference to those sections (staff teams/business units/etc) which are principally affected by each objective. In any event, the information entered in this column should be of assistance in providing a linkage between Departmental Service Plans, Business Units' Plans and Personal Action Plans.
- 4.7.6 Column 3 of the pro forma requires the indication of a target date for attainment of each objective.
- 4.7.7 Column 4 of the pro forma requires departments to identify success criteria for each and every objective. In some cases, it will be possible to make use of Performance Indicators to detail these criteria. The use of PIs in this context is encouraged, whether they are nationally recognised or have been derived locally.
- 4.7.8 The fifth and final column of the pro forma should be used to provide an **outline** of future Plans for taking forward specific objectives over a 3-year period.
- 4.7.9 Two footnotes are proposed for each completed pro forma. The first relates to the relative importance of each objective or group of objectives: for example one objective may involve several hundred members of staff devoting a significant part of a multi-million pound budget, whereas another objective might be undertaken by a very small team devoting a relatively minor proportion of their total time to this particular objective. Wherever possible Chief Officers will provide a broad indication of the human/financial resources being allocated to each group of objectives.

4.7.10 The second footnote provides an opportunity to make explicit the linkage with the Corporate Plan. It might also be useful to note that application of Annex 1 as a pro forma for the Service Plan of a business unit offers a similar opportunity to demonstrate linkages with the over-arching Service Plan.

4.8 Appendices

4.8.1 There may be information which departments feel is essential in order to make the Plan understood.

4.8.2 Equally, it is possible that some readers will have ready access to information not available to others.

4.8.3 There is a strong possibility that detailed information will be required for the Council's Annual Public Performance Report - information which adds a useful dimension to the Plan itself.

4.8.3 In circumstances such as these, the use of a small number of short appendices is necessary to meet the overall aims of the planning process.

4.8.4 All 3-year Service Plans will contain a financial appendix providing a budget summary – This should cover the same 3-year period as the Service Plan (see Annex 2 for model financial appendix).

4.9 Service Plan: Length of Document

4.9.1 In order to make the plan as accessible as possible, it should not be an unduly lengthy document.

4.9.2 Equally, it will be impossible for most departments to comply with the above advice in a document which is unduly short.

4.9.3 As a rough rule of thumb it is suggested that the following guidance could usefully be applied

•	Introductory Section	2 to 5 pages
•	Progress Report	5 to 12 pages
•	Priority Service Areas	<u>8 to 20 pages</u>
•	Total	15 to 37 pages

4.9.4 Ideally, a 25-page document should be the aim, accepting that larger departments will have little choice but to produce lengthier plans and small departments will be better advised to produce much shorter documents.

5. PRIMACY OF PLANNING PROCESS

5.1 Although these brief guidelines concentrate on the production of the final document which will be the 3-year Service Plan, it is vital to stress that the planning **process** is of infinitely more importance than the document.

- 5.2 The plan itself must be seen as a working document - used regularly by staff at different levels.
- 5.3 The crucial issue of linking systematically and transparently the corporate plan with Service Plans (for major services and for units within these services) and with personal action plans must continue to be given high priority - particularly when discussing service planning with staff.
- 5.4 The advice in these guidelines is intended to provide a framework which will make the whole process more transparent and more effective.

Priority Objectives 2000/01 Highlight Development (D) or Maintenance (M)	Lead Responsibility	Target Date for Completion	Success Criteria	Update/Note	Future Plans (2000/2003)	New Targets	Target Date

DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY

	<u>Final</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>@ Outturn</u> <u>Prices</u> <u>2001/02</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>@ Outturn</u> <u>Prices</u> <u>2002/03</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>@ Outturn</u> <u>Prices</u> <u>2003/04</u> <u>£'000</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Employee Costs			
Property Costs			
Supplies & Services			
Transport Costs			
Third Party Payments			
Transfer Payments			
Unallocated Hypothecated Resources			
Other Additions			
Total Expenditure	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0
<u>Income</u>			
Specific Government Grant (AEF)			
Specific Government Grant (Other)			
Recharge Income (Internal)			
Fees, Charges, etc.			
Other Income			
Total Income	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0
Net Expenditure	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0

DEPARTMENT

MAIN CAPITAL PROJECTS

EXPENDITURE PROFILE 2001/02 - 2003/04

Project	Planned Expenditure (Net Cost) *		
	2001/02 £'000	2002/03 ** £'000	2003/04 ** £'000

* The figures shown here include both legally and not yet legally committed expenditure

** It should be noted that the expenditure totals for 2002/03 and 2003/04 are in excess of estimated resources. It will in all likelihood be necessary for the expenditure shown here to be cut back in the setting of capital budgets for these financial years, in order to reconcile total estimated expenditure with estimated resources