

ANGUS COUNCIL

**SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2003
HOUSING COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2003
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2003
ENVIRONMENTAL & LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2003
RESOURCES AND CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2003
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE – 11 DECEMBER 2003**

SERVICE PLANS 2003-07

Report by the Chief Executive

ABSTRACT

This report advises Members of revised corporate service planning processes which were implemented during 2003.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee: -

- i. note the revised service planning process
- ii. welcome the progress which is being made to link the service planning and budgeting processes and to identify and plan for other resource/ support requirements
- iii. approve the departmental service plans for the period 2003-07
- iv. note that updates to each departmental service plan will be submitted annually to the Committee in 2004, 2005 and 2006

2. BACKGROUND

Since its inception, Angus Council has adopted a systematic approach to the development of service planning processes across each of its departments. Members may be aware that the council's approach to date has focused on the production of three-year service plans, with annual updates. Considerable progress has been made but, in the evolving environment in which local authorities function, it is important that our systems continue to respond effectively to the demands which will be made of them.

Increasingly, the Scottish Executive, through Audit Scotland, is focusing on internal business management processes in their assessment of the extent to which local authorities are delivering best value for the communities they serve.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 placed a duty of best value on local authorities, in force from 1 April 2003, which includes provision for the introduction of a rigorous audit of local authorities on a three-year rolling basis.

The revised service planning guidelines, therefore, seek to translate this audit requirement into practical actions which will help Angus Council to demonstrate that it is delivering best value across the full range of services it delivers. The guidelines also seek to build upon the good practice we already have in place, address areas of weakness which we have recognised and ensure that our business management processes are fit to respond to future questions which may be asked of them.

3. FEATURES OF THE REVISED SERVICE PLANNING PROCESSES

The key elements of the revised processes are:-

- A new corporate plan will be prepared following each election of a new council, to cover the four- year life of the council. The current plan will go before Angus Council on 18 December 2003.
- Service plans will be prepared on a four-year basis to link directly to the corporate planning and community planning processes. Updates, appended to the original four-year plan, will be submitted annually to Committee in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- Departments will be given greater freedom to shape their service plan around their services, but core content will be stipulated to ensure that a corporate minimum is covered by each plan. This will broadly cover the range of initiatives and external influences that impact upon all local authorities today.
- Clearer links will be established between targets identified in service plans and the resources required to deliver them; particularly finance, but also IT, personnel or legal support, or property requirements.
- A corporate overview will be introduced into the service planning process. This will involve the circulation of all draft service plans to central support departments prior to them being finalised. These will then be reviewed to ensure that the minimum corporate requirements are adequately covered and targets identified by departments are agreed by support departments to be achievable within available resources and identified timescales.

The service plans submitted in the current diet of committee meetings are the first to be prepared in Angus Council using this revised approach. They build upon the progress which has been made across the council in recent years to develop effective service planning processes. The changes in approach will ensure that service plans are fit to respond to external demands, link clearly to corporate priorities and targets, and remain realistic and achievable within the limited resources available to us.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

6. CONSULTATION

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

A B WATSON OBE
Chief Executive

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