

Performance Management, Measurement and Information Service planning guidance

Introduction

Good service planning is a cornerstone of effective performance management. An effective service plan provides a solid foundation, keeping priorities and principles firm even in times of change. They are a vital part of the 'golden thread' which links corporate and community objectives through to individual performance plans, so that each person in a council knows how what they do contributes to achieving the council's improvement objectives. Service plans are an essential tool for making rational and co-ordinated decisions about levels and types of provision where resources, financial, people and skills and assets are used well through clear links to financial planning. Good service plans:

- Provide a route map to the positive outcomes prioritised by the council and the community
- Help to identify and mitigate risks to planned service levels and improvements
- Outline and address customer needs
- Help to focus on key issues such as quality and productivity

Using this guidance

Depending on the position you hold in local government and where your council is on its improvement journey, you will likely use service plans in subtly different, but important ways, and that will influence the way that you use this guidance.

As a corporate officer in a council with highly effective performance management, or as a manager in a service with good planning and performance management, you may wish to use this guidance as a check against your existing service planning guidance and you may pick up a few new ideas. Your service planning is probably well developed already, but you may wish to improve the way that you support the service planning arrangements, such as annual planning days, the way that risk is incorporated into action planning or the development and use of local performance indicators (link) in action planning. You may also find that can use your existing service planning arrangements, such as meetings with groups of officers and Members who work with different services, to take stock of both service delivery arrangements and your corporate and service level performance management arrangements.

Even in councils with very good performance management, there are often one or two services with less effective performance management, or a few managers who may be resistant to using performance management, and you may find this guidance helpful when working with those services or managers. In those cases, combining key messages from this guidance with the PMMI Managers' Guide to Performance Management (link), perhaps in a workshop setting, can help to set service planning within the context of the importance of performance management in helping services to achieve better services for local people.

If you are in a council with less effective performance management, this guidance along with examples from other local authorities found on the service planning page of the PMMI website can help you to develop or improve your corporate guidance on service planning.

This guidance should not be replicated as a whole, but rather elements should be lifted from this guidance and tailored to your own circumstances. Your own guidance should use language that has relevance in your own council – by referring to issues of immediacy to your own local community (e.g. local regeneration or community cohesion objectives) and focusing on how service planning fits in with your council’s organisational development programmes.

If you are reading this guidance straight through, you might think that all service plans should be data rich to the point of being cumbersome. We decided to be inclusive, suggesting a range of possibilities, but you should take away from this *only the elements that are useful to you in your circumstances*. PMMI research indicates that the precise detail is less important than having the basics in place and a clear commitment to improvement. What matters is what works for you. Service planning is a tool to help services and the council overall to achieve its objectives in making your area a better place to live and work.

Service plans in context

PMMI research stresses the importance of the ‘golden thread’ – that is a clear cascading of information and objectives from national and local priorities, through corporate and community plans, service planning and on to team and individual objectives to ensure that what’s important gets done. Service planning is a key link in this chain, because it’s at a level that’s high enough to show how activity contributes to this objective but detailed enough to ensure that important activities are managed for maximum performance.

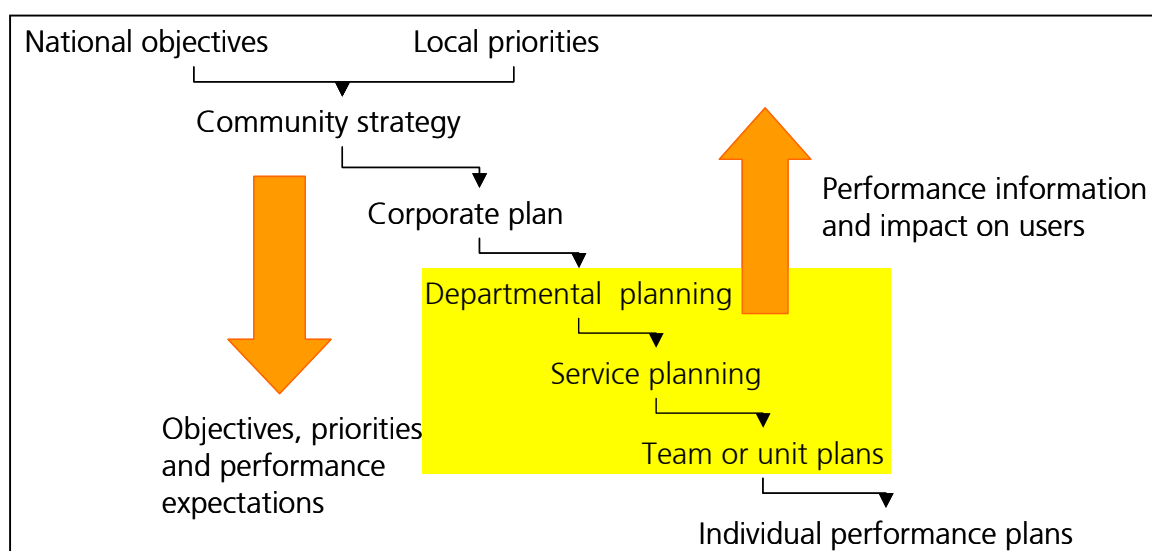


Figure 1: Regardless of the level of your main detailed performance planning, it's a vital part of the 'golden thread' of performance management.

A note on council size and levels of performance planning

Generally speaking, the larger your council is, the more information your service plan probably needs to hold, simply because corporate documents will, by necessity, cover only basic or top-line information.

For smaller district councils, it's likely that your corporate plan or perhaps a departmental performance plan can contain a lot of the information both on performance and objective setting that might appear in a service plan. If documents link up and there's enough information to set action planning in context, there's no need to replicate data endlessly in plan after plan.

On the other hand, in very large councils, much of service planning may appear in team or unit plans. The temptation may be to put much of the detail in those plans. However, a service level plan should still have an overview of a service's breadth of activity and how it contributes to corporate objectives.

Regardless of the level where a plan appears, it must contain enough information so that those inside your service know what performance has been achieved and what's expected and those outside your service have a reasonable understanding of the same. But only you and those who use your service plan, can reasonably determine how much information that is.

We feel our needs can be met with concise service plans clearly derived from the Council Plan. Our council plan contains much of the background information larger councils put into the service plan. We also have a third document we call Team Targets.

Team targets are derived from service plans. Whereas the service plan details the service priorities, how they derive from the corporate objectives, priorities and strategies, what outcomes or outputs are expected and the resources bill, team targets are designed to show how the service will be delivered and how we will know if we have delivered. It is from the team targets that individual targets come. They are, if you like, a series of action plans for delivering the service plan.

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Communicating the importance of service planning

In the best councils, service planning isn't a document that sits on the shelf, but rather it's a way of being clear about performance, priorities and objectives and setting a clear pathway to improvement. Most importantly, service planning is not a paper exercise. It's linked with budget setting and an annual review of performance and priorities. Corporate officers work closely with service managers from across the council, often in cross-service or multi-disciplinary workshops.

Corporate officers are clear that service planning is a way to help services work together to achieve overall objectives and a way to ensure, through moderation or collation exercises, that there aren't either gaps or overlaps in effort. The centre must also demonstrate that service plans are a useful tool for achieving improvement corporately as well as tool for the service manager. Corporate officers need to show

In our first year of workshops to support performance management, most managers were keen to develop their service planning and improve performance management overall. But there were a few 'old guard' who were reluctant. Instead of letting those managers set the agenda, we concentrated on the willing, supporting them in getting the tools and skills they needed to have better service delivery and performance management arrangements.

By the second year, there were very few managers who couldn't see the relevance of planning and performance management. Partly, other managers had exerted peer pressure, but also services with good PM were already seeing results, and in celebrating their successes we were able to persuade others of the importance of performance management.

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that any information that is requested is genuinely used and that service plans are necessary, not just a box to tick.

Service managers are clear that service planning is both a way to ensure that services are achieving objectives important to the council and community and a way to communicate how their service makes important contributions to the same. Service managers must then communicate their service objectives and how these link with corporate objectives to teams and individuals within the service. It is their responsibility to ensure that teams and individuals understand how important their contribution is to the whole. More information on how this view can be shared across your authority can be found in the PMMI online conference report [Embedding performance management frameworks and developing a performance management culture](#).

Format and structure of service plans

Service plans vary from council to council and there is no one right way to structure a service plan, although there is considerable value to having a flexible but consistent corporate style, which allows anyone familiar with your format to pick out key pieces of information quickly. Some plans may conform to one of a wide range of [performance management models such as EFQM or Balanced Scorecard](#), and others will follow a council's own adapted framework. But every service plan will have, in some form, each of the following assessments:

- Current performance;
- Objectives and needs;
- Means of achieving objectives; and
- Ways of measuring success.

Where are we now?	The first step for initiating improvement is clarifying the context and issues that face the service and its users. It's about being proud of your accomplishments and sharing your learning, but it's also about honestly assessing and owning the challenges the service faces.
Where do we need to be?	Assessing what needs to change is the next step on the route to improvement. This section helps to set a clear vision for the service over the long term as well as focusing on goals for immediate action.
How do we get there?	This is about activating the improvements that the service needs or wants to make and identifying a clear plan for closing the gap between where the service is now and where it wants to go. This section will clearly allocate responsibilities and define accountability, as well as the resources needed to achieve service improvement through clear links to financial planning and plans for how people's skills will be used to best effect.
How do we know we are there?	Goals and targets are little use without a clear plan and mechanisms to ensure that you can make it happen. This section establishes how you can monitor and maintain progress, keeping on track to real improvements for local people.

Figure 2: The essential elements of any service plan

Detailed service planning guidance

This section of the guidance is a detailed, step-by-step approach of what to include in a service plan.

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1. Introducing the service and the service plan

Anyone picking up a copy of a service plan, whether a Councillor, a partner, a member of staff or a colleague in another department or local authority should be able to get a clear picture of your service. In a brief introduction or overview, explain what the service does and why it does it – outlining the legislative background and how the service addresses user needs. Help readers to understand the context of the service and how it links to corporate and community objectives as well as to partners and other parts of the council.

Although this guidance addresses elements separately in the introduction and the next section, “*Where are we now?*” for purposes of explanation – in a real service plan, some of these elements can be usefully combined.

1.1 Period of the plan

All service plans need to be updated in full, with performance and budget outturns at least annually. But that doesn't mean that service plans should be dusted off only once a year. Any good project manager uses a project plan to map where they are and where they want to be and regularly updates their project plan to monitor how close they are to achieving their goals. Service plans are the overarching plan to your main project – achieving high-quality, cost-effective and appropriate services to local people. These need to be living plans, with performance, milestones and targets updated regularly, perhaps in the context of weekly, monthly or quarterly team meetings.

In local authorities with well-developed *Medium Term Financial Plans (MTFP)*, services should produce rolling plans, usually covering three years, with clear links to the MTFP. In other cases, perhaps where the future of the service is less clear or where either the priorities or finances of the local authority may be subject to significant change, a service plan covering a single year may be more appropriate. In either case, timeframes for actions and impacts on the service must be clearly indicated, and detailed action plans for the coming year must be clear and explicit.

1.2 Setting the scene: the context, drivers and reasons for service provision

1.2.1 Brief overview of the service

An overview of a service should be brief, but should explain what the service is and how it does it in terms that a general member of the public would understand. This helps any reader get a basic understanding of the service. This is an area where it would be helpful to have a corporate template, so that anyone familiar with your council's format would be able to immediately pick out key pieces of information covering:

Organisational structure

- Customer profile
- Employee profile
- Financial profile – revenue, capital budgets and income streams
- Geographic distribution of the service
- Key partners

1.2.2 Scope

Some parts of the service may not be included in the service plan in great detail, for example if some parts of the service are delivered by partners. Make clear any boundaries of what is included or excluded and briefly explain any partner's role and contribution. For those areas not covered by the service plan, which one might generally expect to be covered, be explicit about who is responsible for delivery and how the service will maintain oversight and accountability for aspects of service it does not deliver directly.

1.2.3 Vision and mission

Set out the high-level vision and mission for the service and how this links to corporate and community objectives. This brief statement demonstrates how the service contributes to achieving the council's corporate vision and values. Statements like 'this is what we are about' and 'this is where we fit' set the service within context.

1.2.4 Key drivers

Every service provided by public monies has to demonstrate why it should be provided by the council or at all. The key drivers of the service should provide a clear answer to the question 'why are we here?' and 'why do we provide the services that we do?' These may include legislation, national priorities and guidance, such as:

- Your service's contribution to national priorities, including how your service is linked to the national or local Public Service Agreement, or the shared priorities (agreed by the Government and LGA)
- Minimum levels of service provision required under relevant statutes
- Recommended service standards from a professional institute or other national centre of excellence
- Service level guidance from government departments (e.g. Environment Agency, Government Office or Food Standards Agency).
- Good practice guidance from regulators (for example the Audit Commission 'Learning from Inspection' series);

Equally important, the plan should demonstrate how the service contributes to local priorities or addresses local need by including:

- Links to key strategies. Demonstrate how the service contributes to delivering the council's key strategies and plans like the community strategy, corporate plans or local public service agreement.
- Any relevant local circumstances. For example;
 - Customer or user needs
 - Links to Member portfolio priorities or other local manifesto commitments
 - Links to the priorities of strategic partners, e.g. police or health.

Tip 1.1: information should be presented like 'Key facts at a glance' so readers have a high level but comprehensive view of the service.

Tip 1.2: Show how your services supports better services for local people, whether your service is largely internal, i.e. providing services to other council departments or services or external, i.e. customer facing.

2 Where are we now?

2.1 Baseline assessment of service

Up to this point, the service plan has been an overview of what the service does, who its users are, and how it contributes to local and national priorities. This section sets out how well the service is currently performing against a range of criteria, measures, targets and customer expectations. This information provides the basis for prioritisation over which aspects of the services to continue, improve or cease altogether.

2.1.1 How does the service meet user expectations?

Service planning should be driven by what serves residents and existing or potential customers best. Analysis of user and non-user consultation should highlight areas for improvement and illustrate successes. Present key findings and feedback from customers and other stakeholders, such as:

- Qualitative or quantitative surveys conducted by the council or its partners
- Analysis of partner data, such as the Health Service in relation to bed-blocking if you manage social services dealing with elder care or police comments about unsafe levels of street lighting or property damage in relation to community safety if you run an Environmental service.
- Formal and informal feedback like customer comments and analysis of complaints. For example a needs analysis of highways repairs could be based on complaints about road or pavement conditions, as well as using professional highways surveys.
- Analysis of user views recorded through regular procedure. These might be the views of clients, their carers and families in Social Services care plans or an analysis of holds for library books, indicating stock in a particular area may need updating.
- Other consultation such as focus groups as part of a service review or feedback from citizens on neighbourhood panels or user groups.

Tip 2.1: Don't include detailed findings of assessments or consultation. Instead provide information in a few bullet points with links to additional information.

Tip 2.2: Feedback doesn't have to be in the form of statistics to be useful.

Member enquiries on behalf of constituents, reader letters in the local newspaper or even the views of pressure groups could be a prompt for further investigation. If there isn't enough evidence to act right away, include further consultation and analysis – as well as how results will be addressed - in the service's action plan.

Tip 2.3: Conversely, take extra care with, but don't avoid using less formal sources of data – as there may be equal opportunities implications. Some members of the community are less vocal in their formal or informal complaints, and information about usage trends won't reflect the needs of those who feel excluded from the service for whatever reason.

2.1.2 How does the service meet its objectives?

Summarise how the service is performing in relation to its own objectives and targets (community strategy, corporate plan targets etc.). Put these in context by providing comparisons over time and with other councils. Provide information on performance against key targets, standards and indicators, such as:

- targets for previous year

- BVPIs or other national indicators and any change in performance
- key local performance indicators
- professional service standards if applicable
- key financial targets for the service, including productivity or value-for-money indicators

This section should illustrate where improvements have been made, but also where the service has fallen short of expectations. Some services may show an evaluation of the service against a recognised framework such as EFQM, Process Mapping or IIP, or against the council's own performance management framework.

(For more information on these see the Review of Performance Management Models and Improvement Tools on the PMMI site at www.idea.knowledge.gov.uk)

Tip 2.4: presenting pages of tabular data can be boring or confusing. Highlight key successes and areas for improvement using something like a traffic lighting method. Simple graphs of trend data for key performance indicators can be used to communicate powerfully. Break up tables with simple commentary telling readers what the figures mean to the service and service users.

2.1.3 Key achievements and outcomes

While the previous section might be a comparison of performance against key indicators, this section should draw out the key facts and demonstrate how well the service has contributed to required outcomes. Ideally though, this section will be the positive commentary on the previous section. This is an opportunity to show how day-to-day outputs actually result in greater efficiency, improved services and quality of life for local people. It should also highlight where effort and resources are best placed to deliver key outcomes – essential for prioritising services for the coming period.

Success can breed success. Demonstrate the potential and capacity for further improvement by listing any national or local recognition, citations, accreditation or awards for good practice or significant learning that has taken place in the last year.

Tip 2.5: Provide contact details with information on successes so other officers can pursue any learning you've highlighted.

2.2 How does the service compare?

2.2.1 To other service providers

You may also want to provide information on how competitive the service is in relation to other existing providers in the private or voluntary sector. A brief overview of alternative providers could be included. Where well-developed markets exist, comparisons on cost and quality of alternative service provision should be used to demonstrate the competitiveness and contestability of council services.

2.2.2 To other councils

In any thorough assessment of a service, there should be comparison of service performance against those of other councils. This sets the service in context of what

can be achieved and how well the service is doing in comparison to others and raises the bar of expectation.

Tip 2.6 : “Competition” analysis need not cover the whole service, but there may be specific aspects of the service where outsourcing makes sense, freeing up existing resources to improve other areas of the service.

3 Where do we need to be?

This section positions the service for the future, setting out what needs to change in order to deliver better services. What does the service need to do to achieve the council’s objectives and customer expectations? How does the service need to change to come in line with national priorities? What changes must be made over the period of the service plan in order to achieve objectives in the near term and the long term? This section is about making tough choices about provision and outlining service priorities.

Information provided in this section may mirror the ‘where are we now’ but will focus on what must change for the future. These may be changes in:

- The service profile, such as an expansion in customer base or levels of provision
- Service performance, such as improvement against key PIs
- Reduction of service provision in lower priority areas, or
- Changes in costs due to changes in levels of service or efficiency gains. *Both cashable and non-cashable efficiency gains are increasingly important in light of the Efficiency Agenda.*

‘Where we want to be’ often leads to discussion around how teams could improve an existing service. This can result in small incremental improvement, but often transformational change is required.

To achieve this, we recommend that Service teams benchmark with excellent councils and those with good inspection results to identify alternative ways for delivering a service. When we do this in a structured way in Best Value Reviews, we always take Councillors to see the good practice, which helps when we ask them to support a radical change proposal made to Cabinet. The external search for good practice nearly always resulted in a bigger step change.

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Explain why changes are being made and what is driving those changes.

This section should also include information about external factors that may affect the provision or cost of the service, such as changes in demographics, price increases of goods or services, or changes in the law.

Evaluate the challenges facing the service by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the service in relation to the demands placed on it by the external environment. This will highlight any gaps in capacity that need to be addressed and is needed to ensure that the service has the capacity to deal with the impact of external factors. Evaluating these risks means that you not only have a better idea about feasible changes are, but also a rationale for making changes. It may well be that a service is perfectly alright today can offer a similar level of service which won’t be appropriate for next year or in five year’s time.

There are a number of techniques that can be used to provide structure to the evaluation and to ensure that a range of factors are taken into consideration, including SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technical, Legislative and Environmental) in Figure 3 below. While a full risk assessment is included in the action planning stage, it may be helpful to consider major risks when considering future options, using techniques like SWOT or PESTLE can help to highlight some of the risks to future delivery.

Political	Changes in make up of the council and government trends may affect political support and leadership. Examine the impact of the Modernising agenda, shared priorities etc
Economic	Cost pressures and market forces may affect the 'take'-up' of the service. For example private health clubs in the proximity of council leisure centres may affect usage figures. Or a downturn in the economy may put pressure on services like Housing or Social Services.
Social	Cultural and demographic trends, for example an ageing population may increase or decrease demand or take up of a particular service. Or if the profile of the local population is changing this may affect the need for translation services or other equal access considerations. Additionally, examine changing expectations about local government's role in civil society, such as the Community Cohesion, or Race Equalities agendas
Technical	Availability of new technology or innovative market solutions may highlight the need for existing services to be provided in a different way. How will the pressure to deliver electronic service delivery targets affect the service?
Legislative	Changes in the statutory framework for example Data Protection, Freedom of Information Act may affect the way that services do business.
Environmental	Changes in environmental / sustainability standards and laws could have an impact on the service, through, for example, the authority's procurement policies and procedures or the way planning permissions are granted.

Figure 3: Using techniques such as PESTLE can help provide structure to evaluations

4 How do we get there?

This is the framework for action, with clear indications of what needs to be done, by when and who is responsible for doing them.

4.1 Detailed action plans

Summarise your main actions and planned outcomes in a table as in Figure 2. The table in this guidance is indicative, as the information could be arranged in a number of different ways. For example where we have included a single column for targeted outputs, some may wish to have several columns indicating targeted outputs over a three to five year period, particularly if it is rolling multi-year service plan. Some people like to include risks to achieving targets within detailed action plans as well (risk management is addressed in the next section.) Highly detailed action plans for operational purposes can be attached as an annex.

Example 1

Objective	Task or action	Lead Person	Targeted Output	Targeted Outcome	Resources	Timescales and milestones

Example 2

Activity	Accountable officer	Risks to achievement	Year one target	Year two target	Year three target

Figure 4: indicative action plan headings

Headings may include:

- **Objective** – what does the service hope to achieve and how does this link to corporate and community objectives?
- **Task** – a brief, one-line description of the planned activity. Include only key tasks for this level of plan.
- **Risk** – what could stand in the way of achieving performance targets?
- **Lead person** – a named person responsible for ensuring the task is completed
- **Targeted output** -- what level of output is expected. Outputs may be quantifiable levels of service, such as number of families re-housed or the occurrence of single event. Output targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). This will mean that part of a targeted output will include an indication of how the performance will be measured.
- **Targeted outcome** – what is the expected impact as a result of a key action or group of actions. Outcomes may be less easy to define with straightforward quantifiable measures, but clear indicators of performance will be included as part of the targeted outcomes. For example, a targeted outcome could be about reducing homelessness, which might be measured by specialist survey or a reduction in the number of registered homeless.
- **Resources** – what resources will be required to complete the task. These resources will be about people as often as about money. What skills will staff need to ensure success? If any development is required (whether through training, mentoring or even learning on the job) is this reflected in their personal development plans? The bottom line has to be reflected in terms of financial, personnel and other resources. And if all actions can't be adequately resourced, that's an indication that prioritisation must be more robust. Final implications of the plan have to be clearly demonstrated.
- **Completion deadline or milestone** - date by when the task is to be completed or in certain cases (for example: improvement to be achieved in a PI) a milestone per quarter etc. could be set for regular monitoring.

These action plans should be reviewed regularly and any changes of direction during the year should be noted along with the reasons for and implications of the change.

- Tip 4.1:** Organise action plans by theme in easy to scan tables
- Tip 4.2:** Managers should ensure that each named person also has these key activities in their personal performance plan for the same period.
- Tip 4.3:** Post action plans in a place that visible to managers and staff, so everyone can keep track of priorities and progress.
- Tip 4.4:** Some councils use shorthand notes or symbols to indicate which council objectives each activity contributes toward, making clear links between high level objectives and service activities.

More specific information and guidance on [target setting](#) and [performance measurement](#) can be found on the PMMI website at www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk. Or visit the PMMI virtual library section on [performance measurement and the use of information](#)

4.2 Risk Management

Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled and is a crucial element of 'how do we get there'. A process for the management of risks needs to be in place but it needs to be simple and straightforward. A strategic risk profile should also be developed by identifying all risks and assessing them against a simple matrix of 'Likelihood and Impact' of occurrence, as in Figure 3 below. This will also result in the prioritisation and categorisation of all risks.

Four categories are suggested:

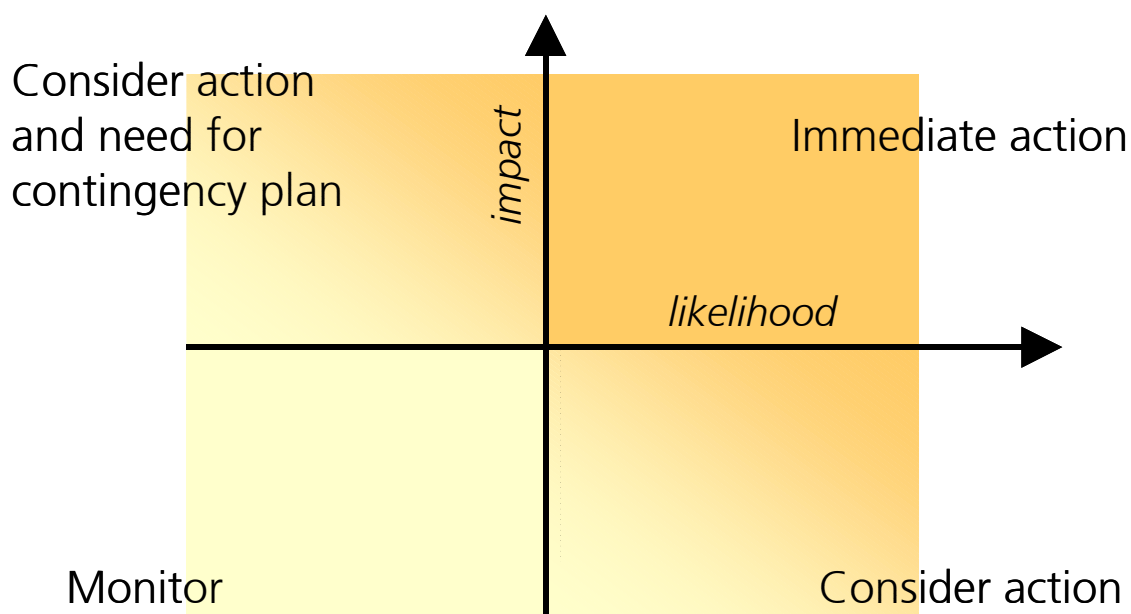


Figure 5: risk matrix

The risk matrix above can be used for conceptual purposes or for a risk mapping exercise. People already familiar with the risk matrix can log risks directly into a table such as in Figure 6 below. Risk logs must be regularly checked and updated, as both the perception and likelihood of risks changes over time. How frequently risks logs are updated will depend on how many high likelihood or high impact risks there are, but risk logs should be checked at least quarterly, perhaps by reviewing them with key staff or when assessing progress against the action plan.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Action
Describe the risk	High, medium, low	High, medium, low	What will be done to prevent, prepare for or alleviate the consequences of the risk – who will be responsible for actions.

Figure 6: a sample risk log

Tip 4.5: in preparing a risk log, don't forget to include who will be responsible for monitoring risks and taking action.

4.3 Efficiency

You may also want to use the service planning process to map out and monitor required efficiency gains. This is an increasingly important area – which will require changes to the way we plan for and monitor performance. Each council's approach to Value for Money (including cost management, procurement practices and efficiency gains achieved) will figure into the Audit Commission's "use of resources" score as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime. Additionally, performance measurement and management will need to be much sharper because you will need to prove that:

1. You're achieving the same level of performance by using fewer inputs
2. You're achieving the same level of performance by with reduced costs (through procurement, labour costs, etc)
3. Increasing the level of performance (in terms of quantity or quality) for the same inputs
4. Getting proportionately more outputs or quality in return for an increase in resources.

And simply reducing the level of service or service quality standards *does not count* toward efficiency gains.

Although, the 2.5% efficiency gains required as set out in the Gershon Review don't apply uniformly across every service, it is likely that each service will need to make a contribution to the total. More [information about efficiency can be found in the IDeA Knowledge website](#) where you can find [guidance on annual efficiency statements](#) and more.

The following table¹ sets out one way you could identify and map some of the efficiency gains and other savings.

Non-Cashable Efficiency Gains				
	2005/6 £	2006/7 £	2007/8 £	Evidence
<p>“Much more for a little more”</p> <p><i>Employment of additional member of staff to improve performance in housing the homeless</i></p>				Improved performance against LPSA Target 9 takes the Council via significant improvement into top 25%. Whilst benchmarking demonstrates costs are in the bottom 25%
<p>“More for the same”</p> <p><i>Increase the number of invoices which were paid promptly</i></p>				<i>Measurement against KCPI 28</i>
Cashable Efficiency Gains				
<p>“More for less”</p> <p><i>Example ICT – Enterprise wide windows licensing</i></p>	<i>£5000</i>	<i>£5000</i>	<i>£5000</i>	<i>Current cost per license £200, new cost £150 – saving £50 per licence. 100 no. Licenses per year.</i>
<p>“The same for less”</p> <p>4.3.1 Example <i>Procurement savings on contracts, or a combination of reduced inputs and productivity gains</i></p>	<i>£120k</i>	<i>£120k</i>	<i>£120k</i>	<i>Rebates estimated at £100k and reduction in unit costs est. £20k</i>
Other savings				
<p>“Less for even less”</p> <p><i>Stop doing something</i></p>				
4.4 Total				
(%) of Service Budget				

Figure 7: a sample table for setting out efficiency gains.

¹ After a table included in North Somerset District Council's service planning guidance.

5 How do we know we are there?

What are the measures for success? Set out the arrangements for monitoring progress against targets and keeping on track to success. Include clear information about:

- The mechanisms for monitoring performance and progress
- What will be reported
- When information will be reported and how frequently
- Who will report to whom
- Who will take action if there is insufficient progress

For key targets it may be worth setting out trigger points where remedial action will occur if an indicator falls below target. It may be appropriate to monitor progress of certain performance indicators that are key to the council's priorities more frequently. The process must be practical and manageable and most importantly measures must be meaningful. If a single measure doesn't show an accurate picture, a collection of two or three may be more appropriate.

There should be a hierarchy of monitoring arrangements, with high level and strategic monitoring being the responsibility of senior officers and Members. It is essential that people who have the power to take corrective action or divert resources are able to keep abreast of service performance.

Finally, even the best monitoring arrangements on paper won't make a difference if they aren't used. Progress must be tracked against each item in the action plan. At worst, demonstrating progress is monitored and risks are being addressed can help persuade key-decision makers to provide assistance to get performance back on track. At best, emphasising results sets the right tone and helps to ensure that staff are meeting their own individual objectives and that managers are using supervision sessions and appraisals to keep the service on track.

6. Conclusion

Service planning is an essential tool for performance management. It helps people understand your service, it provides a road map for where your service needs to be and is an essential part of the accountability framework for service provision.

But unless you construct your service plans so that they can be used for the regular management of your service, they are unlikely to be of much use.

For other guidance on performance management visit the [PMMI web site](http://www.idea.knowledge.gov.uk) at www.idea.knowledge.gov.uk