

Policy

Strategic Service Planning Framework

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Legislation, Australian Standards, Code of Practice	Local Government Act 1993, Chapter 13, Part 2 Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, Part 9, Division 1A Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR): Guidelines for Local Government in NSW (Office of Local Government) Integrated Planning and Reporting: Handbook for Local Councils in NSW (Office of Local Government)		
Aim	Establish the method of determining the services to be delivered, and levels of services that are appropriate for meeting the outcome desired by and willing to be funded by the community.		

1 Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a 'service planning framework', which sits within the IPR framework, supporting Council and each service to:

- Provide for comparative choice between services to enable Council to ultimately determine the range of services provided, and the preferred level of service for the Snowy Monaro regional community,
- Determine the purpose and desired outcomes of each service, in line with Council's strategic objectives,
- Consider if changes are required to current service provision levels, or if additional/different services are required,
- Identify the most effective and efficient way for services to be delivered,
- Ensure services meet the requirements of relevant Federal and State Government legislation, regulations and frameworks, and are delivered consistent with Council policies,
- Identify service resource requirements for the longer term and consider what impact, if any, this will have on Council's long-term sustainability.
- Assess and monitor the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the service delivery model.

This framework sits within the IPR framework.

2 What is strategic service planning?

Strategic service planning (SSP) is the process of determining how the desired outcomes set by the governing body in the delivery plan are translated into programs and activities. It is how the organisation operationalises the strategies and goals set by the governing body. SSP improves organisational performance and accountability to deliver more appropriate, efficient and effective public services.

While it can include what is known as a service review, its main focus is looking at the broader strategic view of why the service is being provided and what level the service should be provided at, rather than how it should be provided.

3 Integrated Planning Framework

Council is required to utilise the IPR framework as set out by the Office of Local Government. This includes the guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government.

3.1 Office of Local Government Guidance

The handbook issued by the Office of Local Government shall provide the overarching guidance on how to apply the IPR framework to SSP at Snowy Monaro Regional Council.

3.2 How does strategic service planning fit in with the IPR framework?

SSP impacts on the delivery program, resourcing strategies, and operational plan. SSP is not in itself the development of strategies and is not the process of determining the delivery plan. It does, however, interact closely with those processes and influences them in turn.



This framework focuses on supporting the decision-making process that determines what is included in the delivery plan regarding Council's service mix. It facilitates the governing body in determining what services to provide and the CEO in aiding and supporting the governing body in developing the delivery plan.

This process also influences the contents of resourcing strategies, and in part determines what activities are to be included in the operational plan.

4 Development of strategic service plans

4.1 What are the roles and responsibilities for strategic service planning?

The SSP is an iterative approach, where the direction of the governing body guides the planning process, with the outcomes of the planning process then guiding the content of the strategic plans of Council.

4.1.1 Role of councillors

- Communicate a vision for the Council,
- Ensuring that the views of consumers of Council services, and other members of the community served by the Council, are sought in relation to the organisation's policies and plans for the provision of services,
- Use evidence-based information from the SSP process to help make informed decisions as to what services or facilities are to be included in the delivery plan, and what level of service is to be delivered,
- To provide resourcing for services and facilities included in the delivery plan as identified from the SSP,
- Monitor the achievement of the agreed service delivery outcomes.

4.1.2 Role of staff

- Coordinating the planning of system-wide service delivery and providing advice to the councillors on these matters,
- Clearly set out how the existing services deliver the outcomes as determined by the governing body,
- Identify any divergence between Council's priorities and business as usual paths,
- Develop strategic service plans that efficiently and effectively achieve the outcomes and objectives set by the governing body,
- Implement service delivery in alignment with the strategic service plans,
- Have in place a planned program of review of the service plans.
- Implementing systems to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of services.

5 Determining the service mix

Council faces competing demands across the community, and not all requests will be able to be fulfilled by Council. In determining the priorities for service delivery, the following factors will inform and guide these decisions:

1. Required service delivery: Where Council has legislative responsibilities, these are required to be met to the minimum level, as set in the legislation. Anything above the minimum level is subject to the remaining factors of consideration.
2. The benefit to the boarder community: Consideration should be given to the extent of positive impacts that the service provides, or the negative impacts avoided, and how frequently the benefit is gained.
3. Willingness of the community to fund: All services require resources. Unless there is an agreement from the community to fund the service it cannot be provided.

6 Resourcing the service mix

Resourcing can come from a variety of funding sources. This mix of funding needs to be determined equitably and sustainably. The following will guide the decisions on the funding sources:

1. Legislative requirements or guidelines: Where legislation or guidelines set out the preferred source of revenue or methods of charging, these will be applied unless a sound case exists for varying from that approach,
2. Cost of raising revenue: Where the cost of raising revenue exceeds or is equal to the revenue to be raised, non-user charging systems are to be used,
3. Commercial nature: Where the benefit of the service accrues to a commercial operator, that benefit should be funded by user charges,
4. Narrow community benefit: Where the benefit is provided to a small number of recipients, or a clearly identified single organisation receives the benefit, these costs should be recovered from the recipient of the benefit,
5. User charges: Where those individuals or groups that benefit from the service can be identified and revenue practically be raised from those users to recoup the costs from those gaining the benefit. Charges should be linked to the benefit derived where practical.
6. Community service obligation: Where the benefits link to the broader community and not individuals, those costs should be covered by general revenue. In most cases, it would be expected that benefits accrue to both individuals and the community, which would require a determination of the degree of benefit that accrues to each group.

7 What must be considered when undertaking strategic service planning

7.1 Community strategic plan

When undertaking SSP the needs and wishes of the community, as expressed in the community strategic plan, should guide the development of the service planning. The focus should be on the outcomes planned to be achieved in the community strategic plan.

7.2 Delivery plan outcomes and objectives

SSP must align with the adopted delivery plan and include explicit linkages demonstrating the harmony between the planned objectives, and the outcomes adopted in the delivery plan. Should the SSP indicate a need for consideration of a change to the delivery plan, the SSP should be placed on hold while the consideration of changes to the delivery plan are undertaken.

7.3 Council policies

SSP must consider the existing policies of Council. This does not mean that strategic planning processes must align with the existing policies, but where the strategic planning indicates that policies need to change, this must be identified and supporting documentation provided to Council to enact such change to policy.

7.4 Council strategies

SSP must consider, and should be enacting, the existing strategies of Council. If the SSP identifies issues with the strategies, the SSP process should be deferred while the strategies are reviewed.

7.5 Resourcing

All SSP work must consider the holistic and full lifecycle costs of the activities of facilities planned. Sustainable funding must be identified as part of any proposal for service delivery.

SSP must consider the resourcing available to Council. This does not mean that strategic planning processes must remain within the existing resources, but where the strategic planning indicates that resourcing levels need to increase, the planning process must identify a guaranteed funding source.

7.6 Community and customer views

Where SSP relates to services provided to the community, the views of the users of the service are to be considered while undertaking the SSP. Proposed changes to services or service levels are to be developed in conjunction with a process of community engagement.

8 Initial implementation

8.1 Service delivery planning

In developing the first iterations of strategic planning management, the primary focus is to prioritise the introduction based on:

1. The level of potential for service efficiency improvements from the services,
2. Evidence of changing demands or priorities for services, including customer and community feedback,
3. Financial pressures and considerations, including withdrawal or changes to external funding arrangements,
4. A risk assessment of the existing service.

8.2 Service level delivery

There will be instances where there are backlogs that impact on the ability to deliver services in the short term, due to interim resourcing constraints. While these are in place, the planning for service delivery is to be prioritised on the following basis:

1. Just in time works: These are works where preventative investment provides a significant financial benefit to the community, rather than allowing assets to fail,
2. Identified critical services: Where services (or service elements) are considered critical these will be prioritised over other services,
3. Greatest community benefit: Where two actions are needed, the one that provides the greatest community benefit is prioritised. This can be determined by considering the value of the benefit provided, the number of people benefiting from the action, or how often the benefit is realised.

9 When will strategic service planning occur?

Strategic service planning will have two main components:

1. Review of the overall service mix.
2. Strategic service review planning.

The first component should occur following each local government election, when the councillors determine what the outcomes are for the following term of Council. A review of the service mix is to be undertaken, to consider whether the current service mix achieves the desired outcomes. Any significant gaps will lead to a strategic service review being undertaken.

A cycle of review will then be put in place to undertake the strategic service planning of services individually on a periodic cycle, ranging from 3-5 years. This time frame will depend on the criticality and nature of the individual service being reviewed.

Reviews will also be carried out when the direction of Council changes, therefore impacting and informing the need for changes to the services mix.

10 Service Reviews

It is important that the services are delivered in an efficient and effective way. To ensure this is the case the CEO will have in place a process of regularly reviewing the method of service delivery.

Service delivery reviews will be undertaken on a periodic cycle, ranging from 3-7 years. This timeframe will be determined by considering the complexity of the service delivered, the extent of change in technology and methods of delivery, the cost of the service provision.

11 Related Documents

This policy relates to the following documents:

Documentation

250.2023.#.1 Strategic Service Planning Procedure

IPR framework as published by the Office of Local Government

12 Variation

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy, therefore this policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure it is relevant and appropriate.

Schedule of changes to the policy

Significant Changes	Version Control	Date effective
Adopted By Council 21 March 2024: Resolution 51/24		21 March 2024
To be reviewed each 4 years or as required		