

**HMCPSI
PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR
CPS AREAS AND SERVICE CENTRES**

DECEMBER 2002

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the guidance

- 1.1 It is clear that the efficient and effective operation of the criminal justice system (CJS) is high on the political agenda, and is likely to remain so for some time to come. All agencies are now required to show quantifiable improvements in process, performance and service delivery. Within this context, there is considerable pressure on the CPS to continually seek improvements in its own performance, and contribute to improvements across the system as a whole.
- 1.2 The purpose of this guidance is not only to highlight the vital contribution that good business planning can make to the improvement of performance and delivery, but also to show how planning underpins the overall effectiveness of an organisation.
- 1.3 This guidance is aimed specifically at managers in both CPS Areas and Service Centres. However, the general principles and advice that it contains will be of wider application.
- 1.4 The guidance seeks to identify the key elements of good planning, and good practice in relation to drafting effective planning documents. It will also provide the benchmark against which the planning process, and plans themselves, can be assessed in the next round of HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSP) inspections. The key requirements and indicative evidence which relate to planning, and to which inspectors will have regard, are included in the new HMCPSP framework for inspections (published in November 2002), and are attached at **Annex 1**.
- 1.5 The guidance does not provide a blue print or template for the 'perfect' plan, since no such thing exists. A good plan should meet the specific requirements of those who intend to use it. Therefore it will vary according to the different needs and circumstances of the organisation concerned. However, all good planning processes will go through the stages outlined in this guidance, and be consistent with the principles contained within it.
- 1.6 In addition to addressing the issues that Areas and Service Centres have highlighted as actual, or potential, barriers to effective planning, this guidance will also be informed by the difficulties and areas for improvement that have been identified by inspectors in the course of their work. Specific reference will be made to the issues that have arisen during the course of HMCPSP's *Thematic Review of Business Planning* (to be published in 2003).
- 1.7 The guidance does not purport to be a substitute for formal training on the various tools and techniques that can be applied to planning. However, it does provide a framework within which such detailed specialist knowledge can be used.

Context within which Area and Service Centre planning takes place

- 1.8** Areas and Service Centres do not begin their planning with a blank sheet of paper. The overall framework in which they operate is established by the CJS Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and the delivery plans that flow from them, and by the national CPS strategic and business plans.
- 1.9** As part of its desire to secure a step change in improvements across the CJS, the Government has strengthened the mechanisms for ensuring delivery of PSA targets at a local level, and has determined that Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs), will be in place in each of the 42 CJS areas, by 1 April, 2003; shadow LCJBs will have been operational since the end of November 2002.
- 1.10** CJS PSA targets and their delivery plans will determine the core local performance delivery targets to be achieved in all 42 CJS areas. Chief Crown Prosecutors, who will be members of the LCJB, together with other Chief Officers locally, will be required to account formally to the National Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) about local CJS performance against targets.
- 1.11** This increased focus nationally on improved performance across the CJS, will drive still further the need for Areas and Service Centres to ensure that their planning is an effective tool to help them to deliver what is expected from them.
- 1.12** CPS Areas and Service Centres are also expected to work within the corporate framework established by the national CPS Strategic and Business plans, and to produce Area or Service Centre business plans that will contribute to the achievement of the corporate targets. The submission of a business plan that shows the contribution of local initiatives to the attainment of national targets is an important element of the CPS corporate governance framework.
- 1.13** This guidance will consider how Areas and Service Centres can engage effectively within the framework established by the NCJB, and CPS nationally.

Assumptions contained within this guidance

1.14 In writing the guidance, the following assumptions have been made:

- * Responsibility for business plans will continue to rest with the Finance Directorate at CPS Headquarters**
- * Funding for Areas and Service Centres will continue to be allocated on the same basis**
- * The integration of risk management into the business planning process will remain a CPS requirement**
- * Use of the (Business) Excellence Model to help secure continuous improvements is supported by the CPS**
- * National strategic priorities will continue to be consulted on at the CPS autumn Senior Management Conference**
- * Area and Service Centre plans will be commissioned by CPS Headquarters towards the end of the calendar year, to be returned towards the end of the financial year**
- * There will be greater accountability for the achievement of targets, with Local Criminal Justice Boards reporting on a quarterly basis to the National Criminal Justice Board. It is expected that the CPS will develop a similar regime in order to ensure attainment of specific CPS targets locally.**

2. Why Plan?

- 2.1 There are very few people who would categorically deny the need for planning. Most activities that we undertake require a degree of planning, whether it be getting to work on time in the morning, or organising a major event. And yet, when it comes to business planning within the CPS, it is not unusual to hear comments like 'I have to do it on top of the day job', 'it's impossible to plan in such a fast-changing environment' or 'our business is demand-led; there is no need to plan, we just respond to what we get'.
- 2.2 Hitherto many Areas and Service Centres thought about the concept of business planning purely in relation to the annual request to submit a business plan. In general, the requirement to submit a business plan is seen as a one-off reporting activity, the sole purpose of which is to satisfy the needs of the Finance Directorate at CPS Headquarters. While there is no doubt that the submission of an acceptable business plan is an important element in the CPS corporate governance framework, it is not the only, or indeed over-riding, purpose of the business plan.
- 2.3 Section one of this guidance highlighted the increasingly high priority Government is putting on delivery in all public services, including the CPS, and the requirement to show demonstrable improvements in performance.
- 2.4 The business plan is an important document that will support improvements in delivery. It should address itself not only to what needs to be delivered but also to the enabling activities (such as issues relating to people, finance, partnerships and finance etc) that Areas and Service Centres will have to undertake in order to be equipped to deliver against the targets that have been set.
- 2.5 Planning guidance issued by the Cabinet Office in 2001 states that there is a clear link between all high performing institutions and robust business planning processes. Whilst not minimising the need for documented plans, it is important not to under-estimate the importance of the process itself. The Cabinet Office guidance states that effective business planning is **essential** to delivery.
- 2.6 Therefore, despite the unenthusiastic response to planning noted above, there will need to be a marked improvement in business planning within the CPS if it is to achieve the desired step-change in performance, to demonstrate a greater focus on joined-up working across the CJS agencies, and ensure better value for money.
- 2.7 This guidance is written on the premise that planning is at the heart of good management, and it is this positioning that enables an organisation with robust business planning processes to achieve improvements in its performance.

What is the link between good planning and improved performance?

- 2.8** The planning process is often described as a journey, with the business plan representing the essential route map. A good business plan will provide the answers to three fundamental questions, and so help you to manage the journey successfully:

- * **Where are we now?**
- * **Where do we want to be?**
- * **How are we going to get there?**

- 2.9** Going through the various stages of the planning process will enable you to answer all of the above questions. There will also be other benefits that will help you to manage your business more effectively, and so achieve improvements in performance.

The benefits of business planning

a) Understanding of business position

- 2.10** By examining the current position of the organisation, those involved in the planning process develop a more comprehensive understanding of the business and its contribution to satisfying the needs of its stakeholders. They become much more aware of strengths, as well as being informed about where improvements and changes are needed.

b) Learning

- 2.11** Effective planning is recognised as a learning process, and the development of a business plan plays a vital role in helping to avoid mistakes, recognise hidden opportunities and share best practice. This is particularly helpful to managers, who can use the knowledge to respond more effectively to unexpected events, maximising the strengths of the organisation and limiting the exposure of known weaknesses. This ability to respond quickly to events is becoming increasingly important to the CPS operating, as it does, in the fast-moving environment of criminal justice.
- 2.12** Planning provides managers with an opportunity to stand back from the pressures of day-to-day management and to consider if there are other ways of doing things that are more likely to bring success in the longer term.

c) Corporate Governance and Resources

- 2.13** The Area and Service Centre business plans are an important element in the CPS corporate governance framework, providing reassurance that local initiatives support the national priorities and contribute to the attainment of national targets, and that funds are properly accounted for. This assurance is also a key element in ensuring that the Service can demonstrate proper stewardship to the Treasury. This is a prerequisite for securing any additional funds.
- 2.14** A good business plan will provide a structure for delegation and enable senior managers to demonstrate good practice in relation to governance at a local level. The business plan will provide the parameters for future decision-making, allocate responsibilities, resources and set a time frame for the achievement of carefully described objectives. Crucially, it will document the action required to ensure delivery and improve performance.
- 2.15** Consequently, it will facilitate an examination of the organisation's resources, and its capacity to deliver its objectives. Done properly, business planning should provide clarity of direction, and eliminate the need for duplication and unnecessary financial expenditure.

d) Measuring performance

- 2.16** The business plan can then be used as a yardstick against which progress can be monitored, making it easier to see and explain the results of shifting priorities or deviance in budget. The business plan cannot remove all uncertainty, but its development will help to understand it, and wherever possible, to anticipate it.

e) Ownership and Commitment

- 2.17** The active process of developing a plan, with actions and timetables, should ensure debate and discussion amongst managers and staff helping to build a consensus about the priorities for the business, and about the means of ensuring their achievement.
- 2.18** Such debate is healthy for any organisation. Not only can it help resolve any suppressed conflict, it also helps to build commitment to the plan. By including as broad a range of staff as practicable in the development of the plan, you will also establish a degree of ownership of it; or at least an understanding about why a particular course of action was agreed upon, and others rejected.
- 2.19** Preparing a business plan can be both a painful and time-consuming process, but it is, nevertheless, an important exercise. It should not be seen as an additional burden on already busy managers. It should be seen as part of their job and a useful aid to effective management. Through clarifying responsibilities and providing the framework for delegated decision-making, the planning process should decrease the number of issues senior managers have to address on a day-to-day basis and help focus their attention on other, more fundamental issues.

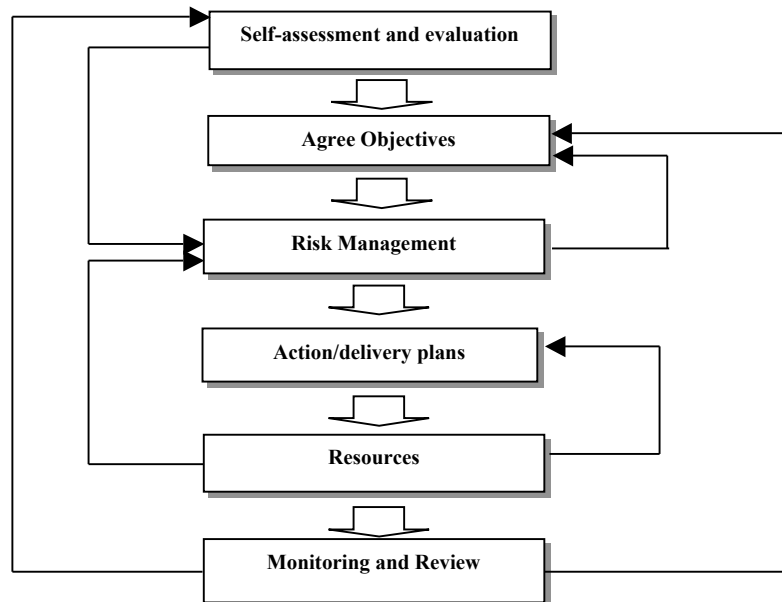
An Area or Service Centre business plan serves a number of critical functions

- * It provides managers with a better understanding of their business and equips them to respond more effectively to unexpected events**
- * It provides an opportunity to consider if there are other ways of doing things that are more likely to bring success in the longer term**
- * It provides clarity and direction**
- * It is an important element in the CPS corporate governance framework, providing reassurance that local initiatives support the national priorities and contribute to the attainment of national targets**
- * It is an important element in ensuring good governance at Area and Service Centre level, allowing senior managers to delegate effectively and appropriately**
- * It provides the framework against which improvement can be measured**
- * It provides staff, and stakeholders with a clear statement about priorities for the coming year, and the means by which, they will be achieved**
- * It documents the action required to ensure delivery and improve performance**
- * It allocates personal responsibility for the achievement of objectives**
- * It facilitates an examination of the organisation's resources, and capacity to deliver**
- * It helps resolve suppressed conflict, and build commitment and ownership**

3. The Planning Process

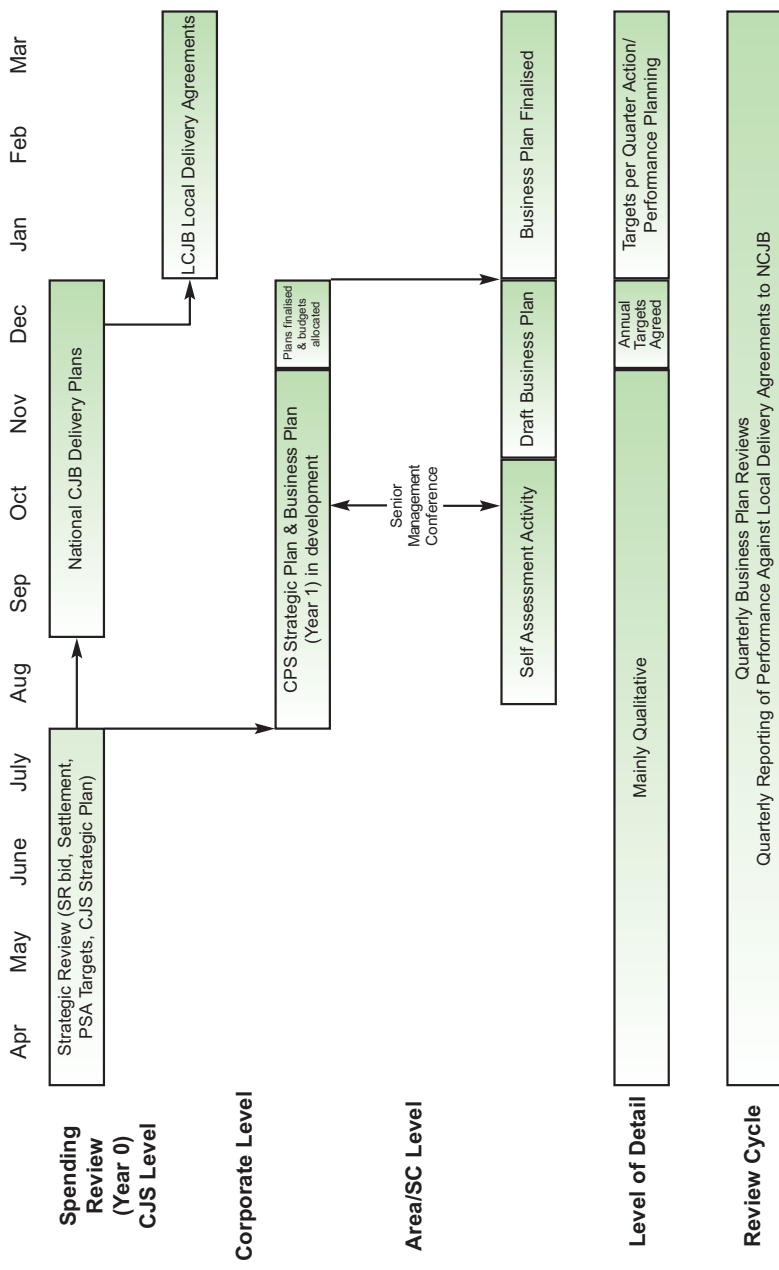
- 3.1 Planning has been likened to painting the Forth Bridge. The end is always in sight, but you never quite reach it. A new planning cycle always starts before the last one is over. Targets change, new ones are introduced. Additional resources become available (or do not) and new initiatives introduced. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, plans are always being updated and revised.
- 3.2 Although there are recognisable stages in the process, it is important to note that planning is iterative, as shown in **Figure 1**. This means that it should not be seen as a strict linear progression from one stage to the next. Instead, stages are revisited periodically, lessons learnt, and changes made in order to ensure that the plan remains pertinent and can be used as an effective management tool.

Figure 1: Flow chart showing the various stages of the planning process, and the links between them



- 3.3 Feedback from Areas and Service Centres to the Inspectorate suggests that a major obstacle to effective planning in the CPS is the issue of timing.
- 3.4 Good planning should always work to a timetable. Often the corporate centre will set out a broad timetable which guides the whole organisation through the planning cycle, setting out the key milestones to be achieved. There is no doubt that there are difficulties across the CJS in synchronising planning timetables, and, at the time of writing, work is underway to try and resolve this. However, despite these difficulties, there are a number of key dates and trigger points that impact on Area and Service Centre planning as shown in **Figure 2**. Areas and Service Centres may find it useful to draw a local timetable that is consistent with these dates, in order to synchronise, as far as is possible, their own planning activity.

Figure 2: Key Dates and Trigger Points in the Planning Timetable for CPS



- 3.5** Evidence collected as part of the *Thematic Review of Business Planning* shows that work on a significant number of business plans does not begin until Areas and Service Centres receive the minute from the Finance Directorate commissioning their production. The commissioning minute is generally not issued until the national business plan is (or is near to being) finalised. For a variety of reasons, including difficulties about timetabling planning across the CJS, the date for producing the national CPS plan can be delayed. Consequently, the time between commissioning the plans and requiring their submission (before the start of the next financial year) can often be compressed. Areas and Service Centres say that this allows them inadequate time to engage in a meaningful and comprehensive planning process.
- 3.6** While it is recognised that delays in finalising the national CPS plan do impact on local planning, this should not mean that Areas and Service Centres could not usefully begin parts of their own planning process at a much earlier stage. Indeed they must do so, if their plans are to be effective, and make a contribution to setting the national priorities at the annual Senior Management Conference in the autumn.
- 3.7** Advice on timetabling each stage of the planning process is provided throughout the following paragraphs.
- 3.8** It is vital to ensure that Area and Service Centre business plans are 'live' documents, and that they are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any change to national or local priorities. The process of producing an annual business plans is cyclical, many of the activities in developing the plan in the first year are repeated in subsequent years.
- 3.9** Currently, Areas and Service Centres are required to produce a one-year business plan. This is essentially an operational management plan, and should show in detail the activities for the next twelve months, how performance will be measured, how resources will be used, and who will be responsible for delivery.
- 3.10** However, Areas and Service Centres will also be mindful that the Spending Review covers a three year period, and so managers will also need to be looking to the longer term, and considering how they will contribute to the overall attainment of the Public Service Agreement targets over that same period. A review point in the current planning year should trigger the start of the planning process for the next period.

Areas and Service centres should not wait until January to begin the planning process for the next financial year.

i) Where are we now?

Self-assessment and evaluation

- 3.11** If there is an ideal place to start the planning process, then it is by considering 'where are we now?' The answer to this question will form the foundation of any plan. If there is no clarity about the current situation, then it is very difficult to determine what needs to be done in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Self-assessment can be time consuming, however the information that you gather will be of great benefit to you in both gaining a better understanding of the business, as well as giving you the knowledge required to identify the action that is necessary to achieve your objectives, and ensure delivery.

Planning Assumptions

- 3.12** In beginning to think about your current situation it is important to take time to clarify and record the assumptions upon which your plan is based. A good business plan will make these assumptions explicit within the documentation, either as part of an introduction, or in a stand-alone section. Thinking about and testing the assumptions throughout the planning process will help you put your situation, and therefore your business aspirations in context.
- 3.13** The issues that you might need to consider may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * **Is the *type* of work likely to change within the life of the plan?**
- * **Is the *volume* of work likely to change?**
- * **When will pay negotiations be settled, and what is the likely impact on the budget?**
- * **What is the likely impact of proposed new legislation?**
- * **What is the likely impact of any national projects/initiatives?**
- * **What is the likely impact of any known changes to staffing levels/accommodation/IT etc?**
- * **What are the CPS corporate assumptions and what assumptions are you making about local partners in the CJS?**

Self-assessment methods

- 3.14** Whatever method of self-assessment you undertake, it is good practice to try to include as broad a range of staff as possible. You will inevitably find that different parts of the organisation have different views about the way it operates, and as managers you will gain useful insights about your organisation from this knowledge.
- 3.15** As a lead in to self-assessment, your planning can be informed by considering the following general questions:

- * **To what extent have objectives and targets contained in current plans been achieved?**
- * **Are any outstanding objectives still relevant?**
- * **What new issues have arisen throughout the course of the year?**
- * **What issues are likely to feature next year?**
- * **What are the obstacles to achieving Area or Service Centre objectives?**

- 3.16** There are a number of different ways you can approach a self-assessment exercise. Different methods will require a different investment in terms of time. Areas and Service Centres should begin their self-assessment, and the overall planning process, at least six months before the start of the new planning cycle, that is, in September or October if not earlier. This allows sufficient time to undertake a comprehensive assessment, but does not build in too much of a delay before the results are acted upon as a part of the new business plan that will be operational from 1 April of the following year.
- 3.17** Reference has already been made to the links between the different stages in the planning process. It is important to remember that information coming out of the reviews of your existing plan, can also usefully inform the self-assessment that feeds into next year's business planning, see **figure 1**.
- 3.18** Work on self-assessment is not dependent upon the national CPS business plan, or any local CJS plans, being finalised. It can commence as a discrete exercise.
- 3.19** **Annex 2** describes the self-assessment methods that it is felt will provide most assistance to Areas and Service Centres. They are not mutually exclusive, and more than one approach could be used by any single Area or Service Centre.

What next?

- 3.20** Having conducted your self-assessment you will have acquired useful information about the organisation's strengths and areas for improvement, reference to both of which will inform your planning when you reach the stage of developing your action/delivery plans and risk management.
- 3.21** However, you will also need to prioritise the areas for improvement, since you are unlikely to be able to address all of the issues at once. You will need to develop improvement plans to address those issues that are high priority, and ensure that these are threaded through into your business plan.

ii) Where do we want to be?

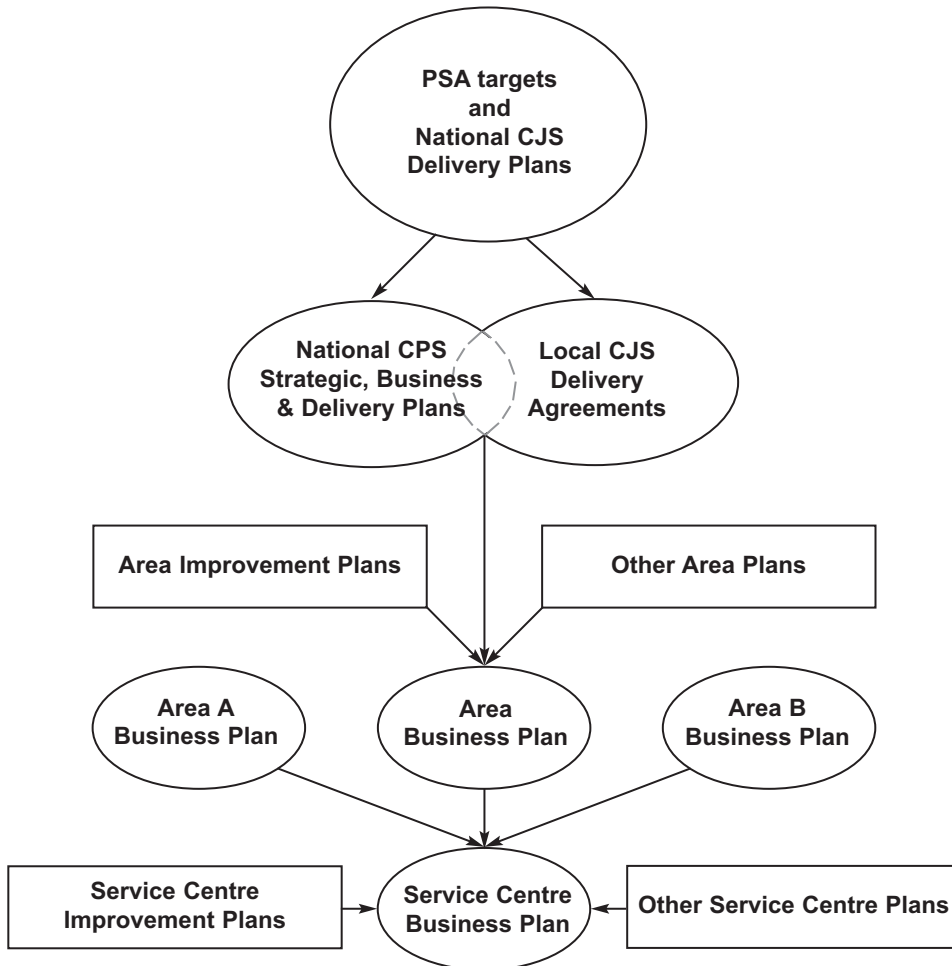
Objective setting

- 3.22** The objectives contained within your business plan will come from the following major sources:

- * **CJS PSA targets and LCJB local delivery agreements**
- * **CPS corporate strategic and business plan, and national delivery plans**
- * **Area or Service Centre improvement plans**
- * **Other project plans**
- * **(And for Service Centres) Family Group members business plans**

See figure 3

Figure 3: The major sources of Area and Service Centre business plans



Local Criminal Justice Boards

- 3.23** From April 2003 there will be a Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB) in each criminal justice area, comprising the Chief Officers of Police, Probation, Prisons, Youth Offending Teams, the Courts and the Crown Prosecution Service. The LCJB will replace the Area Criminal Justice Strategy Committees (and any pre-existing Chief Officers' group).
- 3.24** The purpose of the LCJBs is to improve the delivery of CJS targets in local areas, and there will be an explicit requirement on Chief Officers to work together to optimise their performance. Guidance on establishing LCJBs has been issued by the Criminal Justice Joint Planning Unit (CJJPU), which has responsibility for co-ordinating activity relating to the Criminal Justice Strategy and Business plans.
- 3.25** The national Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) will provide the framework of objectives and Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to be met, but the LCJBs will have the autonomy to determine *how* best to achieve them. They also will have the option to take forward action on any additional local priority issues.
- 3.26** The LCJBs will be directly accountable to the NCJB for the *delivery* of local performance targets, and will be required to report on achievement against targets on a quarterly basis. It is anticipated that through these arrangements, there will be greater accountability, and the Government can secure the step change in performance across the whole system that is necessary.
- 3.27** Chief Crown Prosecutors will have an essential role to play in the development of local delivery agreements, and will need to ensure that the Area plans effectively with its partners, and is able to play its full part in achieving the PSA targets that are set. Local CJS objectives that are 'owned' by the CPS, or in which CPS have a contribution to make, will need to feature prominently in the Area business plan.

CPS national plan

- 3.28** As part of a national organisation, both Area and Service Centre business plans will be expected to show how they will contribute to the attainment of the CPS corporate targets and implementation of major initiatives, such as the Race Equality Scheme. Therefore, there should be a clear link between the contents of the CPS national plans and those of the local business plans.
- 3.29** The CPS is a key member of the national CJB, and so there will be a high degree of congruency, between the contents of the national CPS plans (which will focus primarily on attainment of the CPS PSA targets) and those of the local CJS delivery agreement. Areas and Service Centres should find that objectives deriving from these sources are consistent, and compatible.

- 3.30** However, the national CPS business plan, in particular, may be broader in scope than the local CJS delivery agreement, and is likely to include specific organisational issues, and enabling activities to support improvements in performance. These would also need to be considered in local Area and Service Centre plans.
- 3.31** In the same way that the national CJB recognises the autonomy of the LCJBs, the CPS acknowledges the degree to which responsibilities have been devolved to Areas following the review of the CPS, undertaken by Sir Iain Glidewell. Whilst there is little flexibility for Areas and Services Centres about *what* they must achieve, the way in which they do so, the *how*, is a matter for local decision.

Timing issues

- 3.32** Earlier in this section reference was made to the difficulties experienced by Area and Service Centre because of the late finalisation of the national CPS plan. Similar difficulties may be caused in the future by delays in finalising local CJS agreements.
- 3.33** Although there is no doubt that the contents of both sets of plans have a huge impact on the contents of Area and Service Centre plans, their late finalisation should not preclude effective local planning taking place at an early stage.
- 3.34** Chief Crown Prosecutors (CCPs) and Area Business Managers (ABMs) have structured opportunities to contribute to the development of the national CPS strategic and business plans via a number of different CPS forums, in particular the senior management conference held in the autumn of each year.
- 3.35** Additionally, from April 2003 CCPs will also sit on LCJBs, together with other Criminal Justice Chief Officers, and will be jointly responsible for drawing up local delivery agreements.
- 3.36** Consequently, although the national CPS plan, and the local criminal justice delivery agreement, may not be finalised until towards the end of the previous planning year, Areas and Service Centres will have good quality information about their content some time in advance of publication and should ensure that this is threaded through into their local planning and informs their work at an early stage.
- 3.37** Clearly, Area and Service Centre plans cannot be signed off until the national CPS plan, and the local CJS delivery agreements have been finalised, and late amendments may need to be made in order to ensure absolute consistency.

Area and Service Centre improvement plans

- 3.38 Reference has already been made to the importance of including locally derived objectives relating to improvement activities that have been prioritised following the self-assessment activity conducted earlier in the planning process.

Other Area or Service Centre plans

- 3.39 Additionally, Areas and Service Centres will want to ensure that any other major programme of activity is considered as part of the overall business plan. This will include things such as work relating to the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme locally, local action planning following on from any HMCPSI thematic report national action plan, and re-accreditation as an Investor in People etc.

The business plans of Areas within the Family Group

- 3.40 Service Centres will additionally need to consider what other initiatives are necessary in order to support the work of the Areas within the family group.
- 3.41 Even if Area business plans are not finalised by the time Service Centres begin to firm up their own proposals, managers will be informed about probable support needs by information coming from the CPS nationally, and by regular attendance at family group meetings, and can include suitably drafted objectives in their plans.

Drafting objectives

- 3.42 Once you have identified your key objectives for the next twelve months, you will need to ensure that they are drafted in language that is meaningful to your staff, and that is unambiguous. A central principle of good planning is that objectives should be:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time bound

Specific

- 3.43 The objective should be described in unambiguous terms, so that everyone is clear about what is to be achieved. For instance, if the desired outcome is '**To ensure the effective delivery of justice**' you will need to think carefully about how this is defined. Therefore you might enlarge upon your original objective thus:

We will ensure the effective delivery of justice by:

- * Reducing the rate of cracked and ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts; and
- * Reducing the rate of late discontinuances (i.e. those not made at the earliest appropriate opportunity)

Measurable

3.44 All of the objectives included in your plan should be capable of measurement, so that you can demonstrate improvement. Targets will be set by CPS nationally and by the Local Criminal Justice Board. Areas and Service Centres should also set targets for any internally derived objectives.

To continue with the previous example:

We will ensure the effective delivery of justice by:

- * Reducing the rate of cracked and ineffective trials from **67%** to **40%**; and
- * Reducing the rate of late discontinuances (i.e. those not made at the earliest appropriate opportunity) from **20%** to **10%**

Achievable

3.45 All objectives must be stretching, but achievable. If they are unrealistic, those responsible for their attainment will quickly become demoralised, and commitment will wane.

A more realistic and achievable objective, may therefore be:

We will ensure the effective delivery of justice by:

- * Reducing the rate of cracked and ineffective trials from **67%** to **50%**; and
- * Reducing the rate of late discontinuances (i.e. those not made at the earliest appropriate opportunity) from **20%** to **14%**

3.46 Consequently, it is for managers to ensure that they participate effectively in the national CPS consultations about future priorities and objectives, and if necessary, open a dialogue if targets are proposed that are not achievable. Similarly, Chief Crown Prosecutors are in a strong position to ensure that local CJS delivery targets are set within realistic parameters.

Relevant

3.47 Objectives that do not appear to be relevant to the work of those charged with delivery stand little chance of being achieved. It will sometimes be worthwhile rewording national objectives into language that is more meaningful to those working at a local level.

Time bound

3.48 Not only do objectives need to be achieved within a defined time period, you will also want to set reviews at various points throughout the life of the plan, so that you can monitor progress towards a target. This is essential not only to be sure that you have the performance information with which to account to the National Criminal Justice Board and the CPS nationally, but also to enable you to identify difficulties at an early stage and take the appropriate remedial action. It is additionally very important in terms of staff morale so that you can recognise and acknowledge where progress is being made.

3.49 The example, therefore, becomes;

We will ensure the effective delivery of justice by:

- * Reducing the rate of cracked and ineffective trials from **67% to 50% by March 2004, with a mid-year target of 60% by October 2003;** and
- * Reducing the rate of late discontinuances (i.e. those not made at the earliest appropriate opportunity) from **20% to 14% by March 2004, with a mid-year target of 16% by October 2003**

iii) How are we going to get there?

Integrating risk management

3.50 As part of the Government drive for more effective business planning, Departments are expected to embed risk formally into the planning process. Every central Government organisation is required by the Treasury to make provision for Internal Audit which provides an important assurance about the adequacy of management's embedded risk and control mechanisms. This includes the CPS.

3.51 However, not only is robust risk management a requirement of central Government, it is also of critical importance in helping organisations to deliver their objectives and to meet agreed targets. The management of risk is regarded as an essential component of good planning and has now been recognised by the CPS as a necessary element in all Area and Service Centre business plans.

3.52 The benefits of risk management are numerous.

Risk management

- * **Helps you to anticipate the future and plan accordingly**
- * **Reduces the number of ‘surprises’ that impact on your business**
- * **Helps you to better manage the impact of unexpected events**
- * **Provides greater levels of safety, confidence and assurance**
- * **Reduces the number of direct costs resulting from failure to anticipate risks**
- * **Provides a more controlled balance between risk and opportunity**
- * **Provides greater clarity of responsibilities and ways to best manage risk**

3.53 Areas and Service Centres have been offered basic training on the subject of risk management and further, more detailed information, advice and written guidance, is available from Management Audit Services.

3.54 The analysis of risk needs to be planned and approached in a methodical manner. It is also important to adopt an approach that is proportionate and it is suggested that you try to prioritise your work on this issue.

Risk management is not a ‘once and for all’ activity; it is a process, not unlike planning itself. It helps you to understand the nature of your business, to identify obstacles that may impede the delivery of your objectives, and to manage your work better.

3.55 Although your self-assessment will have involved an element of risk assessment, the greatest investment of time is required at the point at which objectives have first been developed and agreed. Risk management is ongoing and pro-active, and needs to focus specifically on the organisation’s objectives.

- 3.56** Risk management, stated simply, asks you to consider your objectives and to answer the question ‘what are the potential barriers to success?’ You will need to think about what may get in the way of achieving your desired outcome, and to plan at an early stage in order to remove, or reduce the risk to an acceptable level. For each of your business objectives you will need to identify the *greatest* risks to delivery; do not list *every* risk you can think of, without regard to its size or impact, or indeed its likelihood.
- 3.57** Additional useful information could be obtained from the national CPS risk profile, which identifies risks for the whole organisation. It is also likely that the local Criminal Justice Board will have done some work on risk that could inform your work.
- 3.58** Guidance issued by the Cabinet Office suggests that organisations will probably find it helpful to appoint a senior individual to take overall charge of the risk management process, and to take responsibility for co-ordinating the work on it; a risk champion.
- 3.59** If sufficient preparation time has been allowed, then the majority of the initial work on this issue can be done in a specially convened meeting of the management team at Area or Service Centre level; a risk identification meeting.
- 3.60** Attendees of the risk identification meeting should be provided with a copy of all the business objectives, and asked to consider, before the meeting, what they perceive to be the risks to achieving each one. Unit managers and team leaders will probably find it useful to consult their staff about this, so that the feedback obtained is from as broad a range of people as possible.
- 3.61** Any risks identified should be submitted to the risk champion in advance of the meeting, so that a list, with issues appropriately grouped, can be drawn up for discussion at the proposed meeting of the management team.
- 3.62** The meeting will aim to:

- * **Agree the list of identified risks and where appropriate prioritise them according to severity (impact v probability)**
- * **Agree an appropriate response to each risk**
- * **Assess existing controls, and agree any further action that is required**
- * **Ensure that responsibility and timescale for the action has been allocated**
- * **Agree a mechanism for further review**

- 3.63** *Figure 4* shows an example of the level of detail that is appropriate in relation to the risk analysis in order to make it meaningful and practical. All risk analyses should be linked to the business objectives.

- 3.64 You will need to ensure that you actively manage the risks that have been identified. Further consideration will need to be given to potential risks each time the business plan is reviewed, or more frequently if the situation is evolving quickly.
- 3.65 From this work the risk champion will be in a position to draw up a risk register. This should be circulated for final comments and then appended to the business plan.

Figure 4: An example of risk analysis in relation to one business objective

National Objective	To ensure the effective delivery of justice		
Area objective/target:	To reduce the rate of cracked and ineffective trials from 67% to 50% by March 2004, with a mid-year target of 60 % by October 2003; and Reduce the rate of late discontinuances from 20% to 14% by March 2004, with a mid-year target of 16% by October 2003		
Risks (with probability/impact as H, M, L)	Counter Measures Actions to address risk (focusing on high and medium impact)	Responsibility and timescale for actions	
1. The quality of files received from the police continues to be low (H)	1. To meet with the Head of the police CJU on a monthly basis in order to analyse TQ1 returns with a view to identifying particular issues of concern and agreeing action.	1. CJU Head: attendance bi-monthly, and preparation of quarterly report to AMT (latter to commence Mar 03)	
2. The Court continues to triple list trials in order to meet its own performance targets (H)	2. To continue to attend quarterly court users' meetings and to present an analysis of the impact on CPS, witnesses, and other court users of the use of triple lists	2. ABM and CJU Head to share responsibility for attendance; analysis to be prepared by ABM; joint report to be available for AMT (to commence March 2003)	
3. There continues to be a lack of clarity regarding the implementation of the monitoring system for cracked and ineffective trials (M)	3. Convene early meeting with all agencies to clarify implementation of protocol on cracked and ineffective trial monitoring, and ensure regular review.	3. CJU Head to convene meeting before end of February 2003, and agree quarterly reviews as minimum for next year. Report to CCP on exception basis.	
4. The quality of on-going review is poor and does not improve (L)	4. Continue with implementation of casework quality monitoring system each month. Identify learning points for dissemination across the Unit, and implement any individual training or development needs identified.	4. CJU Head to undertake assessments on a monthly basis. Quarterly report to be prepared for CCP. CCP to promulgate learning points via Area Newsletter on a quarterly basis. Any learning points requiring immediate notification to be emailed to all staff by CJU Head.	

Action or delivery plans

- 3.66** Risk management and action planning are inextricably linked. In order to have maximum effect, risk management should be embedded into the business plan. Countermeasures that have been identified to address the 'top' risks to your objectives should be threaded through and included in your main action or delivery plans.
- 3.67** You will need to draw up an action or delivery plan for each of your **key** objectives. The overall effect of which will be to produce a picture of your main activities for the year, how they relate to your agreed objectives (and therefore how they link to the national CPS and local CJS objectives), how resources will be used, and the mechanism for measuring progress. The plans will also allocate responsibility for the achievement of the objective, and the targets contained in them. The issue of responsibility is particularly important in relation to delivery plans that are generated by the Local Criminal Justice Boards. Areas will be planning in collaboration with their criminal justice partners, and there will need to be total clarity about the responsibilities of respective organisations.
- 3.68** In order to ensure ownership of the proposals, and to make sure that the planned action is realistic and appropriate, the individual or group responsible for delivery should be involved in drafting the plan. Key responsibilities should be clearly reflected in Unit, team or individual forward job plans, as appropriate.
- 3.69** The management team will want to approve the final plan, and assure themselves that the resources allocated to it are realistic and affordable. If they are not, then the plan will either need to be revised, or managers will need to try and strike a balance between the outputs and resources by modifying the relevant objective and targets. The latter, is likely to entail further negotiations with the CPS nationally, or the local Criminal Justice Board.

Linking resources to planned activity

- 3.70** A key element in helping Areas and Service Centres reach their targets is ensuring that the resources available are deployed to best effect.
- 3.71** Areas and Service Centres are currently required to complete documentation for CPS Headquarters to show, in broad terms, how the centrally allocated administration costs budget will be broken down locally. They are also required to break this broad overview down into a detailed profile of staff and expenditure on a month-by-month basis. This information is to be submitted alongside the business plan.

- 3.72** However, the information provided to CPS Headquarters is not aligned to the **individual** activities, or groups of activities, contained within the plan. Evidence collected by HMCPSI shows that the link made by Areas and Service Centres between the discrete business objectives and the resources necessary to fulfil them is not generally made; on the whole Area and Service Centre budgets do not reflect the same range of activities as the plan.
- 3.73** Whilst the information is not required centrally, good planning practice suggests that a much clearer link should to be made between resources and planned activities.

The importance of integrating the budget with the business plan cannot be overemphasised. Business plans express activities in words, but the budget should describe those same plans in financial terms.

- 3.74** The link between objectives and financial resource allocation is essential to enable managers to match resources to activities. Any mismatch between the two should be apparent at an early stage, and so allow remedial action (either scaling down activity, or bidding for extra resources) to be taken at an early stage.
- 3.75** CCPs are now required to sign an assurance to the Chief Executive reinforcing their financial responsibilities and delegations. This increases the need for managers to actively manage their budgets, and match resources to planned activities that support the corporate aims of the CPS.
- 3.76** Best practice suggests that managers should have a good grasp and understanding of their resources, activities and costs, and the links between all three.
- 3.77** Consequently, business plan objectives and action plans should be costed in terms of both finances and human resources. This will become more important as CPS Headquarters exercises an increasingly more controlled and accountable financial delegation structure, as described above.
- 3.78** In its simplest form, one can take each objective or action and express it in terms of the resources expended on it. The example given (**Figure 5**) below illustrates the clear linkage between the corporate objective, through to the Area objective, and includes actions to be taken, as well as identifying the resources and training required.

Figure 5: Area Activity and Resource Plan

Corporate objective	To ensure the effective delivery of justice
Area Business Objective	To ensure the effective delivery of justice by reducing the rate of cracked and ineffective trials in the magistrates' court
Target	To reduce from the rate to 50% by March 2004
Current Performance	Current rate of cracked and ineffective trials is 67%
Actions	<p>To meet with Head of police CJU (monthly)</p> <p>To attend quarterly court users meetings and prepare analysis of impact of high rates</p> <p>To regularly review implementation of monitoring protocol with other agencies (quarterly)</p> <p>To undertake monthly casework quality monitoring, disseminate learning points, and identify training needs</p>
Resources	<p>CJU Head: 12 x 3 hours to meet police 2 x 2 hours court user meeting 4 x 1,5 hours to review protocol 12 x 3 hours to monitor case files and identify learning points/assess training/development needs</p> <p>ABM: 2 x 2 hours court user meeting 4 x 2 hours preparation of impact report</p> <p>CCP: 12 x 2 hours dissemination of learning points from case files/adverse case reports</p>
Training	Negotiating and influencing skills training CJU Head
Timescales	As set out in action/delivery plan
Responsibility	Lead CJU Head

Training and development plans

3.79 When considering the key elements of your action or delivery plans it is important to remember that, in this context, 'resources' is much broader than simply finances and personnel. You will also need to consider whether staff have the right training and abilities to carry out the actions described. Consequently you will need to consider training and development needs.

3.80 A good training and development plan will:

- * **Itemise the training priorities for the Area or Service Centre (having considered the potential risks to business objectives)**
- * **Align training and development activities to the objectives in the business plan**
- * **Set SMART training objectives**
- * **Incorporate a variety of learning methods**
- * **Cost the activities described**
- * **Identify how training and development will be evaluated.**

3.81 Training and development needs can be identified from a number of sources.

3.82 By following the action planning and resource budgeting processes outlined above, you will have built up a picture of the training and developments needs identified on an objective-by-objective basis.

3.83 Additionally, Regional Training Managers will be liaising with local Training Officers throughout the year, and will be able to provide information about any additional national training initiatives that will need to be integrated into local plans.

3.84 You will also wish to take note of any significant themes or trends emerging from staff mid-year reviews conducted by line managers, and ensure that these are threaded into your overall thinking about training needs at a relatively early stage.

3.85 It is good practice to pull together these different training and development needs in an Area or Service Centre training plan. This will help to refine and rationalise your thinking.

3.86 You will need to consider how the different needs can be met. There is a wide range of training methods available, and you will need to determine the most appropriate method for each of the identified needs.

3.87 It is at this point that you need to think about resourcing the training plan. This includes the direct cost of training, as well as the time staff will need to spend on training and development activities.

- 3.88** Once you have a clear idea of the cost of training, it is likely that you will need to prioritise according to the resources that you have available. You may need to consider taking a phased approach to some of the 'mandatory' training. You will need to balance carefully the risks inherent in according any training or development need a lower priority, when you make decisions of this sort. You will need to think about the consequences of not meeting a training or development need in a specific area.
- 3.89** Once you have agreed the training objectives for the year, you will need to think carefully about what you hope to achieve from each training event. How will it contribute to your business objectives? The Investors in People standards stress the need to evaluate training and you will need to consider how you will do this at an early stage. The training section at CPS Headquarters, has a template which can assist you with this.
- 3.90** Help and advice on all of these issues will be available from your Regional Training Manager.

iv) Monitoring and review of the business plan

- 3.91** It is important to note that regular monitoring and review should be built into the business plan from the outset. The management team will wish to check regularly how the Area or Service Centre is performing against the targets that have been agreed, and if necessary, take corrective action to improve performance. There is little value in writing a business plan, and then putting it away in a cupboard until the end of the year. The real benefit is in using the document as a working tool, to help you better manage the business, and so seek continual improvements in performance.
- 3.92** A robust monitoring system should ensure that your plan is a 'live' document. The more seriously managers take this year's plan, the more seriously other staff will engage in drawing up next year's plan.
- 3.93** The business plan should be reviewed at least once per quarter. More frequent reviews will be necessary if new targets are imposed, or if there are significant changes to your budget. A review should be commissioned whenever there is a significant change in circumstances.
- 3.94** To do this effectively, managers will need to ensure that the action or delivery plans are monitored and reviewed at regular intervals, and will wish to commission regular reports on progress in order to inform the overall review.
- 3.95** You may decide, over time, that reporting can be on an exception-only basis, with a formal report presented to the management team if there are difficulties or concerns that need to be addressed. However, whatever you decide in this regard, you are likely to want to see performance management information on all key issues at regular intervals.

- 3.96** Although it is still in its early stages, as the national CPS performance management framework becomes more established it will assist Areas and Service Centres to monitor their performance. The framework currently seeks to capture the high level measures that the CPS will use to assess its contribution to the relevant Public Service Agreement targets, as well as monitoring progress on other key CPS initiatives. Over time, information on an Area-by-Area basis will be provided by the Compass case management system, and from new personnel and finance systems that are currently being developed or procured.
- 3.97** Additionally some Areas are beginning to develop their own 'Balanced Scorecard' as a means of organising performance information and tracking progress towards the attainment of targets.
- 3.98** Part of your monitoring process will include gathering information about issues that may affect your work in the future, and may need to be considered in your risk management activities. You will want to ensure that you are aware of developments within your local community, at local CJS level, and nationally at CPS and CJS level.
- 3.99** Areas and Service Centres need to be aware that PSA targets span the three years to which the Spending Review settlement relates. Consequently, although they are only required to submit business plans covering a twelve month period, they will need to be thinking about years two and three, in order to ensure that they meet the targets within that timeframe.
- 3.100** The provision of performance management information will provide early warning of problems, or the likely outcome of failure. The management team should not simply note such issues, but must be prepared to take action in order to ameliorate the situation.

Plans should be monitored and reviewed regularly. This may lead you to revisit your original objectives, refine your action plans, renegotiate your targets, review your training plan, or revise the budget.

- 3.101** In this way the business plan will constitute a working document, and not just a statement of good intentions.
- 3.102** You should ensure that any changes to the business plan are carefully documented, and that amended copies are clearly identified. It is essential to either number or date each plan as it is revised.
- 3.103** Wherever possible you should share details of decisions taken in response to a business plan review, so staff can see how the planning process works in practice.

v) Communicating your business plan

- 3.104** Effective communication of your plan is vital if you are to secure commitment to it, and to ensure that every member of staff knows what will be expected from them in relation to it.
- 3.105** As each of the stages in the planning process has been described, opportunities to involve staff members have been highlighted. Although it is recognised that it is not appropriate to write plans by committee, nor is it efficient to consult everyone on all of the contents, it is helpful to try to include as wide a range of people as practicable at various points in the process. If you have been able to do this successfully, the final product will not come as a complete surprise, and will be viewed as the natural conclusion all the work that went before.
- 3.106** Regardless of the levels of participation, it is good practice to formally introduce the final plan. There are a number of different ways of doing this.
- 3.107** Although considerations of speed and convenience may encourage you to simply circulate the plan to all staff electronically, it is unlikely that this will be the most effective means of communicating your plan.
- 3.108** The ideal is for the most senior member of staff to convene a meeting with as many of the staff as possible and to introduce the key elements of the plan. More detailed briefings could take place at unit and team level. A full copy of the plan, and any relevant supporting plans, should be available to every member of staff, and managers should ensure that personal objectives contained within Forward Job Plans are aligned to the business objectives in a way that is meaningful. It is also useful to produce a summary of the business plan in an accessible format for individuals.
- 3.109** You will also need to give some thought to how you communicate the contents of your plan to other interested parties, in particular members of your local community, and any groups with which you work, or with which you wish to establish a working relationship. Again, the ideal approach would be to give a personal presentation about the plan, and its relevance for the particular audience. If this is not possible, then you might find it helpful to summarise your plan in a separate document that focuses on the issues of interest for the group concerned. It is unlikely that a full copy of the report will attract many readers from outside your own organisation.

4. The Format of Plans

- 4.1 When CPS Headquarters commissions Area and Service Centre business plans each year, a number of electronic templates are provided. It is important to use these in order to facilitate the central collation of information about budgets, staffing profiles and targets etc.
- 4.2 However, there is no prescribed format for the part of the business plan that documents objectives and the actions to achieve them, and Areas and Service Centres are free to choose how they present this information.
- 4.3 **Figure 6** provides a checklist of the key elements of a business plan. You may find it useful when considering whether your plan has addressed all the key elements of the planning process.

Figure 6: The Area/Service Centre Business Plan – Checklist of key elements

Summary	Key objectives and measurable performance indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Total resources available– current year and next	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Major developments and key issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction	How the Area/Service Centre contributes to the CPS, CJS objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
	How the plan was constructed (who involved, methods...)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	How the plan was/will be communicated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The arrangements for monitoring and review	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis of the current position	Summary of key findings of self-assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Current performance on key targets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective Setting, Action Planning, Activity and Resource Planning	Descriptions of main activities, relating to objectives:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Assumptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Target	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Current performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Actions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timescales	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risks	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Possible Appendices	Training Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unit plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Relevant service standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Risk Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	IIP action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	HMCSI post-inspection action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>
	LCJB Delivery plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Glidewell plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Conclusion

- 5.1** As additional pressures are brought to bear on the criminal justice system, there is a greater urgency to synchronise the many disparate activities of the various agencies to deliver holistic solutions and service improvements, whilst at the same time providing real value for money. CPS is a player that sits at the heart of the CJS and has undergone, and continues to undergo, major organisational changes in responding to those challenges.
- 5.2** However CPS will only succeed in whatever it sets out to do, if it plans for that success. Evidence from HMCPSI inspections and the thematic review of business planning suggests that the CPS can improve its business planning processes. Moreover, managers should be trained in business planning, empowered and made accountable to drive this process improvement.
- 5.3** This guidance sets out the basic principles of good business planning and particularly responds to the issues and problems faced by CPS staff and managers in relation to their experiences of business planning within the organisation.
- 5.4** It is hoped that the guidance and the forthcoming HMCPSI thematic report on business planning will contribute to raising awareness of the importance of, and act as a catalyst to, effective and improved business planning within the CPS.

Extract from HMCPSI Inspection methodology

Criteria: Leadership and governance

KEY REQUIREMENTS:

Leaders develop vision and values which lead to long term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours. In particular, working arrangements are in place which ensure that the Area is controlled and directed to achieve its aims and objectives consistently and with propriety.

Code	Defining elements: <i>What should that entail?</i>	Indicative evidence: <i>How might we know?</i>
L&G5	<p>Effective plans of action, which identify key issues, and which reflect CPS and CJS strategic priorities, and local needs, are in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appropriate stakeholders identified ➤ Evidence that appropriate analysis (e.g. of CPS and CJS priorities, and needs of stakeholders) has been carried out in drawing up plans ➤ Appropriate issues identified <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 2px; margin: 2px 0;"> Consider particularly actions needed to meet PSA and Delivery Agreement objectives and targets </div> ➤ Risk analysis forms part of business planning procedures ➤ Relevant risks have been identified, evaluated and managed ➤ Effective planning documents are in place that address relevant issues ➤ Objectives set that are realistic, specific, and assessable ➤ Timescales and responsibilities for action determined ➤ Appropriate strategies are contained within them, e.g. for provision for deployment of staff, use of financial resources, etc. ➤ Plans include provision for regular review and response to change

Self-assessment methods

SWOT analysis

This is a relatively straightforward approach, designed to ensure that ideas are generated and brought together under some specific headings that are helpful in identifying and dealing with issues. The headings are:

S trengths
W eaknesses
O pportunities
T hreats

Strengths and weaknesses involve looking internally at the organisation: opportunities and threats focus on trends and likely developments in the external environment.

There are a number of issues to bear in mind if considering using the SWOT analysis to inform self-assessment.

As with all self-assessment exercises it is helpful to include as wide a range of staff as possible. Some commentators suggest undertaking the analysis with a cross-grade focus group, and separately with the management team, and then sharing the outputs in order to make comparisons, and generate further debate.

Once you have generated lists under each of the SWOT headings, you will find it helpful to group them under broader issues (such as, 'people/human resources, health and safety, casework issues etc) to identify any common themes that emerge and start to prioritise them.

In facilitating an exercise of this sort you will want to ensure that participants reflect on the future as well as the present, so that you give proper consideration to opportunities and threats, and think about the impact of these on any identified weaknesses and strengths.

For example:

A strength might be that communication in the Area is excellent, primarily because all staff are based in one office.

You may have identified the move to co-located offices as an opportunity to shorten lines of communication with the police.

However the latter may impact on communication between CPS staff, and some attention will therefore need to be given to reviewing the communication strategy.

Areas and Service Centres may also find it helpful to supplement a SWOT analysis by undertaking a further analysis of their business using the framework provided by PEST (which looks at the impact of Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors) or PESTLE (which additionally looks at Legislative and Environmental factors). A similar process to that described above for the SWOT analysis should be used.

The Excellence Model

Managers may prefer to conduct a more structured review making use of the principles and techniques contained in the Excellence Model. Many Government departments are recognising the model's benefits and have begun using it to help them in their desire to seek continuous improvements in performance. Whilst not mandatory within CPS, the use of the model is being actively encouraged by the Cabinet Office, and by CPS Headquarters. Indeed significant investment has been undertaken by CPS to train staff in its use. Management Audit Services (MAS) are taking the lead in this and have undertaken work to adapt the model to fit the needs of the CPS, they also co-ordinate training for Areas and Service Centres. MAS are a source of practical advice and on-going assistance.

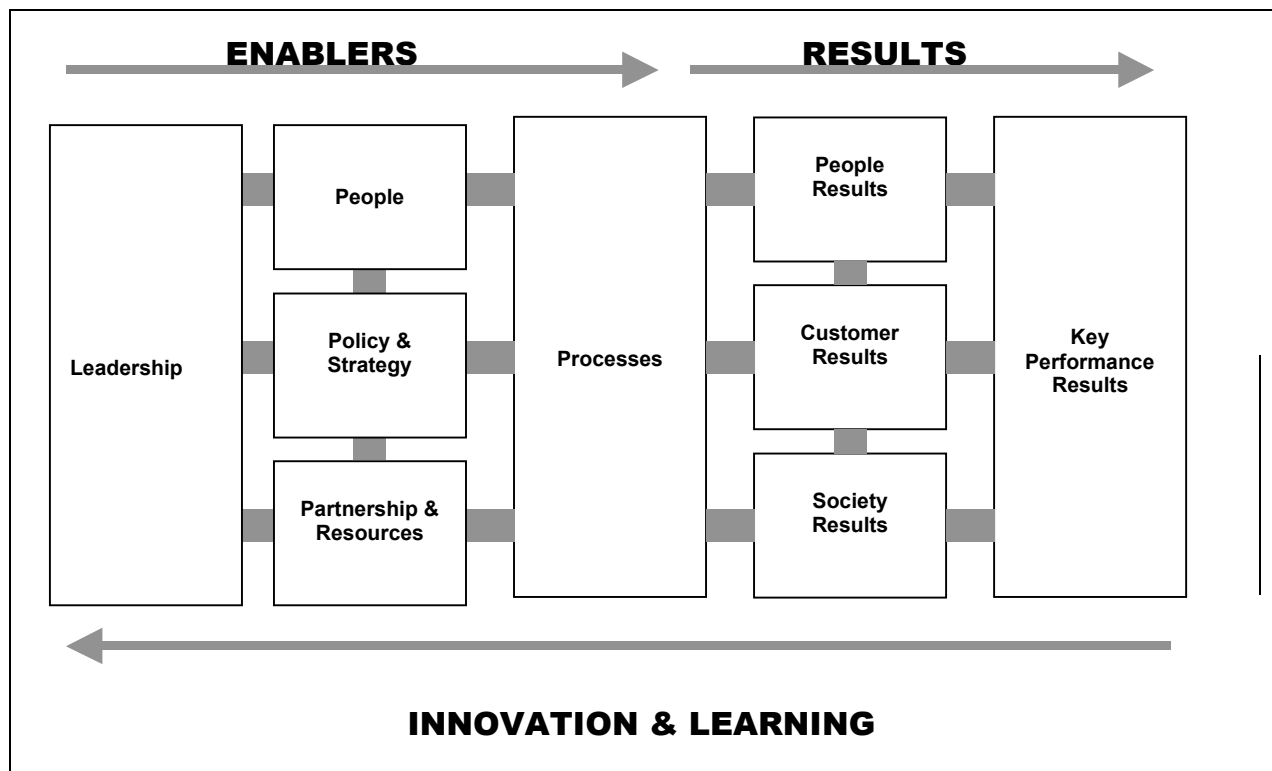
The Excellence Model is a powerful way of highlighting all the aspects that contribute to an organisation's success, and provides a framework for analysis and continuous improvement. However, it can be perceived as overly complex, and not particularly user-friendly if used in its entirety.

Whilst Areas and Service Centres can benefit enormously from undergoing self-assessment against the full model, it would be a relatively lengthy process and would need careful planning.

Fortunately, the model also lends itself to a more narrowly focussed self-assessment exercise, and managers may decide that they can use part of the model to focus their attention on issues of particular concern. MAS has done some work on adapting the model for use within the CPS.

The model is divided into five 'enablers' and four 'results' areas as shown in ***Figure 7***.

Figure 7: The Excellence Model



You may wish to focus your self-assessment on just two or three of the criteria initially.

For example:

- * Information that you already have may indicate that an area of concern relates to 'People'.
- * Results of the staff survey show low morale and high stress levels, you may also have data showing that you have poor staff retention and a high number of on-going grievances.
- * Alternatively, analysis of your performance against CPS targets, and recommendations in your last Area inspection report may suggest that there are weaknesses in your 'Processes'.

In order to determine where to focus your self-assessment activities you might also find it helpful to commission a survey to get the views of staff about priorities for improvement. MAS has developed a number of tools to assist with this.

Additionally, HMCPSI's new Framework for Inspection (published November 2002) is based on the Excellence Model. Areas (and Service Centres) may also find this useful as a basis for conducting their own self-assessment.

Inspection reports

At the time of writing all CPS Areas will have undergone an inspection by HMCPSI within about last two years. Inspection reports contain recommendations and suggestions aimed at securing improvements, as well as commendations and identification of good practice.

Managers will find that a close reading of their own inspection report will provide a useful overview of the Area, and so aid a comprehensive self-assessment. Your post-inspection action plan could provide the foundation of any improvement plans.

HMCPSI also publish thematic and joint reports on a variety of issues such as, casework with a minority ethnic dimension, custody time limits and the investigation and prosecution of cases involving allegations of rape. A full list of the thematic and joint reports published by the Inspectorate is attached at **Annex 3**. In terms of self-assessment, Areas (and Service Centres, where appropriate) will benefit from comparing their own procedures against those recommended in all the thematic reports, to test for robustness.

The new framework for Area inspections cites implementation of recommendations in thematic reviews as indicative evidence that various standards have been met.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking, in its purest form, is a systematic attempt to compare your business with other organisations, or with different parts of your own organisation. It is essentially a tool for improving performance, but information gained from it can also be used periodically to inform your self-assessment. Rather than looking at overall performance it will focus on performance in particular key areas. It can include comparing hard data about performance, as well as sharing information about processes.

A Service Centre may wish to internally benchmark the processes used by its different teams to respond to customer queries

Internal benchmarking, comparing the performance of one part of your organisation (say a team or Unit) with another is relatively resource efficient, and represents good value for money.

When benchmarking is used it is important that it is introduced in a way that engenders constructive debate, rather than fierce competitiveness.

Through benchmarking, best practice can be identified, and lessons learned about where improvements can be made.

The performance management information system currently being developed by CPS Headquarters is likely to be a very important reference point that will assist with benchmarking between different Areas, and between Service Centres. The information system will provide the data on performance against targets, and in relation to major CPS projects or initiatives. Areas and Services Centres can access the information through the CPS intranet.

However, benchmarking is arguably at its most powerful when it is used to compare your performance with that of another organisation that carries out similar activities. This is likely to give you access to thinking and innovation that is not available internally, as units within an organisation tend to adopt similar approaches and methods.

A Service Centre may wish to externally benchmark its processes for responding to customer complaints with another customer service organisation, such as a team within a Local Authority.

Peer review

Peer review is described in the Civil Service Reform Report as a means by which one civil service department can review the planning processes of another.

However, reference to 'peer review' within the current context is defined as one CPS Area or Service Centre providing an assessment of the performance of another, or with another organisation with similar characteristics. This might be an overall assessment, or could be more narrowly focussed on a particular area that had been identified as requiring further attention.

This is a helpful mechanism for spreading good practice and learning from one's peers.

A Trial Unit may wish to invite another similarly sized Trial Unit to undertake a peer review of some of its processes and systems.

Peer reviews have been successfully conducted within the CPS, and further information is available from MAS.

HMCPST Thematic Reports

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date</i>
Cases involving Child Witnesses	Jan 1998
Cases involving Domestic Violence	May 1998
Advice Cases	Sep 1998
Adverse Cases	Jun 1999
Evaluation of Lay Review & Lay Presentation	Aug 1999
Advocacy & Case Presentation	Feb 2000
Disclosure of Unused Material	Mar 2000
Performance Indicator Compliance & Case Outcomes	Jul 2000
Casework with a Minority Ethnic Dimension	May 2002
Custody Time Limits	Aug 2002
Road Traffic Cases Involving Fatalities	Dec 2002

Joint Inspection Reports

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date</i>
How Long Youth Cases Take (with HMIC & HMMCSI)	May 1999
Casework Information Needs within the CJS (with HMIC, HMMCSI, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, SSI)	Apr 2000
Implementation of s.1 of the Magistrates' Courts (Procedure) Act 1998 (HMMCSI Report, contributed to by HMCPST & HMIC)	Nov 2000
Progress Made in Reducing Delay in the Youth Justice System (with HMIC & HMMCSI)	Feb 2001
Investigation and Prosecution of Cases Involving Allegations of Rape (with HMIC)	Apr 2002
Joint Follow-up Inspection of the Progress Made in Reducing Delay in the Youth Justice System (with HMIC & HMMCSI)	May 2002
Joint Inspection of the Handling of Discharged Committals in the West Midlands Area (with HMIC & HMMCSI)	Sept 2002
Safeguards for Children (Social Services' Inspectorate report, contributed to by HMCPST)	Oct 2002
Listing: Creating the Virtuous Circle (with HMIC & HMMCSI)	Oct 2002

Sources of Further Help

Management Audit Services for general advice and guidance on all aspects of business planning, but particularly on self-assessment tools and techniques, peer review and risk management.

Regional Training Managers for information and advice about training and development plans.

Public Sector Benchmarking Service for further information about benchmarking
<http://www.benchmarking.gov.uk>

HM Treasury, Risk Support Home page, contains information about managing risk in the public sector <http://hm-treasury.gov.uk>

Information on the **Balanced scorecard** can be found at <http://www.balancedscorecard.org>

References

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Management of risk, a strategic overview – with supplementary guidance for smaller bodies, HM Treasury 2000

Establishing Local Criminal Justice Boards, Criminal Justice Joint Planning Unit, 2002

Strategic management and business planning in the public sector, Robert J Smith, 1994

The definitive business plan, Richard Stutely, 2002.

Risk: Improving government's capability to handle risk and uncertainty, HM Treasury, November 2002