

Foreword

First impressions may be that now is not the right time to think ahead and do strategic planning. Across the globe different social, political and economic events are creating a high degree of uncertainty. To these are added in some places natural catastrophes on a sometimes unprecedented scale. Public service organisations often bear the brunt of the dislocation and uncertainty that follow from such events. Seeking to conserve scarce resources and at the same time respond to new demands, public service organisations are incentivised to focus on the present. Why engage in strategic planning when the preservation and allocation of the annual budget poses such a daunting challenge?

The purpose of this guidance is to encourage public service organisations to lift their attention from the present, and contemplate the future. In doing this they need not try to predict the future; instead they are encouraged to sketch out possible scenarios and consider how the organisation would respond. Starting from a good understanding of the current financial situation and an assessment of the most likely plausible scenarios, the organisation can stress test its performance against these different scenarios and develop its medium- to longer-term financial planning.

This publication concludes by explaining the role of the chief finance officer in providing the innovation and leadership needed for strategic financial planning to succeed.

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