



Corporate and  
Business Plans

2004-05-  
2005-06

Planning  
Service

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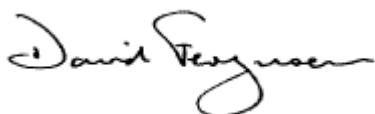
## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Planning Service's Corporate and Business Plans for the period from 2004/05 to 2005/06, the first since my appointment as Chief Executive of the Planning Service.

As is evident from our Plans, we have a significant programme of work to deliver in the coming year, not only in determining the ever increasing numbers of planning applications we receive, but also in taking forward our Area Plan and Planning Policy programmes. At the heart of all our work is the major programme of change set out in the *Modernising Planning Processes* Implementation Plan, which is being taken forward under the auspices of *Planning to Deliver*. A tremendous amount of effort has already been invested over the past number of years in bringing the Planning Service to where it is today, and I hope to continue to encourage this dedication throughout the remainder of the change programme.

We are committed to fundamental reforms that will deliver real improvements in services, and *Planning to Deliver*, our 3-year modernisation programme, is providing us with the tools to make better quality service a reality. The implementation of all the aspects of *Planning to Deliver* will ultimately be of benefit to both our customers and the organisation.

The Corporate and Business Plans set out an ambitious agenda, and both I and my colleagues look forward to meeting these challenges in the coming year.



**DAVID FERGUSON**  
Chief Executive

## Map of Divisional Planning Offices



## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Our Services**

We are an agency of the Department of the Environment. Our three key business areas are:

- the Development Control process (the system for dealing with individual planning applications), including enforcement;
- the formulation of planning policy for Northern Ireland;
- the preparation of Development Plans.

The purpose of the planning system is to regulate development and land use in the public interest. Our planning functions are set out in the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

### **1.2 Our Organisation**

Our Management Board members are:

David Ferguson – Chief Executive  
Ian Maye – Director of Corporate Services  
Pat McBride – Director of Operations  
Pat Quinn – Director of Plans and Policy

Planning Service currently employs about 700 staff. However, we are continuing to recruit, and by the end of this business year we plan to have approximately 800 staff in post. We provide our services through a network of 6 Divisional Planning Offices, 2 sub Divisional Planning Offices and Planning Service Headquarters, which is based in Belfast. We work under the terms of a framework document, which sets out our relationship with the Department and with the Minister.

### **1.3 Planning to Deliver**

Since its creation in 1973, Planning Service has faced and overcome many challenges. However, in recent years we

have witnessed enormous social and economic change across Northern Ireland. The pace of physical development has quickened, which has led to a rapid and sustained increase in the volume of business we deal with, and the environmental regulation and legislative framework we operate within has become increasingly complex.

In order to respond to the many challenges we face, we must embrace and deliver change. That is why we are committed to developing a modern, co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates economic, social and environmental need, delivered by an organisation which is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is what *Planning to Deliver* is all about.

We are entering the second year of this three-year change programme, and are moving forward by making significant changes to our management structure, processes, technologies, organisation and culture. Reinforcing this is a major e-Planning project, which will deliver the full range of planning services electronically by the end of 2005. Funded by the Executive Programme Funds, the implementation of e-Planning will be a major step towards the provision of simpler, faster and more accessible planning processes. It will offer significant benefits to members of the public, to our stakeholders, and to our staff.

The overall objective of the change programme is to ensure that we deliver good quality services and achieve our targets, both now and in the future. We are committed to the delivery of this fundamental and necessary change.

# **The Planning Service**

## **Corporate Plan**

**2004/05 – 2005/06**

## **The Corporate Plan 2004/05 – 2005/06**

### **2.1 The Planning Context**

The *Planning to Deliver* programme, which includes the process changes detailed in the *Modernising Planning Processes* Implementation Plan, is a central focus of our Corporate and Business Plans.

Our service, and the way we provide that service to our customers, needs to be modernised. *Planning to Deliver* is enabling us to achieve this reform, ensuring simpler, faster and more accessible planning processes.

#### **Northern Ireland Priorities and Budget 2004-2006**

The Government's priorities and associated budget allocations are set out in *Priorities and Budget 2004-2006*, which was published in January 2004. At the heart of the Government's priorities lies a commitment to reform and modernise public services. The *Priorities and Budget* document contains plans drawn up by each Department setting out the main outcomes to be achieved. These are identified within their Public Service Agreements (PSAs), which also reflect the activities they will carry out to deliver modernisation and reform.

#### **Departmental Corporate and Business Plan and Service Delivery Agreement**

To support the Government's *Priorities and Budget*, each Department prepares their own Corporate and Business Plan, which includes a Service Delivery Agreement. Both the Departmental Corporate and Business Plans and the Service Delivery Agreement set out the actions to be taken to ensure delivery of our targets and objectives for the 2004/05 business year.

## 2.2 Our Aim, Vision and Values

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of the people of Northern Ireland by planning and managing development in ways which are sustainable and which contribute to creating a better environment.

Our vision is of an organisation which:

- earns respect and trust;
- delivers high quality and timely decisions and services;
- is open and in touch;
- works together;
- values its people;
- works with and learns from others;
- makes the best use of resources.

Our values are:

- integrity and honesty;
- objectivity;
- political impartiality;
- fairness;
- professionalism;
- courtesy.

## 2.3 Long Term Targets

Our long-term targets, as agreed by the Minister of the Environment, Angela Smith MP, are set out below. These targets are also set out in the DOE Public Service Agreement, which is contained in the Government's *Priorities and Budget 2004-2006* document. They are:

- to reduce the target time taken to process planning applications to decision (or withdrawal) from 70% within 17 weeks to 70% within 15 weeks by 2006/07<sup>1</sup>;
- to reduce the target time taken to process residential applications to decision (or withdrawal) from 70% within 16 weeks to 70% within 14 weeks by 2006/07;
- to reduce the target time taken to process commercial applications to decision (or withdrawal) from 70% within 19 weeks to 70% within 18 weeks by 2006/07;
- to reduce the target time taken to process industrial applications to decision (or withdrawal) from 70% within 18 weeks to 70% within 17 weeks by 2006/07.

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding Article 31 applications. A separate target for this category of application will be set by September 2004.

## **2.4 Current and Future Issues**

We are committed to focusing not only on the targets outlined in our Business Plan, but also on wider issues that have significant implications for our work. These include:

- our contribution to delivering the Government's Waste Management Strategy in Northern Ireland;
- facilitating the delivery of sewage treatment infrastructure; and
- expediting major planning applications, dealt with under Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

We will continue to work in conjunction with Environmental Policy Group, Environment and Heritage Service, Water Service, Roads Service and other relevant Government Departments to progress work in these areas.

## **2.5 Financial Resources**

We strive to make effective and efficient use of resources provided through the budget and receipts from planning application fees. The latter was the subject of the consultation paper on the Review of Planning Fees, issued under the auspices of the *Modernising Planning Processes* Implementation Plan in June 2003. The review examined the scope of the costs being recovered by the Planning Service and our key consultees. It also brought forward proposals for simplifying the fee structure. The outcome of the review and the subsequent public consultation will be reflected in Planning Fees Regulations, which will be brought forward during this business year and which will be operative from April 2005.

Our budget allocations for this year and next year are set out below. Last year's figures are also shown for comparative purposes.

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Planning Service	23.2m	25.6m	26.0m

## **2.6 Risk Management**

In line with corporate governance, the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer for the Agency, will have to sign a Statement of Internal Control in relation to the Planning Service Annual Report and Accounts 2003/04. We are committed to improving the way in which we work and manage our business, and part of this improvement is ensuring that we have effective risk management arrangements in place.

The Agency Risk Register fulfils this role by identifying the key risks, those responsible for ensuring that these risks are managed, and the action that will be taken to manage risks. Risk management is taken forward as part of the business planning process, and, like the Agency Business Plan, is monitored on a quarterly basis.

# **The Planning Service**

## **Business Plan**

**2004/05**

## Planning Service Business Plan 2004/05

### 3.1 Balanced Scorecard

The Planning Service Balanced Scorecard outlines the Agency's strategic objectives for the 2004/05 financial year.

<p><b>PEOPLE</b></p> <p>To ensure that Planning Service has well-motivated people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.</p>	<p><b>CUSTOMER</b></p> <p>To improve the level of customer satisfaction, particularly with the timeliness of all planning decisions.</p>
<p><b>RESULTS</b></p> <p>To make speedier planning decisions.</p>	<p><b>PROCESSES</b></p> <p>To streamline and improve the planning decision making process.</p>

### 3.2 Quadrants

#### People

**Strategic Objective: To ensure that Planning Service has well-motivated people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.**

In line with this objective, in 2004/05 we will do the following:

Target	Date
Develop and implement a Human Resources Strategy	March 2005
Develop and implement an Accommodation Plan	March 2005
Develop and implement a Communications Strategy	March 2005

## Customer

**Strategic Objective: To improve the level of customer satisfaction, particularly with the timeliness of all planning decisions.**

Target	Date
Increase current customer satisfaction levels by 10%	March 2005

## Results

**Strategic Objective: To make speedier planning decisions.**

Target	Date
Process 70% of all planning applications to decision (or withdrawal) within 17 weeks <sup>1</sup>	March 2005
Process 70% of all residential planning applications to decision (or withdrawal) within 16 weeks	March 2005

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<sup>1</sup> This target excludes Article 31 applications. A separate target for this category of application will be set by September 2004.

## Results (continued)

Process 70% of all commercial planning applications to decision (or withdrawal) within 19 weeks	March 2005
Process 70% of all industrial planning applications to decision (or withdrawal) within 18 weeks	March 2005
Adopt 3 Area Plans <sup>1</sup>	December 2004
Publish 4 draft Area Plans <sup>2</sup>	March 2005
Publish 4 Planning Policy Statements <sup>3</sup>	March 2005

## Processes

**Strategic Objective: To streamline and improve the planning decision making process.**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Date</b>
Implement year 2 of the <i>Modernising Planning Processes</i> Implementation Plan	March 2005

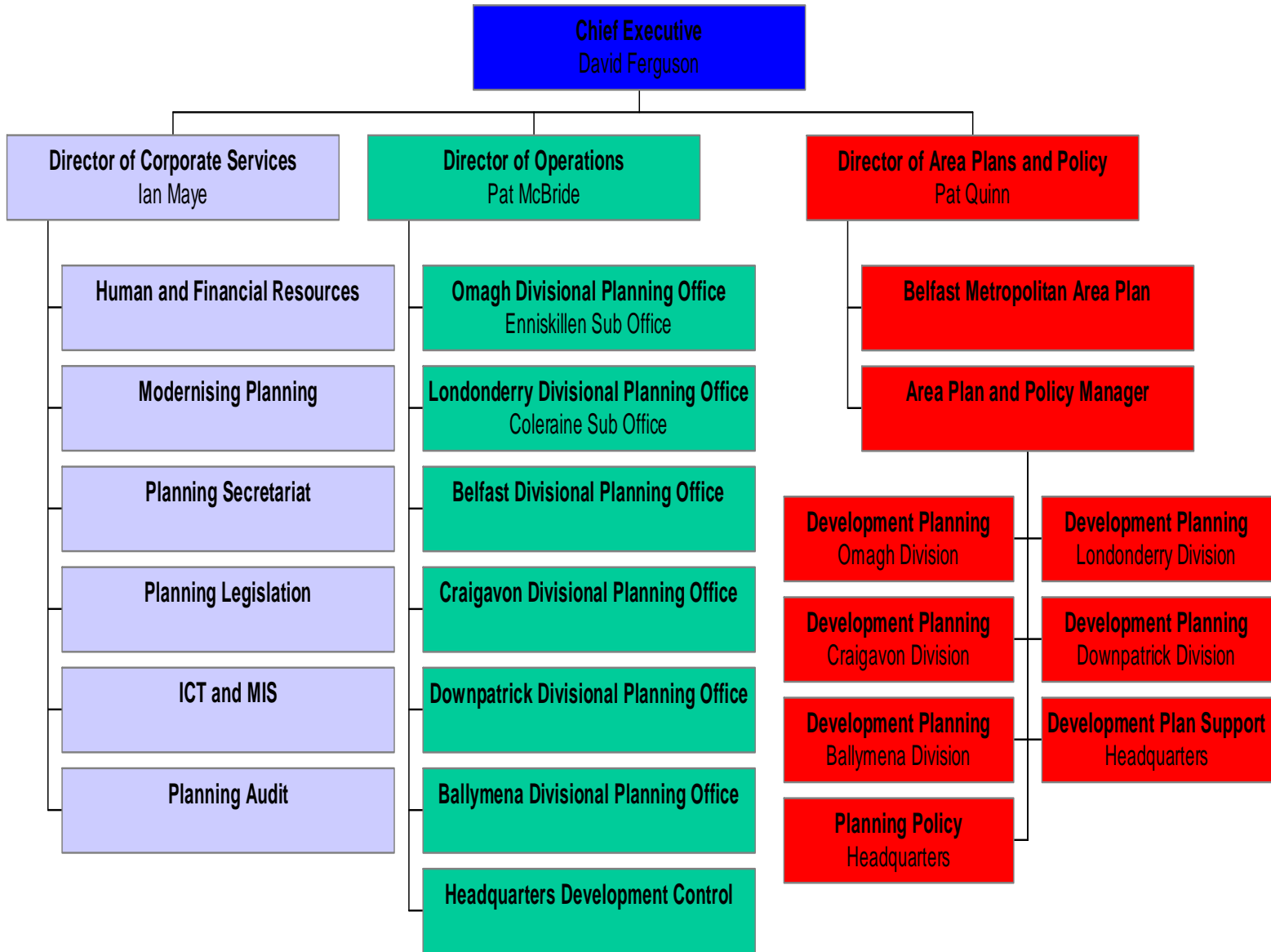
<sup>1</sup> The adopted Area Plans will be the Cookstown Area Plan, the Craigavon Area Plan and the Dungannon Area Plan.

<sup>2</sup> The published draft Area Plans will be the Draft Magherafelt Area Plan, the Draft Northern Area Plan, the Draft BMAP and the Draft Newry & Mourne and Banbridge Area Plan.

<sup>3</sup> The published PPS's will be PPS3-Access, Movement and Parking, PPS4-Industry, Business and Distribution, PPS17-The Control of Outdoor Advertisements and PPS6 (Addendum)-Areas of Townscape Character.

# Appendix 1

## Organisational Chart



## Appendix Two

### PLANNING SERVICE RESOURCES 2004/05 – 2005/06

	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>
	£m	£m
<b>Admin/DRC</b>	20.3	20.4
<b>Depreciation/Capital Charge</b>	0.5	0.5
<b>Other Resource/Programme</b>	4.2	4.5
<b>Capital</b>	0.6	0.6
<b>Receipts</b>	-11.5	-11.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.3</b>

## **Appendix Three**

### **Cross Cutting Issues**

#### **Equality of Opportunity, Human Rights and New Targeting Social Need**

The Planning Service is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity and good relations is at the forefront of all its policies and programmes. It also strives to ensure that Human Rights implications of proposed policies and legislation are reviewed to ensure that proposals are compatible with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

We will contribute to the Department's progress report on commitments contained within the Department's Equality Scheme, and will also provide input to the revised New TSN Action Plan covering the period April 2004 – March 2005, which is being produced by the Department. We are also committed to the values and aims contained in the Executive's Victims Strategy and will, where appropriate, consult victims' groups about major policy proposals.

#### **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

The Planning Service Management Board will monitor performance and review progress against key objectives and targets on a regular basis.

Following the end of the financial year, the Chief Executive will publish an Annual Report and Accounts. The Report will review the Agency's activities during the year and will comment specifically on progress in relation to our strategic objectives and achievements against our performance targets.