

Consultation Feedback From Directors & Forward Plan Contacts

Director of Resources

I am not entirely clear as to why this has been selected as a topic for review, or what such a review could achieve. However, clearly the FP is an important document and if it can be improved that is welcomed.

The reality is that there will always be many decisions that are added late - and I think expectations need making clear at beginning of such a review that you will never actually get the amount of decisions that are added late down to merely the exception. Very often the late decisions are also the most sensitive/significant.

We also need to make clear that there are often very valid reasons why things are either added late, or are deferred - given some recent reports that were deferred seemed to attract more interest than would otherwise have been anticipated.

Forward Plan Contact For Neighbourhood Services

In an ideal world it would seem sensible that the report writer submit their own entry on to the draft FP as they have all the necessary information at hand. As the FP Contact, there is no problem using the system once the correct information is received from the officers. In order to do this in a consistent way I've produced a form for them to use.

It is virtually impossible for Neighbourhood Services to put reports on the FP up to 4 months in advance - much of what we submit is reactive and reports are produced as and when required. I'm usually more or less to the very latest deadline when submitting reports, although this may change once when the new Director arrives.

The main reason our reports are pulled or deferred is because the required information is not available to us in time to include in the report or the situation requiring the report has changed in the meantime. It is also useful to have the FP published every two weeks as it acts as a reminder. Shocking I know, but the FP is not at the forefront of my mind on an average working week.

Director of Learning, Culture & Children's Services

Submitting entries 4 months in advance is not practical as it doesn't reflect the day to day nature of the world we operate in.

Director of Housing & Adult Social Services

Submitting entries 4 months in advance is fine in principle as some issues can be anticipated as regular items, but around 2 months is more realistic and would presumably reduce the number of changes needed as timescales slip/situations change etc. Even so, there will always be some issues that cannot be anticipated and crop up at short notice.

In regard to the frequency of publishing the FP, fortnightly seems much too frequent and I would have thought that monthly would be sufficient. It also seems to be overly complicated and a time-consuming process to amend entries. I can't say precisely

how many times we do need to change an item (less since EMAPs ceased), but I think this process should be made simpler.

Response from Service Manager (a regular report author)

System -

I tried to use the system when it first came on stream. I recall you coming to our DMT meeting. Unfortunately I couldn't understand it. I'm not the best with IT anyway, so very quickly gave up - and haven't returned. I just didn't have the time or motivation to use it.

(I assume) most users will only need to place items onto whatever FP (Exec, EMDS) very infrequently. Therefore its not like you are likely to start to learn the system by becoming familiar with it through continual use.

You might tell me that the system is now working - if so I'd welcome having another go at it - but to be honest its a lot easier for me as a user to send stuff to Kate as I know she will get whatever I need onto the system.

FP -

You guys clearly see the FP as important - its your bread and butter. But in reality I never give it a moment's thought (and I suspect I'm not alone). I'm too busy just getting on with the day to day work trying to keep head above water to worry about something as high level as the FP. When I'm planning some work I will have a think about when I will need a decision taken - and at that point I'll maybe think about the FP. But for most of the time its not relevant.

4 Months Warning -

Blimey. Not sure who came up with the 'statutory regulations' but I suspect they don't work here.

We can probably get together a programme of very boring stuff that needs to be done regularly - say Performance reports, or decisions needed by the Assistant Director to keep his policies up to date - and these could be placed on the FP a long time in advance. But anything beyond that and it seems to me that 4 months is hopelessly optimistic - projects just don't come together as you'd want and things crop up that need decisions.

If there wasn't any flak if something was deferred then might not be a problem - but given the political nature of the stuff we do I'd be very cautious about over promising - I'd rather not place something into the public arena until I'm sure I can deliver it. Then if I can't deliver I'm not going to get into political hot water.