

ANSA Digital: Strategic Planning



Document current reality

A Strategic Plan will already exist for your organisation and is likely to be reasonably up-to-date. It will present your organisation's strategy for achieving your identified outcomes and ambitions that is aligned to your mission to meet The Grand Challenge.

Even though it will be reasonably up-to-date, recent events and digital discoveries could mean that aspects may need to be refreshed or strengthened.

The first stage will be to document your organisation's current reality, which should also consider the reality of your partners and key stakeholders.

There are various tools available to achieve this but a simple SWOT session (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is transparent, productive and can quickly lead to consensus.

Transparency is important as your relationships within your organisation and with partners, key stakeholders and external influencers, could have complex interactions. This may include the influence of sub-national transport bodies and early steps towards devolved powers.

ANSA Digital can run SWOT sessions tailored to your organisation to help capture your current reality and then undertake the subsequent analysis and reporting.

To make your Strategic Plan more robust and to broaden its ownership it is useful to involve representatives that can provide more local and operational inputs as well as strategic inputs.

The SWOT analysis is used to establish common groupings and to critique the findings into summaries that can be more easily shared.

It provides a 'telescopic' look at the big picture and further into the distance, as well as a 'microscopic' look at the detail.

The SWOT analysis helps build alignment through the 'why?', 'what?' and 'how?' questions baked into your strategy, and the lineage to your organisation, partners, key stakeholders and external influencers.

The top priorities identified by the SWOT analysis will assess how your organisation can: build on strengths; overcome weaknesses; exploit opportunities; and eliminate or minimise threats.

Strengthen governance structure and terms of reference

The SWOT analysis provides the new baseline against which to check the governance of your organisation's planning services.

As the governance and its terms of reference are likely to be reasonably well established this may be a relatively trivial exercise but nonetheless worth a check.

Gather customer requirements

A key step in the strategic planning process is to undertake a 'requirements gathering' exercise to develop a thorough understanding of the different 'voices' across your organisation's planning services, including: partners and key stakeholders; the public (for example through a citizen's panel); central and local government; private sector; academia; and other external influencers.

Such 'customer' requirements are likely to be known by your planners and other officers and the SWOT sessions will have built a first draft of requirements. However, a refresh would be prudent due to the significant changes we are experiencing and to consider the transition to future mobility.

ANSA Digital can bring help explore more contemporary and digital options as well as help manage this exercise including arranging and facilitating numerous digital sessions with external organisations.



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Refresh The Grand Challenge & outcome priorities

It is likely that The Grand Challenge and desired outcomes will be reasonably up-to-date and should in fact be a key input to the SWOT analysis. As such it may only require checking and a relatively minor refresh.



Refresh strategic & economic ambitions

It is also likely that your organisation's strategic and economic ambitions will be reasonably up-to-date and should also be key inputs to the SWOT analysis.

However, your shorter term outcomes and ambitions are likely to have significantly changed and therefore may require more effort and a further round of engagement with partners, key stakeholders and external influencers.

Refreshing the outcomes and ambitions ideally needs to be led by your organisation if resources are available and therefore ANSA Digital could provide a facilitation and advisory role.

The update to The Grand Challenge, outcomes and ambitions should be seen as an extension to the SWOT analysis to help maintain alignment through the plan and to update the top priorities.

Strengthen governance framework

Due to the complexities of rapidly changing traveller behaviours and outcome priorities an area that may need more significant strengthening is your governance framework, in particular for shorter term outcomes.

The governance framework represents the decision making process for policies and investment plans.

A similar framework has recently been developed for the North of England, which has referenced other organisation's frameworks like Highways England, Network Rail and

Sheffield City Region. This may provide a useful reference or template to strengthen your governance framework.

Strengthening your governance framework ideally needs to be led by your organisation if resources are available and therefore ANSA Digital could provide a facilitation and advisory role.

Update policy positions & delivery programmes

Close working with your planners and partners, key stakeholders and external influencers will be required to update your organisation's various policy positions and delivery programmes to ensure strong alignment back to requirements.

This update should take a more holistic view of infrastructure and behavioural impacts, considering data and connectivity as well as utilities, in particularly energy.

This update should also consider how changing positions on legal, moral and political imperatives should influence the choices you make.

For longer term outcomes narrative around future mobility options may need updating and ideally this would also include evidence on accelerating future mobility options and the early building blocks to future mobility to avoid this being viewed as merely 'blue sky' thinking.

This could require input from central government and emerging guidance, as well as certain technical experts, at the very least to meet shorter terms outcomes, some of which may have not been envisaged until recently.

Collectively, schemes, services and policies form your list of interventions. Contemporary data and planning tools may allow you to re-consider practical ways of packaging evidence for interdependent outcomes, including: as a single intervention; programmes of closely related interventions; or a complete portfolio of all interventions.



ANSA Digital can support your planners in delivering these activities.

A balance may need to be found between stakeholder engagement and governance with any urgent delivery or rapid re-planning. This may identify the need to streamline aspects of the planning process that could be reflected in the Strategic Plan.