

Strategic Thinking Skills

09:30 Registration and welcome.

09:45 Introduction to strategy and strategic thinking

- What is strategy and why is it important?
- Why is strategic thinking important and useful?
- Open policy making and other recent developments
- The strategy cycle

Learning outcome: Participants understand what strategy in organisations involves, why it is important, emerging trends in strategy making and its relationship with operational delivery.

10:30 Group work – gathering evidence, understanding the context

- What are the big trends influencing your organisation over the next 20 years?
- Where do you find the evidence?
- Using PESTLE to structure that evidence gathering.

Learning outcome: the importance of understanding your organisation's wider and long term context and the sources of evidence available to inform your strategy

11:15 Break

11:30 Developing and communicating future scenarios

- Importance of understanding the big picture and incorporating new ideas/perspectives; exploring the different ways we do that as individuals.
- Some strategy techniques;
 - SWOT
 - Scenario planning
 - Open policy making

Learning outcome: to introduce participants to a few of the more commonly used strategic thinking tools.

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Problem definition and developing new ideas

- Group working (3-4 per group) applying scenario planning techniques discussed in the pre-lunch sessions to a strategic challenge.

Learning outcome; group working, thinking about a strategy challenge and to practising using strategic thinking techniques.

14:00	Break
14:15	Options appraisal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using an assessment matrix to test different options and decide/recommend preferred course of action. <p>Learning outcome: importance of having relevant criteria against which to evaluate options.</p>
14:45	Group presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of being able to communicate strategy persuasively to a variety of audiences.
15:15	Delivery – making strategy a reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even in the largest organisations strategy is not about ‘pure thought’ and must be grounded in practical delivery in the context of organisational capacity, culture and values. <p>Learning outcome: strategy is not an end but a means of shaping future direction and influencing organisational effectiveness and sustainability. Strategists cannot stand aside from delivery.</p> <p>Learning outcome: to turn the strategy into practical action through creating a critical path/project plan.</p>
16:15	Review of the day and action planning
16:30	Close