LONDON ON-LINE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

FORWARD PLANNING & ADVISORY DIVISION

EXPECTED WORK PROGRAMME

1. <u>Introduction</u>

The areas where the Forward Planning Division is expected to concentrate its activities during 1980/1 are indicated below. Some of these areas may assume greater or lesser importance than is anticipated and new areas may emerge as contacts and discussions with the users are developed.

2. Training

Initial training will be required for all Business and Technical Analysts. For the former this will consist, in general, of appreciation courses relating to the new technology: for the latter there will be a need for appreciation courses for all plus some specialist courses for their individual areas of responsibility. The minimum requirements are estimated to be:—

(a) Business Analysts (covering APL appreciation, APL packages, office automation systems, word processing, information retrieval and mini-computer systems).   15 man weeks

(b) Technical Analysts (covering APL programming, workshops, mini-computers, distributed processing, word processing, micro computers, teleprocessing)   12   "   "

(c) For all members of the Division visits to other installations, exhibitions, miscellaneous training   <u> 7   "   " </u>

Total <u>94 man weeks</u>

2. <u>APL</u>

APL is expected to be a primary tool in offering personal computing facilities to the users. It is intended that effort will be concentrated on the use of APL packages, enhanced as necessary by additional APL facilities developed by LOLA. In some areas it will be necessary to develop facilities completely based on new APL routines developed by LOLA.

Following the initial training, it will be necessary for the Analysts to obtain some experience of both using the packages and providing APL functions before their services to the users can be fully productive. It is intended that this development of competence/expertise will be achieved by enhancing existing demonstration facilities developed at LOLA to a level where they can be used as personal computing facilities for LOLA administration. Effort will be concentrated on the areas of establishment/personnel records and financial control of the LOLA budget.

3. <u>Borough Use of APL</u>

The main headings under which work will be carried out are:-

Investigation of the many service areas
of the Boroughs to determine where APL
could be of use.

Identification, in conjunction with the
Boroughs, of the areas which will give optimum return
e.g. cost benefit or saving of professional staff time.

Development of APL facilities with the
users.

Areas of work where development is already under way or under
consideration include:

- Manpower Control
- Inflation Planning
— Estimate variation by inflation
- Budget control for Old People's Homes
- Overtime Analysis/Control for Manual Workers
- Bonus calculations
- Project Management
- Housing Advances
- CLUSTER analysis
- Capital Project progressing
- Invitations to Tender
- Establishment/Personnel Analysis

4. <u>Mini-Computers</u>

Currently two Boroughs are evaluating the use of mini-computers and it
is understood that a proposal for the use of a mini computer in one
department of a third Borough is to be made shortly. The Forward
Planning Division will be required to assist with:

- Mini-computer evaluation
- Determination of need for local computer facilities
- Priorities of potential users
- Cost benefit
- Selection of hardware and software
- Installation
- Implementation
- Operating procedures interfaced with central computer

5. Local Printing

It has already been established as a requirements for the Forward
Planning Division that investigations to be carried out into the
desirability and extent of local printing alternatives. This will
involve:
- Analysis of all LOLA operational printed output
- Identification of advantages and disadvantages
  of local printing for each type of output
- Determination of the extent to which interactive

computing or mini—computers or intelligent printing
facilities could be used
- Production of proposals for improvements in
existing service

6. <u>Distributed Processing</u>

A start must be made on investigating the whole area of distributed
processing in terms of hardware, software and problems of
compatibility and control. It is proposed to use the existing Rating
system as the most appropriate area to investigate in that it not only
produces a large load on the central computer but is also the one
major application which is contained within one section of a Borough.

The general requirements will be to identify the stages of development
of distributed processing, produce resource estimates and costs,
identify the benefits and problem areas and make proposals concerning
the extent to which pilot schemes should be implemented if at all.
More particularly this will involve:-

- determination of criteria for "sizing" local equipment
- establishing performance characteristics — reliability
  and response times
- evaluating alternative database software, in particular
  those packages which permit concurrent query and analysis
  activities
- assessing software maintenance aspects e.g. operating
  systems, utilities and control of local libraries
- evaluation of integrated data aspects including degree
  of problems arising if data not kept in step with
  "corporate records"
- assessing physical planning aspects ~ accommodation, air
  conditioning, power supply
- defining appropriate conversion strategies which would
  enable transfer of present system

7. <u>Word Processing</u>

Word processing is being considered in two of the Boroughs and the
Forward Planning Division will be required to assist Borough
Management Services in the following areas:-

- Determination of users' needs and level of
  facilities required
- Evaluation of available equipment
- Extent of interface with central or local computing
  facilities

8. <u>Others</u>
Resources will need to be allocated as required to areas of
importance to the users and LOLA as further needs are identified. It
is expected that as a minimum list this will cover:
- Text retrieval
- "User friendly" query languages
- Use of micros
- Advanced telephone exchanges and related facilities
- Improvements in techniques to optimise use of
  scarce specialist LOLA resources.

NOTES ON 3033N OPTION

This option (a large central processor with approximately four times the power of a single 370/158) was proposed by TOP members as being a better solution on the following grounds:-

1. It would guarantee adequate capacity to meet all contingencies in the immediate future.

2. Capital procurement for computers might become exceedingly difficult after April 1980.

3. Sale of the present 158AP now would produce a substantial contribution towards the purchase price.

Accordingly some work has been done in investigating this option with the following results:-

1. The previously quoted price viz £1.2 million was for an unviable configuration in that it did provide for adequate channel capacity to support the 8-megabyte machine and the need for a motor generator set was not taken into account – a realistic price is now thought to be of the order of £1.5 million.

2. Initial enquiries made on establishing a sales value of the 370/158AP have so far produced £200,000 as the highest offer – as the lease payments still outstanding this August amount to over £375,000. the expectation of a surplus is totally unrealistic.

3. Well-informed computer sources are now suggesting that the release of a '4351' is imminent. They further suggest that this machine will completely supersede the 3031 as being considerably faster at about half the price. Further announcements having a further devastating effect on the 3033N are expected within a matter of months.

4. Installation would necessitate the provision of water cooling equipment.

5. Only with a long amortisation period could the annual costs of a 3033N be viable, however, there is no technical basis for a guaranteeing that its capacity would be sufficient to develop the kinds of services (distributed processing, support for word processing and text retrieval etc.) which may well feature prominently in the consortium's policy for the 80's.

It is accordingly recommended that no further consideration be given to this option.

DAS/BD
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