



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee

Report to the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee

Title:	Project & Programme Management
Committee date:	Tuesday 14 November 2017
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Cabinet Member sign-off: Finance, Performance and Resources	Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for

Purpose of Agenda Item

The purpose of the report is to inform Members about the Council's approach to project and programme management in terms of how we are structured and the support that's available e.g. toolkits, developing knowledge, skills and expertise.

This report was originally requested by Risk Management Group in August 2017, however it was felt that due to the breadth of the topic that the Finance, Performance & Resources Select Committee would be a more appropriate forum to discuss this.

Background

The Council don't have a centralised Programme Management Office ("PMO") model – the corporate function is performed by a Programme Management Officer in the Finance and Assets service and Business Units have separate functions to ensure that projects and programmes are carried out appropriately within their respective service areas.

The corporate function focuses on:

- Setting, developing and embedding a standardised set of frameworks and tools that facilitates a consistent approach to project management



- Establishing a learning and development pathway to develop the skills and expertise required to support successful delivery of projects and programmes
- Providing advice, guidance and support on using best practice project management standards and approaches

While there are some differences between Business Units, role holders are responsible for operationalising functions and governance frameworks to facilitate internal reporting and visibility of project and programme progress to executive management, including Business Unit Boards.

Transport, Economy & Environment (“TEE”) have identified the need for a dedicated PMO and are in the process of recruiting a PMO Manager. A PMO Charter has been created, defining the purpose, vision, mission and functions that the PMO will provide, which includes:

- Establishing and facilitating controlled start-up and closure of projects
- Encouraging a project environment focused on performance and execution
- Building project management discipline and professionalism

In Communities, Health & Adult Social Care (“CHASC”), there are two Business Managers responsible for:

- Providing skilled project management and oversight to the implementation of key projects within their respective service areas
- Ensuring processes are followed for appropriate project governance and mechanisms to identify and report problems to senior management

In Resources the function is performed within the Commercial Team, which also undertakes peer reviews and check and challenge of business cases before they are presented at Business Unit Board. Whereas in Technology Services, they operate a PMO structure model where four Project Managers report directly to a Head of PMO & Project Governance who is responsible for:

- The development, and effective and efficient provision of project management and programme office services
- Ensuring that all services provided from within the team are delivered in accordance with agreed specifications and established timescales and, that they support the Council’s vision, values and strategic objectives

In Children's Services, the Improvement Team provide an overview of project and change activity. The Change for Children programme includes a significant proportion of this and is subject to regular monitoring and reviews by the Corporate Management Team ("CMT").

While Business Units are responsible for the delivery of projects and programmes within their service, they should align to the corporate model.

Quarterly reporting via an organisational-wide change register provides CMT with an overview of the delivery readiness; including financial savings, on key change activity, aligned to the organisational and strategic priorities of the Council.

This process is managed by the Insight & Business Improvement team in the Assistant Chief Executive's Service ("ACES"). Projects and programmes are considered by Business Units for inclusion on the register in line with a set of defined criteria based on financial thresholds, potential risk impacts as well as organisational impacts and/or other considerations.

The Council's Capital Programme is managed by the Capital Programme Manager within the Finance and Assets service, with a clear focus on improving the governance framework and processes to support effective decision making at Asset Strategy Board ("ASB") and maximise value for money from the Council's capital portfolio. There is also a significant effort on reducing the level of slippage to ensure that our capital spending is optimised.

Summary

The progress that's been made on the improvement journey to date is outlined below:

Frameworks and Tools

Developed and delivered a consistent project management framework based on industry standard methodology, that's straight forward to follow and recognises best practice. This includes updates to many of the document templates, and development of additional templates to further support the project lifecycle.

The refreshed and updated [Project Management toolkit](#) launched in July 2016, with a further iteration published in September 2017 to support continuous improvement.

The toolkit can be used as a key reference source and guide to the management of projects at the Council. It also introduces agile methods and approaches.

The launch and subsequent enhancements have been actively promoted through organisational-wide communications to raise the profile and awareness. This has

contributed to a three-fold increase in the number of page visits when compared with the previous 12-month period.

Learning and Development

Co-designed a two-day Project Management Enhanced Skills training workshop to build and enhance existing project management skills, and explore the interpersonal skills and behaviours required to manage projects effectively.

The workshop follows a standard process for managing projects based on proven project management methodology, closely aligned to the themes in the toolkit.

This training was launched with a pilot in May 2017 and since then two further courses have been held – evaluation feedback from delegates has so far been positive.

A one-day Introduction to Project Management training workshop has also undergone a refresh to support alignment with the toolkit.

A separate section has been created in the toolkit to outline the project management learning pathway, including the Associate Project Manager Level 4 apprenticeship.

The toolkit also includes signposting to MindTools; an online learning resource, which contains a wealth of useful tools to support staff working on projects and programmes, for example around decision making, strategy and problem solving.

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

A Community of Practice (“CoP”) was set-up to facilitate learning and share knowledge across services to enhance local practices.

To date, this has generated positive discussions leading to the following products being developed and implemented:

- Lessons log – an organisational-wide lessons log to inform the future application of best practice, based on lessons from previously completed projects.

The lessons log, which can be accessed via the toolkit, can help to identify lessons and best practice guidance that can be usefully applied to projects and programmes that we are working on.

- Stakeholder identification checklist – to act as a prompt for project management teams to identify and engage with stakeholders at an early stage.

Organisational-wide communications have been published to raise awareness of these developments.

Advice, Guidance and Support

An improvement plan has been co-developed with the Capital Programme Manager to provide better tracking and visibility of actions through to resolution, a clearer record of decisions taken at ASB and publishing updated guidance on [Capital budget monitoring and forecasting](#) on the intranet.

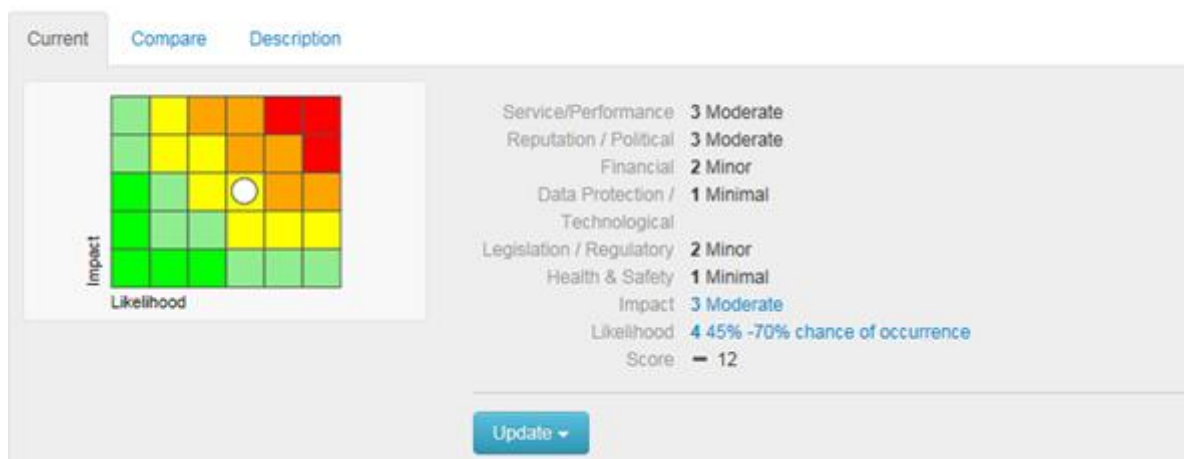
A revised Capital Gateway process has been introduced. The final stage of the process now accommodates production of an end project report following practical completion and handover, followed by a further report at the end of the defect liability period and final account. These reports will be reviewed at ASB and any specific lessons identified and logged for future reference.

Incidentally, end project reports for the Energy for Waste (“EfW”) Programme and purchase of a Bulky Waste Shredder were presented for review and discussion at ASB in October.

Ad-hoc advice and guidance has been provided to major change programmes on developing governance arrangements to support effective set-up.

A strategic risk has been identified around the consistency of approach to project management and is recorded on the corporate risk management system (see below) – this is regularly reviewed and updated.

▲ HQ-A-12 An inconsistent approach to Project Management across the council-



Next steps

While we've begun a journey of continuous improvement, the challenge is that; as in many other organisations, almost every project could be done better.

As many of the building blocks are now in place, the focus is shifting towards demonstrating the worth of these arrangements and how they are helping to improve our project management capability and competency.

For example, more emphasis on end of project reviews to determine whether we have delivered what we said we would, and to learn from this so that positive lessons become embedded in our way of working, and we avoid repeating negative lessons on future projects.

The following have also been identified to support the improvement journey:

Frameworks and Tools

- Develop and publish further guidance in the toolkit on programme management, particularly around the governance arrangements
- Embed the process for collating and sharing lessons learned, building on the organisational-wide lessons log that's been created
- Define and develop a model that provides assurance to stakeholders that projects are being conducted appropriately, properly and comply with relevant corporate standards and policies – the level of compliance should be appropriate to the size, scale and complexity
- Improve the quality of business cases e.g. through training, clearer guidance on development, supported by a robust review process

Learning and Development

- Measure the effectiveness of the training to find out how well delegates have put into practice what they've learnt back in the workplace and whether there have been any barriers to this, to influence future development
- Based on identified lessons, consider developing focused bite-size e-learning modules and/or action learning sets to address key areas

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

- Continue to build effective relationships across the organisation to identify opportunities to enhance project management performance and/or standards

Advice, Guidance and Support

- Drive the improvement plan forward to achieve the expected outcomes for the Capital Programme.