

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

03 November 2020



Title	Corporate Project Management Report		
Purpose of the report	To note		
Report Author	Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Robert Noble	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability		
Recommendations	To note the report		
Reason for Recommendation	To allow Members to be updated on progress of projects and their outcomes across the Council		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 This report highlights the work of the Council on projects.
- 1.2 The Corporate Project Dashboard attached (Appendices 2 and 3) tracks progress of projects and work streams across the Council. Some projects have been impacted by the emergency response to COVID-19 but it is expected that over the next few months the backlog will be addressed subject to their not being a second major emergency response needed with a second wave of COVID-19.
- 1.3 The council's focus continues to be on property investments and housing projects, with the property acquisition portfolio being managed, controlled, and reported through the 'Development and Investment Group' and the 'Investment and Property Investment Committee'. The detail of these projects is captured at these meetings with high-level information being captured as part of the "Corporate Project Register" and "Corporate Project Dashboard" documents. A presentation of the risks associated with the 'Confidential' development projects is made in a 'Part 2' (Confidential) section of the meeting. This format has been used for the past two Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Should there be any revisions/improvements which may prove necessary, then Officers shall see to introduce those improvements for the next session. This includes consideration of future formats.
- 1.4 Moving forward the Commissioning and Transformation (CTG) project manager will continue to meet with all Group Heads to obtain their views on current and future needs in relation to projects. Project Managers need to ensure they seek appropriate authorisations before progressing projects to ensure there is a business case and resources are in place to support the project. CTG will focus on performance to ensure that all aspects of project

work are captured to enable the Council to clearly demonstrate its achievements

- 1.5 Projects need to ensure they continue to take account of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Equality and Diversity impacts, sustainability, and where appropriate Privacy Impact Assessments, to comply with the necessary Governmental legislations.

GDPR considerations are now being discussed at more project meetings.

- 1.6 The Project Steering Group continue to meet and discuss individual projects in greater detail, particularly those with a red or amber status. Highlight reports continue to be produced on a regular basis by the majority of managers.

2. Corporate Projects

- 2.1 The projects being delivered across the Council continue to move Spelthorne forward on various areas to support delivery of the corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The project documentation has been modified to ensure projects at initiation have a clear business case and highlight Procurement, Legal, ICT Finance, Communications and GDPR requirements that will need supporting during the project. This will assist with workload planning where projects cross several different services. To ease reporting requirements relevant forms and database are being developed to make it both easier for project managers and summary reporting by CTG.
- 2.3 Some projects listed have now been completed but given COVID 19 have been included to demonstrate those projects which managed to progress and be completed during the last few months. These will be removed from the listings in the next cycle.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Projects should not be initiated unless there is a clear business case and funding stream in place. These should be indicated at the project planning stage and it is hoped there will be continuing support given for all the initial business case documentation to be completed thus allowing projects to be effectively reported on and monitored.
- 3.2 Project Management shall also include the Procurement Business Case document as appropriate.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 As with the financial needs, resources must be given equal attention, with the appropriate departments and services being considered so that the appropriate and necessary skills can be made available so as to meet delivery deadlines.
- 4.2 Given the current structure, and working practices, of the Authority, prioritisation of workloads will prove crucial to engage key members of the delivery Team at the times conducive to meeting deadlines and fulfilling expectations.
- 4.3 Where resource availability is proving to be a risk with potential to threaten the agreed delivery date, then escalation for support must be considered.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 Projects will need to address GDPR, equality and diversity issues together with those of sustainability (financial, social, and environmental).
- 5.2 The introduction, and regular sitting, of the Project Steering Group (PSG) shall seek to further support each project by way of adherence to the current SBC project principles, recommended practices and processes. All of these shall serve to ensure that projects are managed in a manner conducive with focus to effective, efficient and controlled delivery. Risks and issues shall continue to alert the PSG of where additional consideration and support shall become necessary to review and address project priorities with those of corporate direction and needs.
- 5.3 In a bid to promote speedier submission of project documentation a new streamlined document (Project Brief and Business Case) covering the 'Project Summary', 'Project Initiation' and 'Business Case' requirements, has been produced and circulated for use.

Initial feedback on use of the document has proved to be very positive.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 Project governance shall now also seek the consideration and direction of the PSG and continue to be reported to MAT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny every quarter.
- 6.2 The corporate project team will continue to meet and discuss individual projects in more detail particularly those with a red or amber status. Highlight reports underpin the project report hierarchy and will continue to be produced monthly by project managers.
- 6.3 It is envisaged that as the Groups provide greater support for this corporate requirement that the content and timing of the data input shall become more efficient thereby ensuring that the overall process, and its own requirements shall provide enhanced benefits.

This will include the maintenance of an accurate 'Corporate Project Register', which provides an up-to-date record of all project activity within the Authority. This shall enable opportunities for the necessary support to be provided to the project teams by way of a corporate assessment of budget, resource and man-power needs/availability and the appropriate prioritisation/reprioritisation on an ongoing basis. It is therefore imperative that the Group Heads impart their knowledge of project activity in their respective areas, in a timely manner, to those maintaining the corporate documentation.

- 6.4 It is appreciated that the current sourcing mechanisms (Highlight Reports) for obtaining Dashboard information from the Groups Heads/Project Managers has been 'cumbersome' but a more streamlined approach is now utilised to provide the necessary project information.
- 6.5 The revised design of the Corporate Project Dashboard is still being worked on to continue to improve the presentation of the project status information in a truly focussed format. This issue continues to be addressed by the Project Team.

6.6 The Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation has initiated a number of work streams which aim to manage the end-to-end delivery of any project by introducing more effective and efficient methodologies. These include:-

- Project Governance
 - Project Steering Group responsibilities
 - Stage gates
 - Project Documentation - requirement
- Project Manager Training – In-house
- Project Reporting – automation
- Communication of projects / portfolio of projects

The Project Office, supported by the PSG and MAT, continue to consider opportunities to improve the Project reporting mechanisms and presentation formats based upon the needs and requirements of all the recipients of the data. Research into potential solutions is ongoing, and shall be reported upon in due course with the preferred option/s.

In the interim, the current reporting methods and documentation shall remain in place, whilst addressing the need to share project progress and current status.

So as to assist with the navigation within the “Corporate Project Dashboard – Project Detail” document, hyperlinks from the front page to the various project update pages.

The Reader will need to hover their cursor over the respective project on the ‘Portfolio of Projects’ page (page 1) and then simultaneously press ‘Ctrl’ and the left hand mouse key to move to the project detail page.

ICT are supporting the Project Reporting process and are working to produce a more automated method and E-Form mechanism to streamline the process by making it less time-consuming.

The fully functional roll-out of these changes are anticipated to be delivered by Autumn/Winter 2020.

Background papers: There are none

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Corporate Project Register

Appendix 2: Project Detail Non-Confidential Projects

Appendix 3: Project Detail including public and confidential detail