

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

12 October 2020

- * Councillor Angela Gunning (Chairman)
- * Councillor Gordon Jackson (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Steven Lee |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | Councillor Masuk Miah |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor Catherine Young |

* Present

Councillors Angela Goodwin, John Redpath, John Rigg and Pauline Searle were also in attendance.

SR1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence or notification of substitute members.

SR2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

SR3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 7 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

SR4 NEW PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Project Manager gave a presentation providing an update in respect of Project and Programme (PPM) Governance, which was itself the theme of a business change project, mainly examining the Council's capital programme major project portfolio. New project governance arrangements had stemmed from Phase A of the Future Guildford programme which had created a team to implement new governance and to support and deliver projects and ambitions without wasting time and resources. The purpose of the presentation was to introduce the EAB to the evolving PPM process and to obtain its views thereon as a precursor to subsequent opportunities for early involvement in the development of project mandates.

The presentation explained progress to date and next steps; portfolio, programme and project governance; possible PPM governance issues; benefits of improved PPM governance; common project lifecycle and approval gates; the purpose of a mandate; principles of accountability / ownership; proposed approvals workflow; and implementation of the PPM Governance Project Plan Jan 2020 – Dec 2020.

Progress to date was as follows:

- January and February - Review of major projects performance.
- March and April - Governance issues agreed.
- May and June - Consultation with key stakeholders.

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- July and August - Pilot of new governance tools.
- September and October - Delivery of training and business change.
- November and December - Handover and close.

The definitions of projects, programmes and portfolios, which were separate aspects of projects and related disciplines, were explained. Project management was the management of budget, schedule and resources to deliver required capabilities. Programme management was the grouping of projects into a programme that were necessary and sufficient to achieve desired business outcomes and create value. Portfolio management was the objective comparison and selection of investments to optimise business value by proactive monitoring, management and adjustment of the portfolio of investments to maintain business alignment. These sought to achieve the desired outcomes effectively and efficiently in the correct right way.

Possible PPM governance issues were the absence of mandates, unified lifecycles, robust business cases, audit trails for decision-making, standardised methodologies and clear transparent pipelines of work. The impact of these could include: unclear problem definition, outcomes required, scope, strategic alignment or priority; lack of ability to direct and control the project; absence of a robust rationale for proceeding with no baseline to manage delivery, change or resources and inability to know longer term cost implications; misdirection and misunderstanding; stakeholder challenge, friction and delays; project manager frustration and low morale; and inability for enablers such as finance and procurement to engage sufficiently early in the project lifecycle.

The benefits of improved PPM governance included improved value for money; reduced financial losses by not investing in poorly scoped projects not resourced for delivery; avoidance of ambiguity, scope creep and increasing costs; improved engagement with councillors and key external stakeholders for strategic direction and coherent support; transparency of delivery plan and pipeline to improve alignment with key stakeholder views to prevent costly delays; ability to engage enablers in the Council's Resource Directorate and other key stakeholders earlier in the process; reduced time spent reporting and resolving issues; improved performance and morale for those seeking to deliver projects and change; and enhanced council communications and reputation for delivery.

Common project lifecycle and approval gates, which required approval of certain documentation, consisted of radar awareness of the need for a project, initiation, feasibility, design, procurement, delivery, handover, closure and post project evaluation of the effectiveness of delivery.

All projects were triggered as a result of an initiative for improvement or a requirement to solve a problem and required a mandate. The purpose of a mandate was to ensure a controlled commencement, middle stage and conclusion of a project and it provided the terms of reference for the proposed project in addition to identifying the owner and governance arrangements. A mandate would clearly articulate the problem or initiative, convey the importance, complexity, scale and any assumptions regarding the proposed project and should be generated by those with the appropriate level of understanding, authority and information. A business case was created based on the information contained in the mandate and assessed against it. The amount of work effort expended would depend upon the level of complexity and detail required to convey the problem or initiative. Further discussion would be required in the event that key stakeholders did not agree with a mandate. When the information upon which a mandate was based changed, this could lead to reconsidering or ceasing the project triggering a premature closure, possibly resulting in a new mandate and business case.

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There was an accountability matrix which identified Directors' / Service Leaders' areas of accountability in relation to assets, housing, parks, parking, leisure, and regeneration and infrastructure.

The proposed approvals workflow diagram identified the approval stages of the mandate approval process which consisted of review by governance, enablers, Service Leaders, the Corporate Management Team, the Executive / Management Team Liaison Group, the EABs and the Executive leading to the commencement of the business case and onward reporting process.

In terms of the implementation of the PPM Governance Project Plan Jan 2020 – Dec 2020, the Governance and Stakeholders, Governance Product Development, training delivery, and PPM framework and integrated reporting elements were largely completed or on schedule to date. However, the preparation of Service Plans 2020/21 was considered to be at risk of meeting its timelines and the mandates and business cases (pipeline) for the delivery of the Spectrum, Cathedral Walk, Stoke Park and Guildford Park projects were at risk or overdue.

The following points arose from related questions, comments and discussion:

- Project timelines and speed of delivery were a source of some concern and it was suggested that further consideration be given to identifying alternative project management tools and methodologies, such as Agile, Waterfall or Scrum, including a possible hybrid approach, to achieve a more rapid and responsive system.
- Training for all involved in project management was welcomed.
- Engagement of project managers and a structured approach were necessary to deliver projects effectively.
- Distancing of projects from Service Leaders and their capacity and skill set to pursue several projects at once were perceived as possible issues. However, understanding of processes, structures and behaviours would enhance engagement. It was felt that project leaders could possibly manage two or three projects simultaneously depending upon the size, scale, lifecycle stages and complementary nature of the projects in question.
- Projects were affected by some uncertainty and change associated with the Coronavirus and also shifts in political and strategic policy direction.
- Continuity of relevant councillor and officer involvement would be beneficial, particularly in the case of more significant projects. However, mandates and business cases gave assurances and should assist new officers and councillors to adopt and pursue projects in the full knowledge of why they were selected and what they sought to achieve.
- Although it was possible to discontinue a project if that was felt to be the best outcome, project cancellation became more difficult to pursue over time as more resources were invested.
- A more concise approach to the presentation of project documentation was welcomed as lengthy detailed papers were time consuming to prepare and read. This could be achieved through mandates which distilled information to a level required for transparent decision-making.

The Strategy and Communications Manager confirmed that this PPM governance project was a pilot and was therefore constantly evolving and that the following views expressed by the EAB to inform its development would be taken into account by officers and forwarded to the relevant Lead Councillor(s) where appropriate:

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- Training for all involved in project management was welcomed and should be pursued.
- Further consideration should be given to identifying alternative project management tools, methodologies and disciplines, including a possible hybrid approach, to avoid delays in project delivery by ensuring use of a rapid and responsive system to speed project timelines and decision-making.
- There should be awareness of the project management effects of, or on, the Future Guildford programme.
- Project continuity should be preserved with the involvement of the same officers and councillors where possible, particularly in the case of major projects.
- A concise approach to the presentation of project documentation should be adopted in the interests of readability, clarity and transparency of decision-making.

SR5 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

It was noted that the Cathedral Walk Mandate item had been delayed owing to the need to obtain further information.

SR6 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The EAB's Work Programme was noted without comment.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman