

15 OCTOBER 2020

SERVICE DELIVERY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

15 October 2020

- * Councillor Angela Goodwin (Chairman)
- * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| * Councillor Dennis Booth | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Ann McShee | * Councillor Fiona White |

* Present

Councillors Joss Bigmore, Julia McShane, Tony Rooth and Deborah Seabrook were also in attendance.

SD1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jo Randall. Councillor Marsha Moseley was present as a substitute for Councillor Jo Randall.

SD2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

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

SD3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 10 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

SD4 NEW PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Strategy and Communications Manager introduced this agenda item and explained that, whilst no formal recommendations to the Executive were expected, the EAB was invited to submit comments in respect of the evolving Project and Programme (PPM) governance pilot project in anticipation of its future involvement in the development of project mandates.

The Interim Project Manager gave a presentation providing an update in respect of 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 project 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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, governance, stakeholders, 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 within timelines was considered to be at risk 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 Leader of the Council, whose portfolio included governance, confirmed the need for a consistent approach to the governance, assessment and delivery of projects to avoid cost overruns and delays and to ensure efficiency. The PPM pilot project was seeking to achieve such consistency and the related views of the EAB were sought.

The following points arising from related questions, comments and discussion were welcomed by the Strategy and Communications Manager who confirmed that the views expressed by the EAB would be taken into account by officers and relevant Lead Councillors:

- Formulating the project methodology, which was based on all three industry standards, was welcomed as a means to prevent scope creep, escalating costs and time overruns whilst securing improvements, best practice and common language terminology.
- The importance of project evaluation and impact assessments, change management and organisational engagement were highlighted.
- Although initial project costs were an estimate and could increase as the project progressed, caution needed to be exercised in the event of steeply rising costs.
- Cessation of a project or a change in project direction were acceptable if considered to be the best course of action and the approval gateways offered ideal opportunities to assess the continuing viability and progress of projects at formal stages.

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- Training in respect of PPM for all councillors, in addition to officers and Executive members, would be valuable to increase understanding of the related project process, structure and lifecycle. Specifically, training in relation to project mandates for EAB members, possibly including live examples, would assist with their involvement at that early stage of project development.
- Although the possibility of the Borough forming part of a new unitary authority in the future could have an impact on projects and related stakeholders, the project governance arrangements being proposed constituted best practice meeting minimum standards and would demonstrate a clear delivery plan to external partners enabling the Council to align and collaborate more effectively with stakeholders.
- Having fewer feasible and resourced projects with rigorous checks was considered to be preferable to overstressing resources by pursuing many, possibly undeliverable, projects.
- Although the new project governance arrangements would apply to new projects, those already in train which were experiencing difficulties would be reviewed against the arrangements. Work around building in risk budgets and other resource contingencies would reduce project risks.
- In terms of project ownership and accountability for successful project delivery, work stemming from the accountability matrix was being developed in relation to internal accountability. Responsibility in respect of projects involving external partners such as Surrey County Council was an issue under consideration. There was awareness that the Council needed to be realistic at the project inception stage as to whether there were sufficient resources to pursue a project and therefore allocate responsibility for its implementation. The initial gateway served as the point at which a decision regarding whether to pursue a project was taken.
- Although there was not currently a threshold at which projects were required to follow the PPM pilot process, this was being developed and could lead to less complex lower cost projects by-passing the gateway system if it was considered to be expedient.
- The Board welcomed early and ongoing involvement in projects. As mandates and business cases evolved as more information became available, the more significant and complex projects could return to EABs for further consideration at stages of development and intervention points could be built into the system to facilitate this.
- In terms of documentation, mandates and business cases would be standard concise documents featuring the salient points in the interests of readability, understanding and compliance.

SD5 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan was received and noted.

SD6 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

Further to the Chairman's earlier discussion with the Director and Service Leaders of the Service Delivery Directorate, work to identify and prioritise themes for consideration by the EAB was progressing and councillors were invited to send any suggested topics to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Attention was drawn to the additional meeting of the EAB taking place on 10 December 2020, which would provide an opportunity to discuss the work programme further.

It was suggested that the meeting of this EAB scheduled for 18 February 2021, which would be considering the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 (including the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategies) and the Housing Allocations Scheme, be converted into a Joint EAB meeting to afford more councillors the opportunity to have input into the

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development of these important policies. The Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme was also identified as a topic suitable for consideration at a future meeting of the Joint EAB.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman