

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Audit and Risk
DATE	19 January 2010
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Project Management Guidelines
REPORT NUMBER	CG/10/022

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise Elected Members on the use of Project Management Guidelines across the Council and the use of similar techniques in the private sector. It also outlines the future approach that will be adopted re project management.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

1. Notes the outcome of the overview of the use of Project Management Guidelines, and
2. Note the proposed way forward re the future approach to Programme management and the associated elements of project Management and Contract Management.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There none at this time.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

There are none at this time.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There none as a result of this report.

6. REPORT

- 6.1 Following consideration of an internal audit report by the Committee, on 8th September 2009, officers were requested "to report back on the use of Project Management Guidelines across the Council and whether they

were being complied with and that this report also consider the use of Project Management techniques in use in the private sector”.

- 6.2 Officers identified that there are existing corporate Project Management Guidelines, prepared by the former Continuous Improvement Service. These guidelines are available to Council staff from a web page on the Council's intranet (the Zone).
- 6.3 These guidelines were compiled in 2003 and were due for a further revision during late 2009.
- 6.4 The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a corporate approach to project management. All resources for the project had to be secured by the Service leading the project, including the Project Board and the Project Sponsor.
- 6.5 A copy of the guidelines is attached as appendix 1 to this report.
- 6.6 From the information available it has not been possible to identify, across the Council, either the frequency of use of these guidelines nor the compliance with all aspects where they have been utilised by either Project Boards or Project Sponsors.
- 6.7 The use of these corporate Project Management Guidelines should be viewed entirely separately from the use of construction project management procedures. The corporate Project Management Guidelines were designed to be used where industry standards particular to the project were not available.
- 6.8 Construction project management procedures are used by all the Council's design team on every construction project and these procedures are as published by either the Royal Institution of British Architects or the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
- 6.9 The consistent use by the Contract Administrator of the construction project procedures does not replace the procedures that should be used by either the Project Board or the Project Sponsor. The role, remit and procedures for the Project Board and project Sponsor should be drawn from the corporate Project Management Guidelines.
- 6.10 Dialogue with private sector consultants indicate that project management underpins successful project delivery and the reduction in potential delays and subsequent costs (both evidenced and hidden) more than compensates for the cost outlay required to engage a dedicated project management resource.
- 6.11 All project management processes currently used have the common theme of setting and managing a controlled environment within which a project can be successfully delivered. This environment facilitates all

changes (both foreseen and unforeseen) and minimizes consequently impact to overall deliverability and project completion dates.

- 6.12 It is clear from this overview that while the Council had in place Project Management Guidelines, these guidelines were not consistently known about or utilised.
- 6.13 The focus from this committee on the use of use of Project Management Guidelines across the Council and the use of similar techniques in the private sector is in alignment with the fresh approach being developed, in the Corporate Governance Service, for corporate adoption on how projects should be set up, managed and closed out.
- 6.14 The approach being developed will see the introduction of Programme Management. This will be complimented by a revised approach to project management and a greater emphasis on the deployment of effective contract management.
- 6.15 Programme Management is concerned with gaining the right benefits from change by invoking a structured framework to co-ordinate, communicate, align, manage and control the activities integral to the change to be attained. The framework of Programme Management provides organisation, processes, inputs, outputs and ways of thinking. Together these enable staff to build the capacity and capability to deliver change and cope with its inherent complexity, risks, problems and challenges. It also provides the starting point for the development of appropriate skills and expertise.
- 6.16 Programme Management is therefore concerned with outcomes. These are outcomes that will be effective across the entire council and will require the coming together of various outputs, via individual projects, for the whole objective to be attained. It is a structured approach that makes better use of resource to achieve a better return on that investment.
- 6.17 Project Management supports the delivery of programmes of work but is concerned with outputs, i.e. the specific deliverables required that are to be delivered within time, cost and quality constraints.
- 6.18 Within a project and after a project is closed out there are contract management requirements which represent a third set of skills relevant to the work of effecting change in the Council.
- 6.19 As this fresh approach is developed, implemented and supported from Corporate Governance Service there will be the production or revision of appropriate guidelines and procedures; the input of suitable training and mentoring for those involved in programmes and / or projects and / or contract management.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Corporate Project Management Guidelines, attached as an appendix.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Date : **August 2008**
Version : **2.4**
Author : **Continuous Improvement, Modernisation & Innovation**

Document History

Version:	Date:	Update origin:	Written by:
1.1	27 Oct 2003	Draft for Comment	Lynn Rennie
1.2	5 Nov 2003	Approved by CILOG	Lynn Rennie
1.3	22 Dec 2003	Intranet Version incorporating Core Principles	Lynn Rennie
1.4	13 Apr 2004	Incorporating Version Control & Handover to Operational environment	Lynn Rennie
1.5	25 May 2004	Changes resulting from introduction of templates	Lynn Rennie
1.6	23 June 2004	Changes resulting from additions to Approval Section	Lynn Rennie
1.7	26 July 2004	Changes resulting from comments from Environment & Infrastructure	Lynn Rennie
1.8	5 Oct 2005	Changes resulting from Human Rights Legislation	Lynn Rennie
1.9	28 Nov 2005	Changes resulting from Internal Audit recommendations	Lynn Rennie
2.0	1 st Feb 2006	Changes resulting from Internal Audit recommendations	Lynn Rennie
2.1	23 rd March 2007	Review following Business Case development	Jo Morrison
2.2	3 rd April 2007	Content review	Jo Morrison
2.3	14 th May 2007	Content review	Jo Morrison
2.4	August 2008	Content review incorporating Internal Audit recommendations and introduction of Covalent	Alison Wiles

Next Planned Review Date:

- **August 2009**

However, if there is a change in practice, the guidelines, supporting guidance and templates will be updated prior to August 2009.

1.	Content	3
2	Purpose of the Guidelines	4
3	A Project or a Programme?	6
3.1	What is a Project?	6
3.2	What is a Programme?	7
4.	The Project Lifecycle	8
5.	Roles and Responsibilities	10
6	Stage 1 - Getting Started	12
6.1	Project Proposal	12
6.2	The Business Case	12
6.3	Obtaining approval	13
7	Stage 2 - Plan and Do	14
7.1	Project Initiation Document	14
7.2	The Project Plan	15
7.3	Risk Register	16
7.4	Communication Plan	16
7.5	Recording on Covalent	16
7.6	Project Files	17
8	Stage 3 - Co-ordination and monitoring	18
8.1	Review of the Project Plan	18
8.2	Revisiting the PID	18
8.3	Review of the Business Case	19
8.4	Managing the Risks	19
8.5	Managing Resources	19
8.6	Issues Log	19
8.7	Communicating with Stakeholders	20
8.8	Quality Management Principles	20
9	Stage 4 - Concluding the Project	21
9.1	Project Closure	21
9.2	Post Implementation Review	22
10.	Project Management Training	23

Appendix A	List of Supporting Guidance and Templates	25
Appendix B	List of References and Useful Links	

2 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The aim of these Project Management Guidelines is to help deliver the 3 basic principles of successful projects:

- Delivery on time
- Delivering within budget
- Delivering quality products that are fit for purpose and meet the customer needs

All project work must be **planned, monitored and controlled**. The level of control and management will vary depending upon the scale and criticality of the project but the same principles should apply.

Good Project Management practices that should be evident for projects to succeed are:

- **Governance** of the project
- Clear **roles and responsibilities** of all involved
- Good **planning**, with a defined start, middle and end
- Focused effort on achieving a **shared goal**
- Planning, monitoring and control of the **resources and budget** required to make it happen
- Identified and managed **areas of risk**
- Good levels of **communication** between the project, project management, the rest of the organisation and the stakeholders
- **Quality** management
- The ability to end a project prematurely if it becomes no longer worthwhile or viable

Unfortunately though, some projects do fail as a result of:

- Lack of a meaningful scope
- Lack of a good business case
- Failure to communicate with the right people
- Lack of clearly defined deliverables or outputs that are fit for purpose
- Inaccurate estimating of the time and effort required
- Lack of visible senior management commitment
- Lack of appropriate skills or insufficient resources

Project Management Guidelines

These guidelines, therefore, are here to provide a corporate approach to project management within Aberdeen City Council and ensure that:

- Projects are prioritised taking into account the impact on the organisation as a whole
- All staff involved in projects are aware of their role and responsibilities
- Aberdeen City Council makes better use of its resources
- Quality management, change management and communication underpin all project work
- Successful delivery of end results/outcomes are achieved
- Practical assistance is provided by way of the provision of template documentation and can be used throughout all stages of the Project (otherwise known as the Project Lifecycle).
- Covalent, the Council's Corporate Performance Management System is used and provides a consistent corporate approach to recording and reporting on projects (see 7.5).

At present, some Services already adopt Project Management methodology to complement these guidelines. These guidelines have been created for those where there is no standard industry approach, to help them better understand and better deal with projects.

PRINCE2 is one example, as it is recognised as an industry standard in that Service area. The following is from the Office of Government Commerce who released the most current Prince2 guidance in 2005.

“PRINCE (which stands for Projects in Controlled Environments) was first developed by the UK government in 1989 as the standard approach to IT project management for central government. Since then, the method has been enhanced to become a generic, best practice approach suitable for the management of all types of projects, and has a proven record outside both IT and government sectors. PRINCE2 has been widely adopted and adapted by both the public and private sectors and is now the UK's de facto standard for project management.”

More information on Prince2 can be found at www.ogc.gov.uk and <http://www.prince2.com/>

There are also guidelines available relating specifically to Construction, namely the comprehensive Code of Practice for Project Management for Construction & Development. This code was produced by the Chartered Institute of Building and has been endorsed by the RICS, RIBA, The Institute of Structural Engineers and CIBSE.

3 A PROJECT OR A PROGRAMME?

3.1 What is a Project?

A project is a management environment that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products or services according to a specific Business Case.

- In order for a project to be created a Business Case must exist. This can be developed in advance or as part of start up.
- A project is created to deliver something – one or more business products or services. Planning will define what is required.
- A management environment created specifically for the project – it is not normal operational business

A project might be initiated to resolve a particular problem or kicked-off as part of an overall programme of continuous improvement. The sort of one-off activities that might be developed as a project are:

- Building a new road or school
- Formation of a new service
- Arranging a major event

Within ACC examples are the 3Rs Project; Budget Dis-aggregation Process; His Majesty Theatre (HMT) Refurbishment and Extension Project; the European Election project and finally Trading Standards Hygiene Awareness Project.

Before you commence your project you should define the activity to ensure that it is in fact a project and not 'business as usual'. However, regardless of whether the activity is a project or business as usual, it should be task focussed and planned out in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

- Why is this piece of work being undertaken? (purpose, reasons, benefits),
- What are the goals and objectives?

The activity can then be broken down in to specific tasks that show how the objectives are going to be achieved.

Projects are different from 'business as usual' activities because:

- they are temporary with a clearly defined start, middle and end
- they bring about change and/or added value
- projects may offer investment opportunities
- projects have a budget and resource requirements
- they create risk

'Business as usual' activities are recognisable because:

- there are known policies, processes, procedures or precedents which may be followed
- there is virtually no risk associated with the activity
- the activities are not new
- they do not offer change

Avoid the tendency to make everything that goes on within the organisation into a project. This can lead to project overload, not making best use of ACC resources and a project culture which can remove ownership and responsibility for completing a piece of work and in many cases failure to achieve defined outcomes.

3.2 What is a Programme?

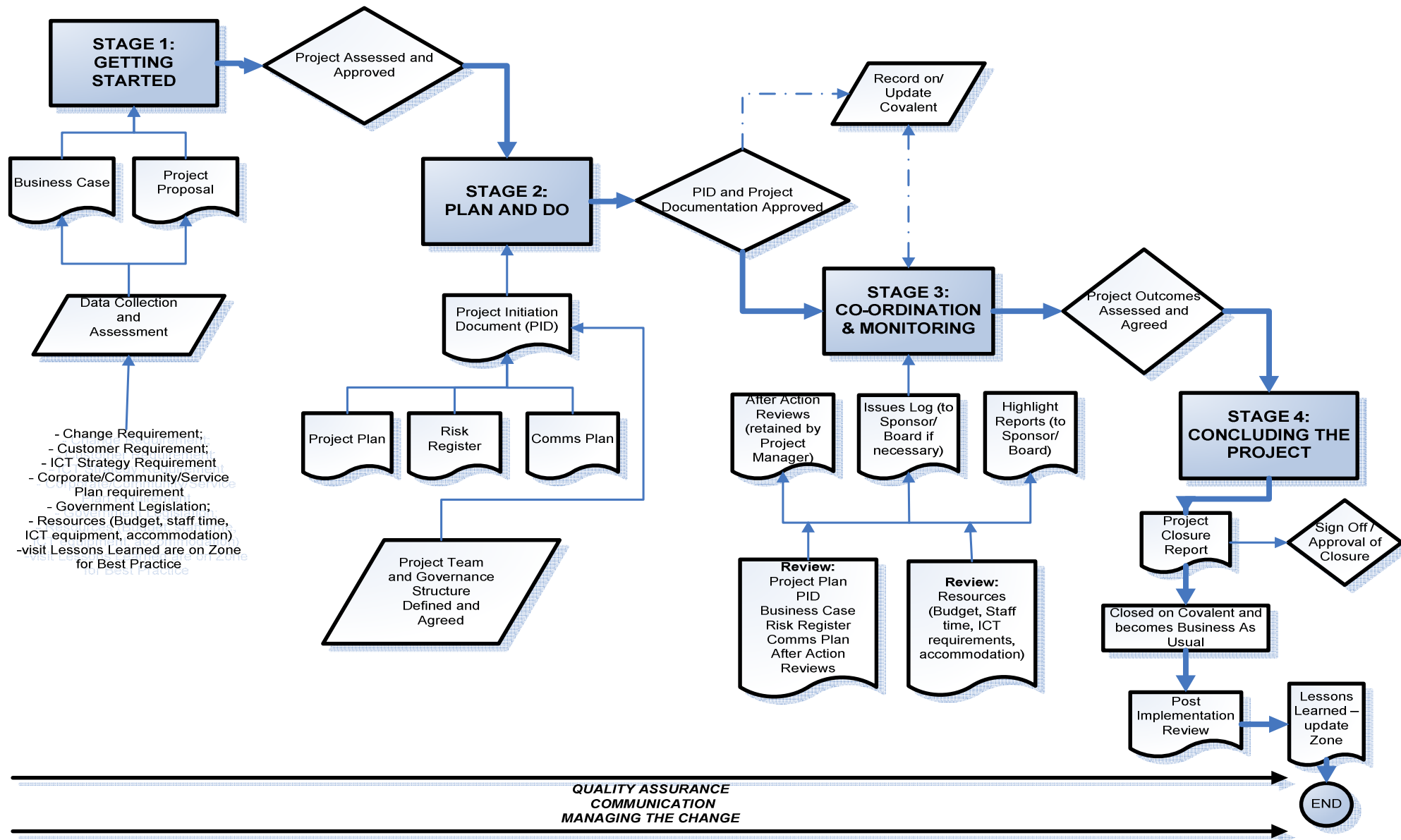
It is important at this stage to differentiate between a programme and a project. A programme is a collection of inter-related projects and activities that are managed as a unit. The management of a programme is very different to that of a project. Projects deliver outputs and should be delivered on time and within budget & quality constraints. A programme delivers outcomes, the effect of change as a result of the project outputs. Co-ordinated management of the change process - transforming behaviour, attitudes and ways of working - are key to a programme's success.

4. THE PROJECT LIFECYCLE

Within Aberdeen City Council, every project has a typical project lifecycle that consists of several key stages with inputs and outputs. This lifecycle shown below on page 8 basically encompasses the key activities of approving the project proposal, initiating and implementing the project, as well as completion and review to ensure that the originally anticipated results have been achieved. It is essentially the checklist for the beginning, middle & end of **all** projects and ensures that the principles are met.

The 4 key stages involved are:

1. Getting Started
 - Definition of the project requirement
 - Obtaining approval for the project to proceed
2. Plan and Do
 - Initiation of the project and its governance structure
3. Co-ordination and monitoring of project tasks
 - Review of Documentation
 - Managing Risks and Resources
4. Concluding the project
 - Project Closure
 - Post implementation Review



5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All projects require a structure that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved. The structure should be designed to fit the size and nature of the project. The basic roles within a project are:

- **Project Board** (under this heading, the minimum requirement for projects is to have a Project Sponsor)
Project Manager
Project Team

In addition, every project should have:

- Some form of **project support**, which might be done by the Project Manager on small projects
- A defined responsibility for **assurance**
- A mechanism for **involving stakeholders**

Roles do not necessarily reflect seniority or status.

Project Board

This is the decision-making authority for the project. It should provide overall direction and be accountable for its success. It should approve any plans and authorise any changes. It should also ensure resources are committed.

For smaller projects, however, it is often more practical and better use of time to utilise the existing management arrangements. It is for this reason that many smaller projects operate via the Project Sponsor or relevant Service Management Team (SMT) as opposed to a full Project Board itself. General tasks for the board/sponsor include:

- Appointment of Project Manager & setting of tolerances for them to work within
 - Measuring Tolerances (Quality, Time & Money)
 - Approval of project documentation and authorisation of any changes
 - Communication to other parts of the organisation and stakeholders
 - Authorisation of expenditure
 - Closure of the project if no longer viable or worthwhile
 - Project assurance and quality control
 - Sign off at key stage ends
 - Authorisation of project closure
- And
- Lead the post implementation review and lessons learned

When considering who to include within a board, ensure that the following three are represented:

- **Project Sponsor** taking ultimate responsibility for successful completion
- **Senior User** representing those who will be affected by the project outputs. They should be there to promote their concerns and interests
- **Senior Supplier** representing those who are designing, building or implementing the projects outputs.

You may also want to consider involving an **Elected Member**. Although there is currently no protocol for including them, you can find details on those councillors who have specific interests in varying areas on the Committee pages of The Zone (protocols are currently being looked at and guidelines will be updated once further detail known).

Project Sponsor

This is the individual who has ultimate responsibility for the project. They are in control of the funding, and should be proactive in providing leadership and direction throughout the project. If part of a board, they will be the Chair. Ideally they should be a representative of the management team for the particular service area. In some cases a project could involve a number of services or in fact be a corporate initiative. It is therefore important that the project sponsor is agreed as appropriate amongst **all** the services involved.

Project Manager

Another key role is that of the Project Manager and this role may be a full-time one or combined with an existing post within the organisation.

It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to deliver on the objectives of the project and ensure that the project can deliver benefits. They must also ensure that key documents within the project framework (referred to throughout this document) are created, monitored and updated, including the business case, project plan, risk register etc. The Project Manager also has a part to play in ensuring that the Covalent (see 7.5) is kept up-to-date. They must also ensure that progress towards key activities is reported to the Project Board if one exists, SMT (or Sponsor for smaller projects) on a regular basis, flagging up any issues to be addressed.

The Project Manager may also be involved in leading a project team.

Project Team

The role of the team is to actually do the work within the project plan. It is crucial that team members are representatives of the area of work on which the project is based. The size of the team depends on the project complexity and whether, for example, technical or professional expertise may be required in a particular area. Multi-disciplinary teams should be encouraged.

6 STAGE 1 - GETTING STARTED

It is best practice at this stage to visit the Lessons Learned area on the Zone to view the posted After Action Reviews (see separate guide and template) for previous projects completed within ACC. This will give you an insight into where things have previously been done successfully or where things could be done better, before you embark on the Project.

6.1 Project Proposal

A **Project Proposal Document** is the first stage, giving a description of why the project is believed to be worthwhile. It should:

- Provide an overview and initial outline of the key features of the project.
- Define the vision for the project, demonstrating both its strategic fit with corporate objectives and the benefits expected to be gained
- Detail the resources and costs involved in carrying out the work. Projects in a Local Authority environment typically operate within a number of constraining factors (e.g. legislation, financial regulations and standing orders) and these must also be accounted for in your specific project.

Before actual implementation of the proposed project, this will need to be approved by your Line Manager along with your Business Case.

6.2 Business Case

Along with your proposal, you must also include an initial **Business Case**. This will show:

- Further details behind the rationale for the project
- The expected benefits
- Detailed analysis of the costs, risks and benefits.

At this stage it may only be outline but should clearly show how the project fits with the organisation's objectives. The Project Manager is usually responsible for developing the information, along with help from finance and other specialists however the Business case should be owned by the Sponsor/ Project Board to ensure that project objectives are aligned. If considering external funding, you should contact the **External Funding Support Office** for assistance with sourcing and applications (details are available in the Business Case Guide). The business case should be **continually updated** and reviewed during the life of the project and where assumptions have been made, these replaced with hard facts as and when known. Do not view a Business Case merely as a means to obtain funding. **This is the case for actually showing how the work can add value to the organisation or service.**

6.3 Obtaining Approval

Once you have completed the Project Proposal and Business Case you will need to seek the relevant approval. This will ensure that, before a project commences, it has been given the go ahead and all the project resources required for success have

Project Management Guidelines

been secured. Approval is obtained through the established reporting structures within the Council ie, via the Project Sponsor and Line Management arrangements.

In considering whether a project is of priority, these groups will take into account the core principles of the authority, including **sustainability, social inclusion and social democracy**, and **whether the project will deliver on one or more of these objectives**. The actual method employed for approval of a particular project is currently dependent upon the respective source of funding and this is an area that requires to be standardised in the future with the respective avenues for funding made transparent to all within the authority.

7 STAGE 2 – PLAN AND DO

7.1 Project Initiation Document

Once your project is approved, build on the start up from the Project Proposal and Business Case to define the scope of your project. This will help you to judge whether the project is viable and worthwhile. Begin to develop the following:

- **Risk Register**
- **Communications Plan**
- **Initial Project Plan**

Further detail is found in sections 7.2 to 7.4. All these documents together form your **Project Initiation Document (PID)** or **Project Initiation Checklist** - the detail of how you are to implement the work. The PID is a contract between the Project Manager and Project Board and will be the basis for future management decisions.

The PID outlines those individuals involved in the project, detailing their roles and responsibilities so that the reporting structure is in place at an early stage. Another key to the success of the project is to identify and build into your Project Plan the controls that are necessary to monitor and manage the project. These include, at a minimum:

- **Highlight reports** at regular intervals
- **End Stage reviews** to check that the project is on course and still viable
- Tolerance on cost/time
- Regular **maintenance of the Risk Register**
- **End Project Report**
- **After Action Reviews/Lessons Learned**

When finalising the PID, highlight **performance measures** or other **success criteria** (critical success factors) which will provide evidence at the end of the project on whether the aims have been achieved. These are added to the Business Case and must be included or developed now. Also set out at this stage a clear timetable for completion of the project, the key tasks/subtasks requiring action and the associated risks.

A final but essential element of the planning stage is ensuring that there is a common understanding of all those involved in the project as to its scope/objectives. It is therefore extremely important to identify the **stakeholders** from the outset. These are the individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the outcome of the project. They may or may not be affected by the deliverables but should be involved in actually progressing some of the key activities in the project.

The degree of influence these stakeholders may have on achievement of the key aims should be gauged and if their influence is high, a strategy should be developed for retaining and/or encouraging their 'buy-in'. **Stakeholder groups** in a typical project within ACC may **include the staff** and **customers affected by any change**,

the **Elected Members**, the respective **Trade Unions** (see **Trade Union Consultation Protocol available on the Zone** <http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=10992&SID=3247> and **any individuals/groups that may be crucial to ensuring that the change happens.**

Another factor to consider when carrying out your stakeholder analysis is whether any Human Rights or Diversity issues apply. For example, individuals with certain religious beliefs may have particular needs in terms of dress and/or working hours that should be taken into consideration. Best Practice guidance on this subject is available from HR contacts located within each Service.

Once all of these factors have been taken into account, the PID must be agreed by the relevant stakeholders and signed off by the Project Sponsor. Any **future amendments to the PID or Business Case must be approved** and must be subject to the necessary change control procedures and included in any audit trail.

7.2 The Project Plan

Another key part of establishing the project structure is the review of the project timetable with the aim of setting up an agreed **Project Plan**. In preparing the plan the following tasks require to be undertaken: -

- **Identify the major activities** encapsulated within the project breaking down the key tasks into sub-tasks. The key tasks are often termed **milestones** and are critical in terms of progressing the project towards achieving its objectives
- **Agree the order** in which major activities need to be carried out and **consider any dependencies** (where one task cannot be initiated until another has been concluded)
- Decide on **how long each key task will take** (bearing in mind the availability of people, budgets, ICT and accommodation and other constraints identified in the PID)
- Ensure that **actions identified as a result of the risk management exercise** to mitigate and address risks within the project **are an integral part of the project plan**
- Enter key tasks/milestones into Covalent (see 7.5).

The project plan is an **evolving** document and should not be set in stone. It should be reviewed and updated as a matter of course by the Project Manager and should have Project Sponsor (or Project Board) approval.

To avoid the uncontrolled shifting of timescales (for example, the original target date set is no longer going to be met and the date has to be extended and re-scheduled) it is important that a **baseline** is established for the Plan. This should be identified within your Business Case.

It is highly recommended that Microsoft (MS) Project be used for the creation and maintenance of the Project Plan. Where a project is one of many in an overall programme of activities, it is vital for easy collation of information, and reporting across the programme as a whole. However, for extremely minor/straightforward

projects it may be more appropriate to use MS Word or Excel using a simple Action Plan format.

7.3 Risk Register

Another key activity that must be carried out by the Project Manager is **risk management**.

All projects no matter their size and complexity are exposed to an element of risk and it is important that these risks are identified, monitored for their **probability** (likelihood of occurrence) and **impact** (low, medium, high) **and managed**.

To identify the risks and to ensure that nothing is missed, it is beneficial to use a **brainstorming session** with the project team and other stakeholder representatives to basically think of all areas where things could go wrong within the project. 'What if' scenarios and basic discussion of the processes involved can also assist in identifying risks, both internal to the organisation and external.

Once the risks are categorised according to type (i.e. funding, technology, training etc) a **risk owner should be assigned**. The owner(s) is/are responsible for devising a strategy to either terminate, treat (reduce the impact of), transfer or tolerate (do nothing) the specific risk. Further detail is given in the Risk Management guide.

A considerable amount of information can be captured around risks in any one project and it is important that this data be recorded. To assist Project Managers a template **Risk Register** is available for use. This should be **regularly reviewed** and updated.

7.4 Communication Plan

The Project Manager must ensure that all stakeholders are fully informed regarding progress of the project. Consideration should be given as to which individuals you need to keep up-to-date with progress and the best means of communicating with them. It is useful to develop a **Communications Plan** (template available). This will establish setting out how you intend to keep all parties informed of key events whether by briefings, newsletters or mail-shots. Communication activities should be incorporated in the main Project Plan itself.

7.5 Recording on Covalent (refer to Covalent Guidelines for further guidance)

Once the project has been approved and the Project Plan defined (actions, sub actions, milestones etc), the key information must be recorded on Covalent. Covalent is the Council's performance management system and is used for recording and monitoring projects.

Project documents are to be attached to projects within Covalent so all key project documentation such as the project plan; risk register and communications plan can be accessed. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to oversee and ensure that regular updates are provided by the responsible officers assigned via Covalent in

relation completion of sub actions, milestones etc. This will ensure that Covalent reflects the latest position on project activities.

Covalent is used as the single source for reporting progress on projects to various groups such as the Corporate Management Team, Continuous Improvement Committee and Managers at all levels within the organisation.

The benefits of Covalent are:

- Relevant staff within the Council will be able to view details pertaining to the projects that are underway
- The principles of data-sharing and knowledge management will be achieved
- Common themes will be readily identified, highlighting priority areas for maximising benefit across the organisation
- Duplication of projects and therefore unnecessary wastage of resources will be avoided
- Joined up working will be facilitated and actions can be linked to other projects, performance indicators and budget savings
and
- Reporting requirements are minimised as details on the project status, budget and key activities, for example, will be available within the system itself

Please refer to Covalent Guidelines for further guidance.

http://thezone/RM/HumanResources/RM_HR_Covalent.asp

7.6 Project Files

For best practice on naming project files, please refer to the file naming conventions guidance available on The Zone:

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=9805&SID=637>

In relation to retention of project documentation, please refer to the National Archive Records Management Guidance for Project Documentation.

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=10940&SID=4869>

This guidance does not cover finance where the minimum retention of documents is the end of the project + 6 years. If European Funding is involved then this increases. Assistance with external funding can be found on The Zone:

http://thezone/rm/citychamberlain/external_funding.asp

The above retention guidance will be incorporated within the Corporate Retention Schedule which will be available on The Zone from January 2009.

8 STAGE 3 - CO-ORDINATION AND MONITORING

Co-ordination and monitoring of tasks is important to a project's success. Without effective management and direction it is at serious risk of not meeting its objectives or obtaining the desired benefits. Throughout the project lifecycle monitoring process described below, the Project Manager and Project Team should consider what lessons could be learned from the experience. It is best practice to do this continuously, rather than wait until the end of the Project, and record these After Action Reviews (guidance note and template available) and review them all at the Post Implementation Review stage. There are a number of elements involved in successfully co-ordinating and monitoring a project:

8.1 Review of the Project Plan

The project plan should be revisited and reviewed regularly by the Project Manager (regularly reporting progress to the sponsor or board). As a result of this monitoring process, the plan should be updated to reflect progress made with key tasks. The Project Manager should also update Covalent (see 7.5 and Update Action Guide available on the Zone). The primary objective is to ensure that the project progresses as per its original schedule and that this is communicated to the stakeholders.

If the plan does fall behind its schedule it is important that all involved in the project:

- Are aware of the costs and implications of delays
- Seek to establish the reason for the delay
- Resolve to amend the plan and take remedial action to address the problem
- Use the plan as a management tool

The Project Manager should collate relevant data on how the project is progressing in particular areas and looking at whether it is delivering on the core principles of the authority. They should also play a key role in identifying and anticipating areas where work may be 'slipping' behind schedule and should seek to identify options for resolving particular problem areas – for example, lack of resources.

This information should then be recorded in the format of **Highlight Reports** (guidance note and template available). Highlight reports should be presented to the Project Board/Sponsor on a regular basis, usually fortnightly or monthly dependent on the scale of the project.

8.2 Revisiting the PID

The Project Manager should also revisit the PID to ensure that progress towards key objectives is continually being made. They should also check for situations where the actual activities in the project or the expectations of stakeholders are exceeding beyond the boundaries established and agreed at the outset of the project. This scenario, which can result in projects delivering late or over budget, is often termed 'scope creep'. The Project Manager should ensure that it is not permitted to happen. If it does occur, and the change in scope is approved, the Project Manager should ensure appropriate resources are secured to meet the new objectives. All

amendments must be approved and subject to the necessary change control procedures and included in any audit trail.

8.3 Review of the Business Case

As with the PID, the Business Case should be regularly reviewed to ensure that where assumptions have been made, these are replaced with hard facts as and when known.

8.4 Managing the Risks

Risks should be managed throughout the project lifecycle according to the strategy devised within the Risk Register. Any actions taken to counter-act key risks should also be included as tasks within the Project Plan and monitored regularly. When reporting to the Board, Risk Management should also be an agenda item.

8.5 Managing Resources

Budgets

It is intended that a standard approach to the pro-active management of project budgets will be devised and further guidance will be made available.

In the interim period, financial summary sheets, relating to each respective project, will be received on a monthly basis from the Finance and ICT service, with reference to the expenditure made to date against the relevant financial code. The Project Manager must ensure that there is clarity as to the signing off or certifying of project expenditure to ensure that any commitments entered into will be capable of being funded at a later date within the Project. A list of authorised signatories should be established by project budget holders during the initiation stage and stated in the PID. To appropriately monitor budget, project managers should ensure all invoices for costs are forwarded to project budget holders for checking prior to the accounting section for payment processing.

Reporting on the financial position of the project is another standard Project Board agenda item.

Resources

Throughout the lifecycle of the Project, any unanticipated resource problems should be discussed and addressed urgently by the Project Manager.

This should be done in consultation as necessary with the Project Team, including the Project Sponsor, with a view to either resolving the problem quickly or, if unavoidable, amending the Project Plan to reflect the impact on the Project timetable.

8.6 Issues Log

A project issue is anything that is currently happening that could have an affect on the project. It could be:

- **A problem or query** raised by someone connected with the project

- A **request for something to change** or be done differently
- A **disagreement** about key decisions or taking the project forward

Keeping control of these and ensuring that they are dealt with quickly is an important part of any project. As with risks, issues should not be ignored. Resolving these involves:

- Capturing the detail in an Issues Log (template & guide available)
- Assessing how to deal and whether escalation outside the project is required
- Deciding if the issues are putting the work in jeopardy
- Putting in place actions to follow up and resolve, including keeping everyone informed

8.7 Communication with Key Stakeholders

The review of project documentation may result in changes to expected outcomes or timescales and it is essential that Stakeholder expectations are managed (see section 8.2). The Communications Plan should be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that stakeholder groups are communicated with in a manner appropriate to their needs – e.g. briefings, newsletters, face to face or by Intranet.

8.8 Quality Management Principles

As stated earlier, Quality Management principles underpin all project work. Quality is a broad term that can cover formal quality standards such as Chartermark or can simply be 'fitness for purpose'.

If the project is to be conducted within a specific quality framework or standard then this should be stated within the original documentation. If the project is to be quality assured (regular review of the project to ensure its adherence to a standard) then this programme (frequency of inspection and by whom) should be agreed and built into the Project Plan.

It is the responsibility of all involved in the Project Team to ensure, that where a quality standard exists and is followed, they are all aware of the quality management principles and adhere to these in carrying out their day to day and/or project activities.

The Project Manager then fulfils their role by ensuring that the project plan is closely and regularly monitored, identifying and managing risks and keeping all parties updated of progress.

9 STAGE 4 - CONCLUDING THE PROJECT

9.1 Project Closure

A project should have a definitive end date. Without this it is in danger of dragging on, to the dissatisfaction of all parties involved.

Once the project is concluded, the resultant outputs will be handed over to Services to become business as usual, or may go to an external provider. This enables the benefits of the project to be realised - the reason for running the project in the first instance.

The Project Manager should run through the following to ensure that everything has been completed:

- **Finalise all documentation** – also making sure that the Covalent is updated to show that the Project is formally concluded (full guidance available on the Zone http://thezone/ContinuousImprovement/SDD/MI/cg_ProjectMgmt.asp)
- **Hand over any unresolved issues** – ensuring that these are not simply ignored, but are passed to the appropriate person(s) to sort out. Stakeholders should also be aware and agree
- **Confirm outputs delivered** – a formal record that those taking over are happy and in agreement
- **Ensure recipients are able to implement** - in particular, for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects, it is essential that the hand-over of the project into a live or operational environment has been properly planned and implemented
- **Arrange ongoing support** or maintenance as required
- **Conduct a review** against the PID and Business Case – this will confirm delivery of the project's aims. At this stage the dates for follow-on reviews should be agreed and noted.
- Produce **Project Closure Report** – with details of the review and other actions
- **Obtain final sign off for approval** of these documents and finally
- Disband the project team

It is worth noting that many projects within the council are specific Improvement Projects or Service Review's with the ultimate aim of improving services to the public. At the conclusion of the project it may be difficult to confirm whether all the resultant changes and recommendations have actually delivered the tangible improvements they were designed to. In these instances, the success criteria or other performance measures put in place at the commencement of the project should be used to prove that the original aims have been achieved.

9.2 Post Implementation Review

Following on from project closure, a formal review should be carried out within 6 months. This is often termed a **Post Implementation Review (PIR)** and a template providing guidance is available.

The PIR is usually undertaken via discussion with project team members and stakeholders from the project. Its purpose is to:

- **Re-visit the original objectives** of the project so see if they were achieved
- **Review the performance** against time and costs
- **Review the After Action Reviews gathered throughout the monitoring process (see section 8)** and consider what worked well and what lessons have been learned and whether any areas could have been improved upon in terms of implementation.

The PIR is not an opportunity to apportion blame for any areas where mistakes were made or where things went wrong. It should be viewed as an opportunity to praise where things have gone well and build upon that success. Where improvements were needed, seeking to be open and honest about why.

These areas should then be recorded as **Lessons Learned**, allowing the experiences gained from the project to be shared amongst ACC. This insight will help the avoidance of repeat mistakes and help future performance improve.

A template and guidance for After Actions Reviews is also available. Once recorded these should be posted on the Lessons Learned area on The Zone. Your service co-ordinator will arrange this for you, details of those can be found at:

http://thezone/tools/webmaster/wt_service_contacts.asp

10 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

To assist with the implementation of these Guidelines and raise awareness of Project Management, the following Corporate training is available: -

Project Management. This workshop provides employees with the key skills to contribute to projects in line with the Council's guidelines. Through attendance employees will also be introduced to project management tools and techniques and gain an understanding of project plans. The workshop will also address the following:

- Defining a project and good practice in project management
- The role of project sponsors and managers
- Council terminology
- Projects and project lifecycles
- Council project management process
- An overview of project planning and links to good practice in planning and prioritising
- An overview of project control and management processes
- Project closeout

Project Sponsors. This workshop is being developed to clarify the differences in roles between project manager and project sponsor and the differences in the skills, knowledge and behaviors required in these roles. This includes:

- Leadership, visible commitment and promotion/ championing of the project
- Business Case and Benefits Management
- Stakeholder influencing and management
- Supporting the Project Manager e.g. unblocking, mentoring, etc
- Ensure effective governance arrangements
- Active support but not micro-management

The training aims to develop an understanding of what each of these aspects looks like in detail, but also how they should manifest themselves in practice. The workshop explores different sponsorship styles and assesses which ones are more appropriate e.g. what is the optimal balance between being "directive and controlling" and "engaging and supporting".

For further information or to book a place on the workshop, please contact Employee Development at employeeedevlopment@aberdeencity.gov.uk. Alternatively, details can be found on The Zone

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=7146&sID=2257> and you can also look at the dates available for the workshops by checking the Employee Development calendar

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=8057&sID=3449>.

APPENDIX A – LIST OF SUPPORTING GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATES

All supporting guidance and templates can be found The Zone:

http://thezone/ContinuousImprovement/SDD/MI/cg_ProjectMgmt.asp

Supporting Guidance

Please note within each guide there is an example of a completed template to promote good practice.

- ❖ Project Proposal Guide
- ❖ Business Case Guide
- ❖ Risk Management Guide
- ❖ Communication Plan Guide
- ❖ Project Planning Guide
- ❖ Highlight Report Guide
- ❖ Issues Log Guide
- ❖ Project Closure Report Guide
- ❖ Post Implementation Review Guide
- ❖ After Action Review Guide

Templates

- ❖ Project Proposal Document
- ❖ Business Case Document
- ❖ Project Initiation Document/Checklist
- ❖ Risk Register Template (Excel)
- ❖ Communication Plan Template
- ❖ Project Plan Template
- ❖ Action Plan Template
- ❖ Highlight Report Template
- ❖ Issues Log Template
- ❖ Project Closure Report Template
- ❖ Post Implementation Review Report Template
- ❖ After Action Review Template

APPENDIX B

References and Useful Links

The documents referred to throughout the guidelines are accessible via The Zone:
http://thezone/ContinuousImprovement/SDD/MI/cg_ProjectMgmt.asp

Trade Union Consultation Protocol available on the Zone
<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=10992&sID=3247>

Covalent Guidelines are available on the Zone along with further guidance that you may find useful (Log In Guide, Print Report Guide etc).
http://thezone/RM/HumanResources/RM_HR_Coalent.asp

Information on Project Management Training see The Zone:
<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=7146&sID=2257>

Another invaluable source of reference material that should be used is the **Continuous Improvement Toolkit**. This has been developed to help provide practical support to those involved with projects. It incorporates a bank of tools & techniques that provide guidance and support for running projects. It can be found at <http://www.db-continuousimprovement.org.uk/users/index1.aspx>

Information regarding Prince2 can be found at:
www.ogc.gov.uk and <http://www.prince2.com/>

If further assistance is required please contact the M&I Team by emailing M&I@aberdeencity.gov.uk