

## **Programme/Project Management**

### **Summary**

1. At the Audit & Governance meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July, the Committee requested an update outlining the arrangements that were in place in respect of project management to ensure transparency in general but particularly in respect of projects with commercial sensitivities. This report seeks to answer that question.
2. A more comprehensive report on the council's project management activity will be brought to Audit & Governance Committee in October.

### **Background**

3. The council undertakes a large amount of programme and project management and in line with best practice across the public sector adheres to the MSP and Prince methodologies. Because of a statutory requirement to change the way services are delivered or because of the need to ensure that more efficient processes are in place to reduce cost, most areas of the council will be involved in project work. The vast majority of these are successfully completed. The council has a strong track record in delivering change, including delivery of West Offices on time and on budget, delivery of major park and ride sites, delivery of capital programme typically around £70m per annum, successful delivery of savings programmes across the council (including major transformation) of around £10m per annum. It is recognised that a small number of higher risk projects do occasionally not progress as intended, however this is likely to always be the case due to the number of major projects being undertaken and the often complex contractual arrangements with third party organisations. All council projects are risk assessed however it is not possible to remove risk completely. The council does however always recognise the need to be constantly improving and recent changes and

proposals to improve the risk management and visibility of these projects are set out below.

4. Over the last year, the council has been strengthening the management of projects through;
  - a. Improved Training
  - b. Deployment of a standard CYC Project toolkit
  - c. Implementation of Verto, an online project office system

### **Training**

5. A programme of training for staff has been developed and is now being cascaded. Led by the council's workforce development unit, the training will ensure that officers working on projects are provided with the right level of guidance and support to develop their skills in project management and wider Lean principles.

### **Deployment of a standard CYC toolkit**

6. Although we adopt the Prince and MSP methodologies, both need to be tailored to City of York Council. The new project toolkit integrates the CYC approach to risk management and governance. This means that the project managers can identify how their project needs to be established, how risk should be assessed. In addition, standard templates are provided for project plans and project reporting.

### **Verto**

7. In order to ensure a consistent, well managed approach to programme and project management, a new web based system has been implemented to support the management of projects. It is called Verto. Each phase of a programme or project is managed within the system and it provides a gateway process for the project manager to ensure that all requirements are met before moving to the next project phase. All work from planning to risk management is controlled in the system and all involved in the projects have access to update and view the information where appropriate. This allows a wider oversight for all stakeholders involved in the projects and those involved in the quality assurance of the systems in place (such as internal audit). During 15/16 all

significant projects will move onto this system. These will include major capital programmes, Adult Social Care Better Care Fund initiatives, Community Stadium and Digital Council Programme.

### **Transparency of Project activity.**

8. It is recognised that through the implementation of a standard project methodology and improved project reporting to Directorate Management Teams and CMT, there is improved visibility of projects across officers. However that improved visibility has not yet been provided to members.
9. The annual governance statement referred to a need to strengthen the role of Audit & Governance Committee and Scrutiny Committees in the issue of major projects. It is recommended that a quarterly major projects report is produced for Audit & Governance Committee, to cover projects under the following broad headings –
  - a. Where there is significant capital expenditure
  - b. Where there is likely to be significant public interest
  - c. Where there is a major saving target/change in the delivery of a service.
10. This report will be focussed on the main key projects and is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It would, however, be possible for the Committee to ask for additional information on any projects they become aware of. It is important however that the Committee are only involved in aspects within their remit, and in simple terms these cover matters of risk, governance, and effective use of resources.
11. It is suggested that where the Committee consider there are matters highlighted that they feel merit a more detailed review, then the committee should ask the relevant Scrutiny Committee to receive further details. Scrutiny Committees can clearly also ask for major projects to be reported to them, and it is hoped that regular reporting to Audit and Governance Committee would assist with the identification of relevant matters for the Scrutiny Committee.
12. It should be noted that matters in terms of the finance of major

projects is reported already to Executive in respect of the capital programme monitor. However, there may be merit in attaching to the Capital Monitor report, the Major projects report that Audit and Governance Committee have considered, along with any recommendations from the Audit and Governance meeting.

### 13. **Commercial Sensitivities.**

Through regular reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee, it is hoped to improve the transparency and communication to members of key projects, whilst balancing where relevant any issues of commercial sensitivity. It should be noted that commercial sensitivity tends to only apply at the procurement stage, rather than during construction.

#### **Recommendations**

Audit & Governance Committee are –

- Asked to agree that quarterly project updates be provided as described in Para 9.
- Note that a regular project updates will also be presented to the Executive (via the capital monitor report) covering the council's most significant projects.

Reason: To ensure greater transparency in project management.

#### **Contact Details**

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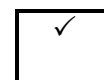
**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 14 September  
2015

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**