

Customer and Corporate Services
Scrutiny Management Committee

10 May 2021

Report of the Corporate Project Assurance lead on behalf of Corporate Management Team

Update on the Corporate Project Management approach

SUMMARY

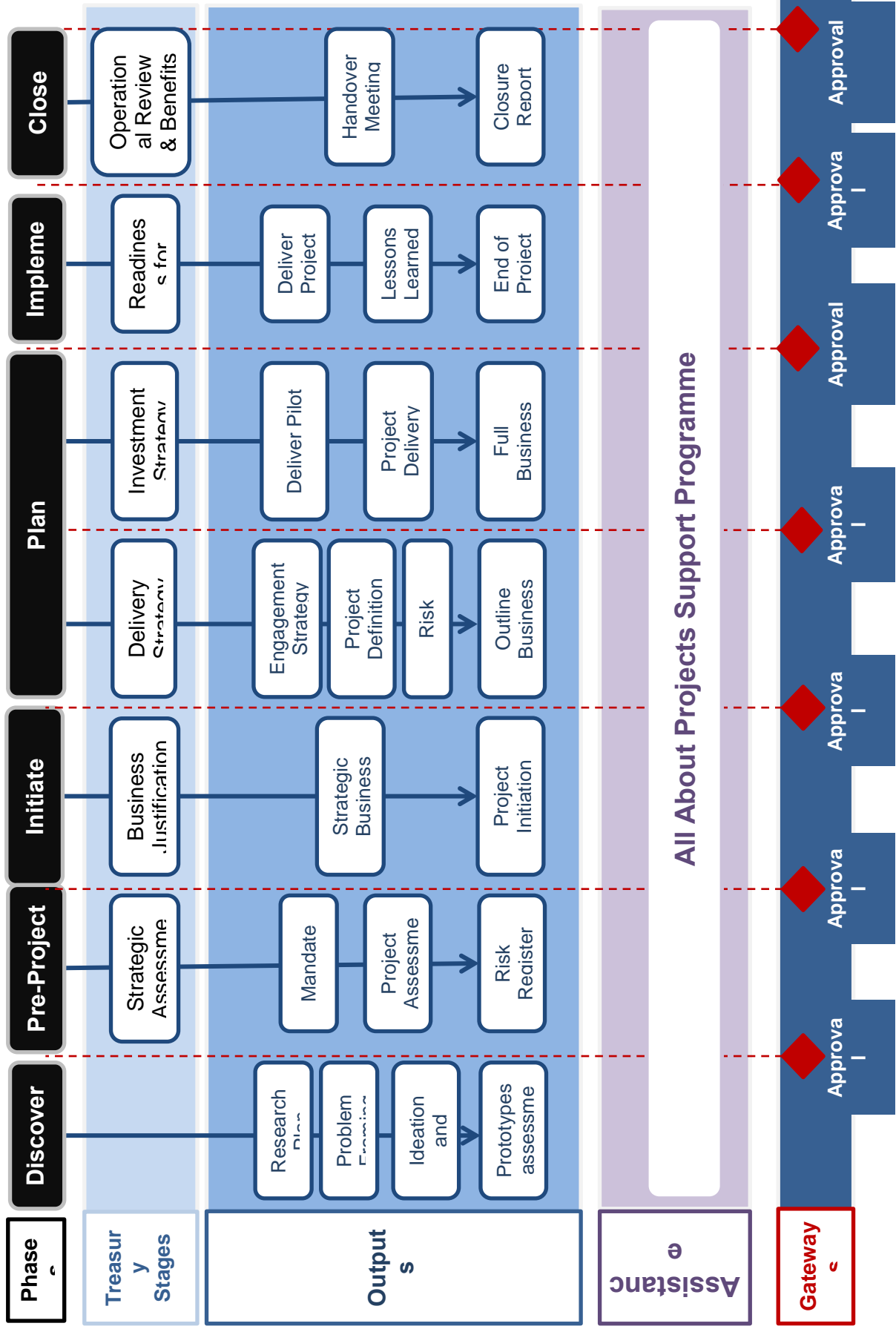
1. The purpose of this report is to update the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on the approach to Project Management across City of York Council.
2. Within the context of this framework to provide the latest major projects public updates at annexe A which are published on an ongoing basis with a specific update on the latest reporting on York Central annexe C.

BACKGROUND

3. The council undertakes a large amount of programme and project management and there is a necessity to ensure that there is an ongoing drive to maintain the standards that have previously been set and to strengthen areas where required.
4. The successful delivery of projects is key to the delivery of change across the Council and across the City in terms of providing, for example, customer centric and innovative business models and processes, value for money functions and regeneration. The Council runs a successful multimillion pound Capital programme. A list of the Council's Major projects is attached for information in **Annex A**.
5. This update is essentially a refresher of the report that was presented to this committee in October 2019.

PROJECTS

6. In order to ensure that projects are managed and delivered with the appropriate level of assurance, in December 2015 the council introduced the All About Projects (AAP) framework. The AAP framework has been developed based on industry standard best practice as a robust but flexible model for project management at CYC. Over the last 4 years the framework has been implemented and adjusted to ensure the delivery of projects is maximised and risk is minimised. **Annex B** illustrates the phases and flow of the All About Projects framework.
7. The requirement for a corporate approach had also been identified through a series of audits up to the end of 2014 and, as the framework was developed and implemented, the Audit and Governance Committee monitored the progress closely through a quarterly report. In the summer of 2017, the quarterly report was then merged into the quarterly risk monitor once the committee was content that sufficient progress had been made.
8. The Project Management approach is also picked up through the annual audit progress by the internal audit team.
9. Within the framework a project is defined as a ‘temporary group activity designed to deliver one or more product, service or result according to a specified business case.’ In other words:
 - A project is temporary – it has a clear start and end date, and therefore defined scope and resources
 - It has specified deliverables (services or products) that can be measured
 - It has a number of tasks to deliver those services or products
 - A project is unique - it is not a routine operation (business as usual), but a specific set of operations designed to accomplish one or more goals
 - A project team often includes people who don’t usually work together – sometimes from different organisations but always with clear roles and responsibilities.
10. The framework is founded on the core basic principles of Project Management, consistent with methodologies such as Prince2 (including initiation, planning, risk management, etc). It is organised into 6 phases. Discovery, Pre-project, Initiation, Planning, Implementation and Closure. See the diagram below.



All About Projects Support Programme

Gateway

Approval

Approval

Approval

Approval

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Approval

11. The following are areas that have been further developed to strengthen the project management approach in the last 5 years as part of the implementation of the framework and as part of adjustments:
- I. The Discovery phase is an important phase before the start of a project where the problem is shaped, knowledge is gathered in order to examine what the council do and what others do (including best practice), ideas are scrutinised and prototyped and proposals are brought forward in order to seek a mandate to move to developing a business case. A key point is that there is no live project at this stage. It is important to embed the thinking and practices around this phase into the everyday business of services areas. This will create a culture that is more responsive to change. There is now more detailed guidance on the Discovery phase and focus on Human Centred Design.
 - II. Business case development forms the backbone of the framework and its evolution and the accompanying options presentation and appraisal are important to an efficient journey through the framework. Key is ensuring that the business case has a sound foundation and that its development from Strategic case, through Outline case to Full case is clear. This is based on the Treasury Green Book approach.
 - III. Gateway points have been built into the framework to ensure that necessary approval, resource and documentation is in place and the risks are understood in order to move to the next phase of the AAP process.
 - IV. The framework is designed to allow an iterative approach to the design and implementation of the products in the projects.
 - V. The framework is flexible in order to cater for different sized projects and during the pre-project phase a project assessment matrix is used to judge the scale of a project. If a project comes out as Major or large it is included in the corporate highlight report The project is tested against:
 - a. Council Priorities;
 - b. Reputation;

- c. Structure in terms of process and staff;
 - d. Technology;
 - e. Policy or legislation;
 - f. Stakeholders;
 - g. Cost;
 - h. Financial objectives / savings;
 - i. Contract complexity;
 - j. Timescale;
- VI. Alignment of the Better Decision making tool to the AAP framework.
- VII. Roll out of the Verto Project Management system.
12. In the last 5 years there has also been developed the Corporate Highlight report. This is a monthly update, in a format agreed by the Audit and Governance committee, on the council's major projects and is published on the York Open data platform (see **Annex A**). Please be aware that the highlight report represents an update at a moment in time (around the middle of March 2021).
13. Since the submission of the highlight reports, the Executive have received a report on the York Central project and to give the latest position on York Central (see **Annex C**).

PROJECT ASSURANCE

14. Project assurance is there to measure the likelihood of success and to put in place recommendations for improvement.
15. The Programme Assurance group is made up of Directorate representatives who have oversight of all the Projects in their Directorate and collectively this provides oversight of all Projects across the Council.
16. Each Directorate programme lead is responsible for the project register in their Directorate and as a group undertake the following activities:

- Ensure that assurance arrangements are in place for projects in their Directorate;
 - Support Project assurance on projects within their Directorate bringing forward recommended interventions to the Project Sponsors where required;
 - Lead the assurance of the Directorate programme;
 - Make recommendations on interventions to their Directorate Management Team (DMT) on programme assurance;
 - With the rest of the Programme assurance group, make recommendations on interventions or improvements to CMT;
 - Ensure that large and medium sized projects are working to the AAP framework (implicit in this is sound business case, planning, risk and resource management);
 - Keep a register of large and medium sized projects organised into programmes;
 - Keep sight of the resource picture and ensure that commitments aren't duplicated;
 - Ensure that the necessary governance is in place and documents relating to the governance (e.g. Terms of reference) are up to date;
17. The Corporate Project Assurance lead, who chairs the group, reports to CMT on a two monthly basis. The Corporate Project Assurance lead is supported in the project assurance function by the Corporate Project Assurance Officer who works with the Project Managers on a day to day basis and in the monthly highlight reporting cycle.

PROJECT TRAINING

18. Having the rights skills on a Project team is important and all staff involved in Projects complete the "Introduction to Project Management" training. It is then mandated that all Project Managers of Major or significant Projects complete the Prince2 practitioner course. Finally, Officers who are performing a strategic role on Projects are directed to

Managing Successful Programmes (MSP). At present all the Major Project Managers are Prince2 qualified or equivalent.

SERVICE PLANNING

19. The Project Management process is linked to the Service Planning process to ensure that there is a full picture of service ambition and activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. CCSSMC are asked to note the updates on the improvements and project approach and review the Major Project Highlight report structure.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is kept updated on the project management framework.

Contact Details

Author:

Dave Atkinson
Head of Programmes and
Smart Place
01904 553481

Tracey Carter
Director Economy,
Regeneration and Housing

**Chief Officer
responsible for the report:**

Neil Ferris
Corporate Director for Economy and Place

Report **Date** 28/04/2021
Approve ✓

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: All ✓

For further information please contact the authors of the report

Abbreviations

AAP – All About Projects (this is the council’s project management framework)

CMT – Council Management Team

CYC – City of York Council

MSP – Managing Successful programmes

DMT – Directorate Management Team

Prince2 – Prince2 is a project management methodology that is widely adopted for managing projects in the public sector.

Verto – Verto is the council’s project management ICT system

Annexes

Annex A – Major Projects highlight report

Annex B – Project workflow

Annex C – York Central report to the April Executive meeting (this is the report only. The Annexes to the report can be found with the papers for the 22 April 2021 Executive meeting

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=12510&Ver=4>).