

Programme End and Lessons Learnt Report

REPORT DATE: 8th March 2021

Purpose of Document

This report is the Project Manager's report to the Board on how well the project has performed against its Project Initiation Document, including the original planned cost, schedule and tolerances, in order to hand over any duties and to receive a final project sign off. The original Business Case, Project Initiation Document and final version of the Project Plan should be provided as supporting documentation to this report.

SECTION A. PROGRAMME DETAILS

Project Name:	Recovery, Change and Transformation Programme – a set of projects set up to respond to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.
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Project Manager	Debbie Smith	Project Start Date	April 2020
Project Sponsor	Kelvin Mills	Project Original Finish Date	March 2021
Project Ref. No	<i>If applicable</i>	Project Expected Finish Date	March 2021

Project Priorities & Status

Project Priority Status RAG*
Completed On track
Completed Off track
Off track – not completed

Priority	Quality / Cost / Time	RAG Status	Comments
1	Quality	Completed	
2	Time	Completed	
3	Cost	Completed	

SECTION B. END OF PROJECT SUMMARY

Achievement of programme objectives and deliverables

Cross Cutting Themes

- Communication

A key deliverable was an effective **Communication Plan** for staff, councillors, residents, businesses and the community groups as we navigated through the challenges thrown at us by the pandemic– this was agreed at Programme Board. The plan ensured that all stakeholders were engaged with in a timely and effective manner, helping to focus and prioritise groups and work streams where necessary.

- Climate savings

The pandemic has accelerated a change in working that we could not have foreseen. The impact to an individual's carbon footprint in terms of travel has been significantly reduced. As part of the Business Transformation, agile working project, it was noted that they 'anticipate total grey fleet (individual car miles claimed) mileage for 20/21 being 60% less than 19/20.¹ It can probably be assumed that a similar % decrease (and possibly more) can be applied to Member travel (an estimated £15K saving).

The Corporate Projects Project generated a criteria to evaluate projects in 2020-21 budget. This prioritised potential carbon impact (reduce or increase) as a key scoring criteria. This scoring criteria has been used to evaluate projects in the coming financial year, allowing the climate emergency to be appropriately considered in future project evaluation.

The sustainability officer played a pivotal role in project meetings for each of the ten projects focusing the groups on where carbon savings could be made in each project and ensure that teams had considered the climate emergency in their actions.

- Financial Impact

The first pivotal hurdle encountered by the Council and its Community was the financial impact of the pandemic. The primary objective within the Finance Project, identified by the Programme as critical, was to understand and evaluate the financial impact of the emergency situation. The RCT Programme played a vital role in delivering the emergency budget that was approved by Council in the summer 2020.

The Programme identified other projects where savings could be made, largely in the corporate projects area. This was prioritised to feed into this work stream. This, with coordination of Heads of Services to analyse their existing budget all of which co-ordinated by the programme, culminated in an agreed emergency budget. This swift action meant the Council did not have to invoke a Section 114 notice. A full report on where savings were made is part of that agreed emergency budget.

The projects here also had an opportunity to access grants from national government to support the community (£110,000 of the Re-opening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) and distributed £533,784 (figure at November 2020) of business rates grants).

Essential Programme deliverables as listed in Programme PID

A Service Delivery Impact Report – assessing all services across the Council and what impact Covid-19 has had on delivery of those, quantified by cost, time and quality.

All Heads of Service completed this as part of their Service Plan review. This impact report is informing Service Plans for 2021-22 as we reflect the on-going changes from the pandemic into our usual priorities.

Lessons Learned Report (from working during the emergency period)- from each service key learning points need to be collected and actions reflected upon. Allowing an informed

¹ Using 18/19 as the basis for our calculations, that year Waverley's business travel accounted for **81,654kg** of direct Greenhouse Gas emissions, based on a total mileage of **276,377** (ECU, casual and lease car mileage). 2019/20 total grey fleet mileage: **248,749**. 2020/21 predicted total grey fleet mileage*: **100,605**. *(based on July-October mileage multiplied to calculate annual total) July-Oct data is because this is when services started to return to "normal" after the first lockdown.

assessment of actions taken that can be useful going forward into our new normal and allow us to be more prepared for future such emergencies

A template was created and given to Heads of Service to aid their updates of Service Plans. The learning is now being incorporated into updated Business Continuity Plans.

More immediately the focus for managers and Heads of Service was to implement a safe way for staff to work at home, focusing on new technologies and on well-being and remote line management. Time was spent on reflecting the best way to move forward when the realisation that we would be working at home for a longer period of time than first envisaged.

The programme allowed a cross organisation, joined up, approach to new ways of working and consistency for teams now working so differently than they had before.

Updated Corporate Strategy and Service Delivery Plans to reflect new priorities

A revised Corporate Strategy was signed off at December 2020 Council.

The updated Service Plans reflecting the Covid impact have also been approved and agreed. These were delivered later than the project objectives had planned as a result of further lockdowns and the continuation of restrictions beyond that first considered.

The prioritisation of work streams across the Programme through an Overall Programme Plan

A programme plan was drafted and agreed at the Programme Board. Priority was focused on ensuring staff / member safety alongside finance and plans to rationalise capital project work. The programme allowed timelines to be stream lined and prioritised to ensure work was completed in the correct order to achieve the financial savings required. Without programme management, each project could have been conducted in silo and timelines not aligned.

Having programme milestones mapped out allowed the Programme Board to understand when work streams would be completed. In due course it set out that the financial sign offs were in place for the emergency budget approvals.

The programme RAG rated the projects priorities against the programme objectives, allowing the individual project objectives to be prioritised against the overall programme to ensure effective delivery. This was shared with the Programme Board and Portfolio Holders which gave them confidence in the programme's ability to deliver.

Updated PIDs and re-direction of finances where necessary for Projects with the new focus and realignment of finance

The Corporate Projects project developed an agreed criteria for project priorities. PIDs have been updated where projects have been put on hold to reflect new timelines – where decisions are still on hold, PIDs will be updated in due course – contributing to an in – year saving of £480,000.

Monitoring of risks associated with the Programme

A full risk register that incorporated programme risks as well as monitoring red scale project risks was presented to the Programme Board on a regular basis. This used the Council's agreed risk strategy and ratings, and was monitored by the Programme Working Group. It fed back into other departments and projects where necessary.

Closer partnership working, shared services, with the county council, towns & parishes and other district and boroughs.

The pandemic has brought together community groups and partnership working with other levels of government that had previously been in place, but with greater focus and urgency. The Community Resilience and Economic Recovery project groups have had a great opportunity to enhance these relationships and work together.

The Economic Recovery Group met with the Town Councils regularly to discuss opening the high street and share ideas. The Reopening High Street Safely Fund was administered by Waverley and shared with the Town Council's to spend. Significant correspondence and liaison with them to agree this fund built rapport and confidence in working with each other.

Through the Community Resilience group, partners were invited to be part of the Project Board itself and the buy-in and attendance to meetings was excellent. The opportunity to meet remotely supported people being able to attend meetings that they might not have been able to previously, enhancing engagement of Council Officers with those from County Council, Health, and Voluntary sectors. Community groups seized the opportunity to demonstrate both their challenges and strengths to the Council.

Through the emergency period, community reliance on largely voluntary community groups was demonstrated. The Council's relationships with these groups have got stronger with the project, boding well for future working practices.

Benefits achieved as a result of the programme

The programme and project structure brought clarity to a process that was a Council wide response, one that could have been haphazard and mixed. The responsive programme to start to 'normalise' the situation, was set up whilst the emergency situation was continuing, where some teams were trying to resolve immediate crisis issues whilst formalising their response. Without the project management support and joined up thinking, this would have not been possible.

The programme used existing agreed project management documentation and structures to bring together a complex programme of work in a systematic response, with rigorous follow up by the Programme Management team. A SWOT analysis of each project in conjunction with the lead Portfolio Holder enabled the projects to be focused with political weight behind them ensuring that objectives were clear and achieved.

Support from project managers across services (not necessarily an officer in the lead team) enabled a more rounded discussion and helpful challenge in the project, with staff seeing challenges from a different perspective outside of the service. Projects reported that having project managers and using the project process enabled clarity, brought focus, and deliverability of the objectives and outcomes.

Early sign off of Objectives within the agreed PID – objectives were critiqued with support from Project Managers and Programme Board early in the process. We took the time to get the objectives right which enabled projects to progress at pace where needed.

The Programme Board highlighted risks to the Covid Response Group (CRG) as we entered the second wave. It gave updates to the Business Transformation Board and CRG meetings to ensure

these linked programmes were kept up to date with RCT progress and no duplication of effort was spent.

The Programme Working Group worked well to pull together a programme with no specific end date and worked flexibly to readjust timelines when Covid has lasted much longer than had been anticipated.

The Programme Working Group worked well with the finance team to bring support and cross service working to enable the creation of an emergency budget at pace.

Allocation of additional resources to projects where required enabled those teams that have traditionally been a small service, but came under significant pressure to respond to the pandemic, were well supported (e.g. Economic Development and Communities).

Performance against planned time, cost and other tolerances

Record performance against time, cost, quality and scope tolerances.

Time – The programme delivered early urgent response to key areas such as staffing policies/resources and the emergency budget. Section 144 Notice was avoided. The pandemic is ongoing, however each project has been delivered in a timely fashion to merge into a new business as usual for each Service area. The timescales for each objective were updated as appropriately as the pandemic evolved.

Cost – The programme did not hold a specific budget. It was staffed using existing resources with many officers adapting their usual work schedules. It delivered significant savings for the emergency budget. It supported the successful management of a number of financial support schemes such as Business Rate Grants, Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and the Emergency Assistance Grant.

Quality – The programme is considered to have achieved its objectives in terms of quality. As well as addressing key emergency challenges and decisions, it has helped re-shape Council services, supported local residents and businesses and identified positive changes for the council's future work.

Scope – The programme remained in scope. It had a wide remit but was able to effectively transfer its work into the new business as usual via service plans, policy updates and action plans.

Deliverables

List the deliverables created during the programme.

- Programme Plan
- Risk Register
- Co-ordination of project update reports

SECTION C. LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This document should also include any lessons that can be usefully applied to other projects. The data in the report should be used to refine, change and improve processes and quality standards.

Lessons Learnt

It was anticipated at the beginning of the programme that the Programme Board would have more authority on allocation of resources to support the programme - however HR led the redeployment of staff and any extra resources required were managed through the usual process.

Inclusion of Transformation Projects led to confusion at the outset although the link was necessary as the purpose of the programme was to move from recovery to change and eventually transform. However, the requirement to report the transformation activity twice was unnecessary and the projects worked alongside each other where appropriate with representation from each programme attending the requisite Board meetings.

When an emergency situation arises and we have to respond quickly, detailed thought must be given on whether it has any synergies with existing projects and has the potential for overlapping of existing governance structures. There was definitely some confusion about the word 'Transformation' in the programme when compared with the already on-going Business Transformation programme. This was counteracted by having updates about the RCT Programme on the BT Programme Board.

Within the PID there is an opportunity to discuss 'interfacing projects'. It is recommended that a prompt is added regarding governance structures and potential overlaps in outcomes – to ensure time is spent on working these through early on in the process.

Handover roles and responsibilities

1. Continue to make provision for staff to work from home to allow for carbon savings with less travel to the office – part of Business Transformation project, Future Office Working
2. Build into the estates strategy new hubs to allow for local staff and councillors to join meetings at their closest location rather than always in Godalming or at home – part of Future Office Working project and aligned closely with estates
3. Continue to allow and promote on-line meetings where possible to save mileage and expense claims for staff and Councillors as part of Policy and Governance Business as Usual and dependant on law and Council decision
4. Ensure ongoing reviews of IT strategy and online platforms to achieve best collaboration opportunity and value for money
5. Training of Chairs for hybrid meetings should this be allowed
6. Continued communication around how we work during this period of uncertainty whilst Covid continues to be present in our community. Also communication about programme close and where the learning from the projects is going to feed in.

SECTION D. PROJECT CLOSURE AND SIGN OFF

Project Closure Meeting Date with the Project Board, Director or Head of Service
Meeting Date 17 th March 2021

Project Closure Meeting Details
<i>Agreed</i>

	Project Sign off from Project Manager	Project Sign off from Project Sponsor / Project Board representative / Director or HoS
<i>Full Name</i>	<i>Debbie Smith</i>	<i>Kelvin Mills</i>
<i>Sign off Date</i>	<i>17th March 2021</i>	<i>17th March 2021</i>
<i>Signature if applicable</i>		