Cherwell District Council & South Northamptonshire's

Project Management Statement of Recommended Practice

A guide for everyone involved in delivering projects

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05/02/2012

South Northamptonshire Council

Cherwell | DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils' Project Management Statement of Recommended Practice

Context

This policy framework constitutes a statement of recommended practice in project management for both South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils. Both councils have previously had their own versions, both based on the standard PRINCE2 methodology, and both tailored and stripped down to varying degrees. This new, single statement of recommended practice, replaces all previous guidance, but is an updated and similarly stripped down version of PRINCE2.

All projects – any standalone piece of work outside of "Business as Usual" and intended to bring about a change is something – should be delivered in line with this guidance; there are specific authorisation point for projects valued at more than £50,000 or which impact both councils or more than one service.

1. Projects, what they do and how they are managed

1.1. What is a project?

The standard PRINCE2 definition is: *A project is a temporary organisation created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to the agreed business case*.

So what does that mean? A project in this context is not a piece of work, it is a temporary organisation. Just as the whole council has a chief executive responsible for everything the whole organisation does, and directors with specific responsibilities, senior managers with responsibility for councils resources, people, and performance, a project is an organisation with someone in charge and accountable for what is done, some other roles responsible for delivering or supplying things, managing the money, making sure the right skills are available etc. It is a replica organisation, set up for a short period, to do something that isn't part of the day to day work of the whole organisation.

Corporate Management Organisation		Project Management Organisation
Chief Executive	Accountable for what is delivered	Project Sponsor
Corporate Management Team	Responsible for deciding and specifying what is to be delivered, when and at what cost	Project Board
Service delivery managers	Delivers what is required	Project Manager
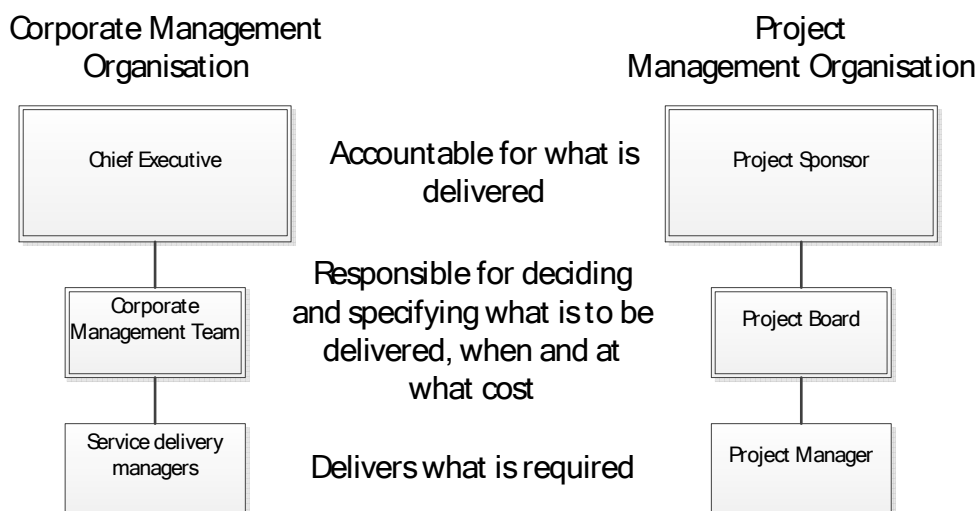
1.2. What do projects do?

Projects are distinct from "business as usual", because they exist to change things – the things that make up "business as usual", whether that's the buildings in a town, or the process to deliver a service. Projects are the means by which we introduce change.

There are real differences between "business as usual" and projects:

Business as usual	Projects
Steady state: "the way we do things round here"	Change: projects are the means by which change is introduced
Permanence: the established structures, policies and operations making up the organisation	Temporary: projects are set up, deliver their products, and closed down.
Organised by function: business management structures supported by an establishment	Cross functional: projects involve a team of people with different skills working together on a temporary basis to introduce change that impacts others outside that team. Projects often cross the functional divisions and can span different organisations.
Continuous: medium and long term strategic plans	One-off: every project is unique.
Certainty of purpose and objectives	Uncertainty: projects deal with threats and opportunities over and above those associated with the normal course of business; projects are more risky.

1.3. Why have a project management method?

Project management is defined by PRINCE2 as *the planning, delegating, monitoring and control of all aspects of the project, and the motivation of those involved, to achieve the project objectives within the expected performance targets for time, cost, quality, scope benefits and risks*.

We have established that a Project is about delivering something new or changed, for example an extension to a house. The extension is made up of a number of different things, referred to in project-management speak as products: a roof, some walls, some windows, some wiring etc. The purpose of project management is to keep control over those products – to make sure the roofer doesn't turn up on site before the foundations are in.

Project management is the planning, delegating, monitoring and control of all aspects of the project, and the motivation of those involved, to achieve the project objectives within the expected performance targets for time, cost, quality, scope benefits and risks.

The second purpose of using a project management tried-and-tested methodology is that projects are inherently risky: using a sound approach to control them increases the likelihood of success.

2. Project Management at South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils

South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils share a project management methodology based on the tried and tested PRINCE2 industry standard approach. The methodology follows these principles:

- to ensure continued business justification for the project during its delivery

- learning from experience

- uses defined and agreed roles and responsibilities

- work is planned, monitored and controlled on a stage by stage basis

- objectives are delivered within defined tolerances with defined delegated authority – the principal of management by exception

- work is defined as the delivery of products with clear scope and quality standards

- the methodology is tailored and scaled to suit the project environment

The methodology is built on the elements:

- A business case, to answer the **WHY?** question

- A project organisation to answer the **WHO?** question

- Specifying quality answers the **WHAT?** question

- Plans, to set out the **HOW? HOW MUCH?** and **WHEN?** questions

- Risk, to deal with the **WHAT IF?** question

- Change, to allow **IMPACT** to be assessed

- Progress monitoring, to answer the **ARE WE THERE YET?** question, and the **SHOULD WE KEEP ON GOING?** question

It is scalable to suit small or large projects, and its use is recommended for all projects undertaken within both councils. However, its use is recommended if your project is going to use more than £50,000 of Council money, or if it brings change to more than one service or council.

2.1.   The three stage project management process

CONTROLLED START		DELIVERY	CONTROLLED
Controlled Start: Pre-project	Controlled Start: Initiation	Delivery	Controlled Close
Defining the project

Options appraisal

Corporate commitment

Do we have a viable and worthwhile project? | Detailed definition of the project in terms of time, cost, quality, scope, risk and benefits

Project organisation set up

Formal approval to proceed | Managing the delivery of products

Managing risk and resources

Reporting progress and exceptions to the Board

Go/no go decisions at stage ends | Embedding the change

Follow-on actions and handover

Decommissioning the project organisation

Lessons learned |

A summary of the documents, records and reports recommended in each of the three stages is given at Annex A.

2.2.   The controlled start stage of project management

Managing a project begins before the formal start of a project is agreed by senior management. There are two stages to the start-up: pre-project work to determine if there is a viable and worthwhile project and then the formal documenting of what the project is for agreement and sign off by corporate management.

In theory, projects start with a mandate from senior management to do something. In reality this mandate may be a casual conversation to investigate some options, or a minute from a Council committee. It may be an idea from within the team set out as a short proposal. Whatever form it takes, it is often not recognised as a mandate until the project is well into being specified.

The SNC & CDC Methodology does not require a mandate, but if you've got one, it's always helpful.

2.2.1. The Pre-Project stage of a controlled start

The recommended starting point for all projects is a Project Brief, but you are unlikely to be in a position to set one out without doing quite a lot of pre-work to clarify what is desirable and necessary to achieve the objectives you have in mind. This might include an options appraisal, talking to suppliers to get indicative costs, researching what others have done etc. Once you have a project in mind, and have some broad parameters, you can set out the Project Brief. A template for this document is available from the programme office, from the intranet, and is also attached as ANNEX B. The project brief is prepared in order to get broad approval to spend further time and effort in working up a project in greater detail. It sets out in broad terms the purpose of the project and the reason it is being proposed. It gives a summary of the Business Case for implementing this change, the main deliverables and outputs that will arise, how they will be used and the benefits they will accrue, the key

risks, the main stakeholder groups, and the likely resources required to bring it about – financial, effort, knowledge and skills.

Authorisation to proceed to initiation

If the project, were it go ahead, looks likely to cost less than £50,000 and/or affect just one directorate in one Council, then corporate approval to process lies with the Head of Service. For all other projects, the project brief is owned by a JMT member whose responsibility it is to get JMT's approval to develop the project further.

2.2.2. The Initiation Stage of a controlled start

If approval to go further with a proposed project is granted, the project brief is developed into much greater detail as the Project Initiation Document (PID). Small projects, within a single directorate and/or using less than £50,000 of council money, can go straight from PID to delivery, with the approval of the Head of Service.

For all other projects, at this stage the project should be registered with the programme office, and the nominated project manager given access to the councils' project management information system called "Project in a Box" and briefed on the use of the scheduling tool and risk register tool of that system. While the PID is in development, and before the project is approved, the programme office will provide any support and training for the prospective project manager to use the system.

Compiling the Project Initiation Document (PID)

The main body of the PID is an extension of the Brief, but covers in more significant detail the objectives, the products, what's in and out of scope, dependencies and interfaces with other things, a detailed organisation chart for the project, and very importantly the business case for doing it. The business case will need to cover capital and revenue costs, forecast for return on investment, a profile of the spending and return, savings and cashable efficiencies. For projects not governed by Programme Management, the service accountant is the key contributor to building the business case. Projects within a Programme will be assigned a project accountant.

The governance and controls sections of the PID

The PID has other sections, not used in the Brief, which are concerned with the governance of the project specifically:

How the project is going to engage with **stakeholders.** The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy provides context for developing a plan for the project, and is attached as Annex C.

What **standards** and **quality** thresholds are going to be applied, and how will tests be used.

What **resources** are going to be used by the project – money, skills, people, knowledge, information, assets etc., and how are they to be acquired and accounted for. The Project Resource Management Strategy provides the context for developing a project resource plan, and is attached as Annex D.

The **schedule** for delivery. This is usually in the form of a Gantt chart which gives a line by line duration or delivery point for each of the products listed earlier in the PID. The schedule

should be compiled using the "Project in a Box" Planner tool. Where the project is large, complex, or being managed externally MS Project is often used for scheduling. This is quite compatible with Project in a Box and is an acceptable option, although the costs of purchase and training lie with the service.

The project's approach to **risk**. The Project Risk Management Strategy (based round the joint SNC CDC Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy) provides the context for developing a risk management plan for the project, and is attached as Annex E. The risks register should be compiled using the "Project in a Box" Planner tool.

Tolerances are a key, but much under-used tool in project control. However well you plan, something you have costed at £10 will come in at £9.50 or £11. Something you planned to be complete next week will in fact be a fortnight late; something planned to be delivered in red is now only available in blue. Project tolerances set out clearly the discretion the project is giving to its project manager to make decisions when things aren't exactly as set out in the PID; tolerances are the linch-pin to managing by exception.

Anything which comes along which has the ability to change the cost, duration, quality or deliverables should not simply be accommodated but assessed as part of a formal **change control** process. The Issue Resolution and Change Control Strategy provides the context for developing a project –specific approach to resolving issues and managing change, and is attached as Annex F.

The purpose of the PID is to get agreement as to what is being produced when, at what cost, to what quality, by whom, and with what level of control. A good PID will allow a project manager to get on with delivering, without having to seek decisions from the Project Board, or to escalate issues to senior management. The PID is owned by a member of JMT whose responsibility it is to present it to JMT for their approval and agreement.

Pre-project work

Problem identified, options assessed, research etc

The solution may require a project

Get template from Programme Office

Project Brief

Value
— Under £50k → Head of service decision to proceed
— Over £50k → JMT decision to proceed

Head of service decision to proceed:
— Yes → Project initiation document
— No → Stop

JMT decision to proceed:
— No → Stop
— Yes → Project Manager (PM) books time with Programme Office to register the project & set up the Project Admin (who, in what roles, objectives, stages etc) in the project information management system (PiaB); Project Brief uploaded.

Project initiation document — HoS Liaison → Controlled delivery

Training for PM from Programme Office to use Planner tool, and to check out, update, and check in PID document as it develops

Project initiation

PM completes the base project into in PiaB (PM supported by Programme Office)

Briefing from Programme Office for Project Board and Team on how to use PiaB for their project, document check in and out, permissions, view only, etc

JMT asked to approve:
— No → Stop
— Yes:

Sponsor and PM decide — Who gets what permissions
— View only
— Modify
— Read Write

Programme office set up users and passwords

Build PID, using template and PiaB. (PM supported by Programme Office)

Project Initiation document

PM takes ownership of Project into within PiaB — Controlled delivery

Formal training in PiaB arranged for PM as soon as can be scheduled; meanwhile support available from Programme Office

2.3. The delivery stage of project management

Depending on the size and complexity of what is to be delivered, the project may be broken up into stages. At the end of each stage the business case is reviewed by the board to ensure it is still valid and that there is still a business justification for the project. The board is responsible for agreeing to progress to the next stage.

Delivery is focused on the creation of the products set out in the PID, to the specified quality, using the agreed resources in the agreed amount of time.

Managing delivery is the responsibility of the Project Manager; the Project Sponsor retains accountability. There are six key areas the Project Manager must control, and a set of key tools for the Project Manager to use in managing the delivery:

1. **Cost**: the project budget must be profiled and monitored at an agreed frequency with the service accountant. A standard format for project accounting has been agreed and should be used by all projects. It can be uploaded into "Project in a Box" where information can readily be extracted in automatically generated reports.

2. **Timescales:** a Project Schedule should be "baselined" at the time the PID is agreed. This means it is fixed in place, so that if a date moves, that movement is captured as a variance and not just accepted without comment. Sometimes, if a significant change to the planned delivery timetable is required, an alternative schedule has to be developed, known as an exception plan. It is not good practice to simply change the end date! Nothing is learned about how change can best be managed if changes to the plan are not recorded and examined. Key milestones and/or a critical path should be identified within the project schedule and those milestones are replicated in the Corporate Performance Management Framework and reported on quarterly. The project schedule should be stored and monitored in "Project in a Box" where it can readily be extracted in automatically generated reports**.**

3. **Quality**: the products created must all be fit for purpose and meet the quality criteria established by the senior customer. There are two tools for ensuring the products are fit for purpose is the Product Definition Document, and the Work Package.

4. **Scope**: The scope is as agreed in the PID but throughout the project's life, questions, suggestions and problems will all come along, and constitute issues which need to be resolved. Some of these issues will require serious consideration in light of the agreed scope, and may result in requests for change. The Issues Resolution plan for the project will set out how this is done, including the role of a change authority board, but all issues must be captured and recorded in the project Issues Log, which is maintained in "Project in a Box".

5. **Risk**: risks change throughout the project, and decisions are required about whether to attempt to reduce or remove them, or to accept them. These decisions are made in the context of the project's risk plan, and are recorded in the Risk Log, which is maintained in "Project in a Box".

6. **Benefits**: The objectives of a project are concerned with what the individual products collectively deliver in terms of improvements and change, and the project manager must

be concerned that the purpose is kept in view and not lost in the business of delivering products.

2.3.1. Monitoring delivery

Monitoring delivery is the responsibility of the Project Sponsor. Monitoring delivery uses a standard project report generated from information collated and updated by the project manager, and stored centrally in "Project in a Box". For small projects which are not using "Project in a Box", a standard paper template Project Status Report is available from the programme office, and covers the same information.

The sponsor should receive a Project Report at agreed, regular intervals from the Project Manager. Very often these reports are produced for Project Board meetings where there is an agreed schedule.

Project reports are automatically generated from the project information stored and updated in "Project in a Box" and comprise

- Summary information about the people involved in the project, the objectives, and stages.

- A standard seven-criteria RAG assessment:

    o Budget status – are we on track

    o Schedule status – are we on time

    o People – are the people or skills Required available as planned

    o Quality – are quality specifications being met

    o Issues status – how are we managing problems, off-spec delivery, and requests for change

    o Risk status – new risks, closed risks, escalated risks

    o Communications and stakeholders – are the stakeholders facilitating or impeding delivery

    Guidance for how to make a Red, Amber or Green assessment is given at Annex I.

- A budget monitoring spread sheet

- An extract from the Project Schedule

- A list of open risks at Red or Amber, with the actions planned

- A list of open issues at Red or Amber, with the actions planned

The Project Board is ultimately responsible for assurance that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcome of the required quality to meet the Business Case defined in the Project Initiation Document, and therefore has a key role in monitoring delivery. While the board need not meet unless there are exceptions to the agreed plan, it is common

practice to have regular meetings to satisfy the assurance role and to receive the project manager's highlight report.

The Board must meet towards the end of each stage, or the end of the project if it has just one stage. A these meetings the Project Manager must provide sufficient information to enable the board to review success to date, approve the plan for the next stage or the project close, confirm the continuing business justification for the project and acceptability of the risks.

Some decisions will be escalated to the Project board where they are out with the tolerances agreed in the PID.

A standard agenda template and standard Action Log are provided for the management of board meetings.

2.3.2. Delivery Monitoring
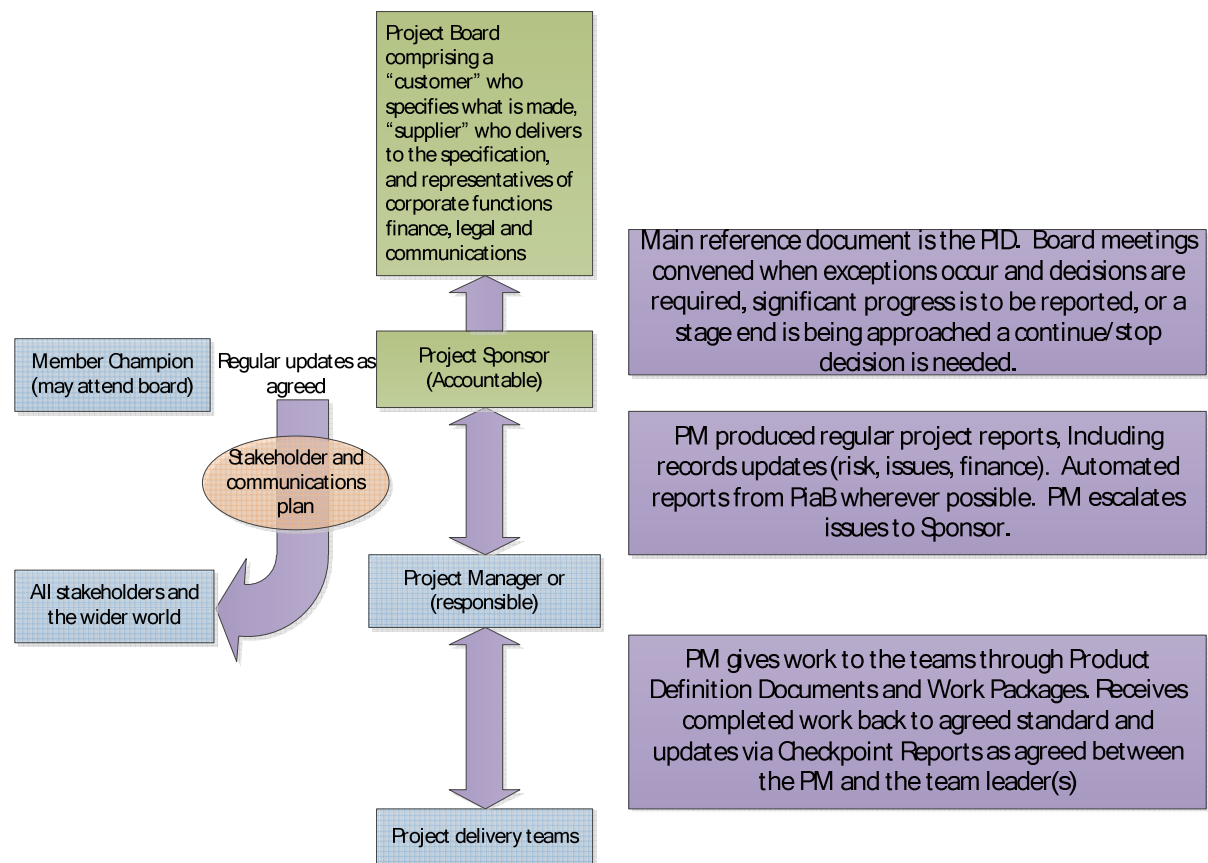
2.4. The controlled close stage of project management

The final stage of all projects is the decommissioning of the project organisation, the return to the business of any assets commandeered by the project such as rooms or equipment, and the preparation of outstanding acceptance processes and handover of follow-on actions.
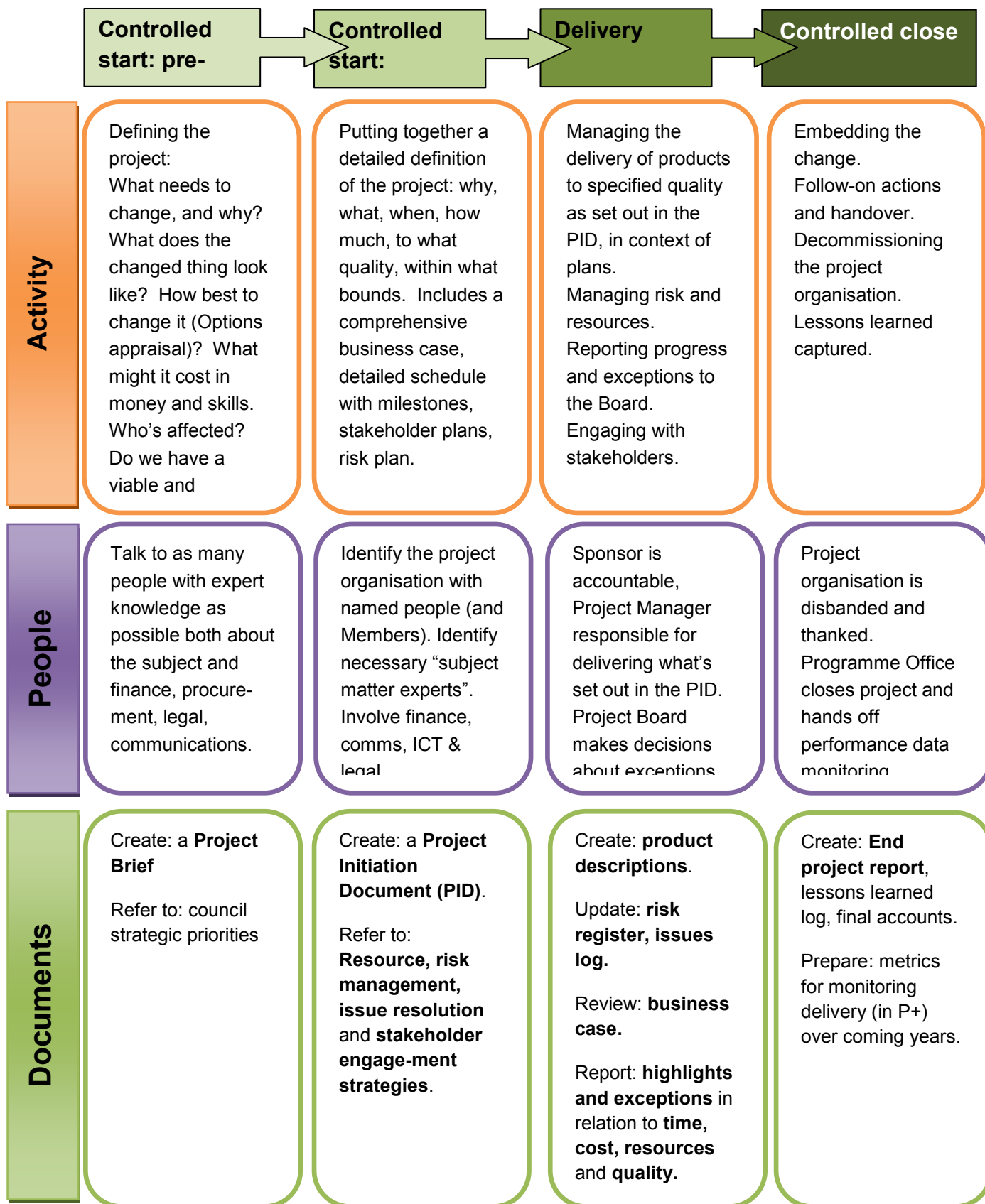
2.5. Summary of activity, people, and documents for each stage in the process

	Controlled start: pre-	Controlled start:	Delivery	Controlled close
Activity	Defining the project: What needs to change, and why? What does the changed thing look like? How best to change it (Options appraisal)? What might it cost in money and skills. Who's affected? Do we have a viable and	Putting together a detailed definition of the project: why, what, when, how much, to what quality, within what bounds. Includes a comprehensive business case, detailed schedule with milestones, stakeholder plans, risk plan.	Managing the delivery of products to specified quality as set out in the PID, in context of plans. Managing risk and resources. Reporting progress and exceptions to the Board. Engaging with stakeholders.	Embedding the change. Follow-on actions and handover. Decommissioning the project organisation. Lessons learned captured.
People	Talk to as many people with expert knowledge as possible both about the subject and finance, procure-ment, legal, communications.	Identify the project organisation with named people (and Members). Identify necessary "subject matter experts". Involve finance, comms, ICT & legal	Sponsor is accountable, Project Manager responsible for delivering what's set out in the PID. Project Board makes decisions about exceptions	Project organisation is disbanded and thanked. Programme Office closes project and hands off performance data monitoring
Documents	Create: a **Project Brief** Refer to: council strategic priorities	Create: a **Project Initiation Document (PID)**. Refer to: **Resource, risk management, issue resolution** and **stakeholder engage-ment strategies**.	Create: **product descriptions**. Update: **risk register, issues log.** Review: **business case.** Report: **highlights and exceptions** in relation to **time, cost, resources** and **quality.**	Create: **End project report**, lessons learned log, final accounts. Prepare: metrics for monitoring delivery (in P+) over coming years.

3. The people involved in project management

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

Role descriptors for all the project organisation roles are attached as Annex H. In summary they are:

The Project Sponsor (sometimes referred to as the Executive) is ultimately responsible for the project, supported by the Senior User and Senior Supplier. The Sponsor's role is to ensure that the project is focussed throughout its life cycle on achieving its objectives and delivering a product that will achieve the forecast benefits. The Sponsor has to ensure that the project gives value for money, ensuring a cost-conscious approach to the project, balancing the demands of business, user and supplier.

Throughout the project, the Sponsor 'owns' the Business Case.

The Project Board is responsible to corporate or programme management for the overall direction and management of the project and has responsibility and authority for the project within the remit set by corporate or programme management and reflected in the PID.

The Project Board is ultimately responsible for assurance that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcome of the required quality to meet the Business Case defined in the Project Initiation Document. The Project Board is not a democracy controlled by votes. The Sponsor is the key decision maker because he/she is ultimately responsible to the business. He/she is supported by the Senior User and Senior Supplier.

The Senior Supplier represents the interests of those designing, developing, facilitating, procuring, implementing, and possibly operating and maintaining the project products. This role is accountable for the quality of products delivered by the supplier(s). The Senior Supplier role must have the authority to commit or acquire supplier resources required.

If necessary, more than one person may be required to represent the suppliers.

The Senior User is responsible for specifying the needs of those who will use the final product(s), for user liaison with the project team and for monitoring that the solution will meet those needs within the constraints of the Business Case in terms of quality, functionality and ease of use.

The role represents the interests of all those who will use the final product(s) of the project, those for whom the product will achieve an objective or those who will use the product to deliver benefits. The Senior User role commits user resources and monitors products against requirements. This role may require more than one person to cover all the user interests. For the sake of effectiveness the role should not be split between too many people.

The Project Manager has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the board.

The Project Manager's prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the required products to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The Project Manager is also responsible for the project producing a result capable of achieving the benefits defined in the Business Case.

Project Assurance is independent of the project manager and is concerned with ensuring that the project remains consistent with, and continues to meet, a business need and that no change to the external environment affects the validity of the project. Project Assurance must therefore monitor Stage and Team Planning, Work Package preparation and quality review preparation.

4. Project Management tools, techniques and training

4.1. Tools

4.1.1. Project information system "Project in a Box"

The main tool available for organising, storing and presenting project information at SNC and CDC is a product called "Project in a Box".

This online project office system has been procured to allow project information to be stored in one place but made available to all, and will allow Officers and Members to have a simple view of the current position of any individual project or the programme as a whole. Provided the project manager keeps the information up to date.

The system has capacity for up to 20 project managers and 40 project team members, with unlimited view-only capacity, managed on a password and permissions basis.

When a project brief is approved, or if a project has started with a PID which is approved, the project manager is recommended to register the project with the Programme Office which will set up the project within the system and provide initial coaching in how to use the Planner tool, comprising a scheduler, risk register and issues register.

Formal training from system specialists will be provided as soon as possible after the project manager is identified, although group sessions are always preferred. If there is a gap, Programme Office staff will provide support to project managers as they become used to using the system to update their information and produce their reports.

Individual documents can be protected and made available only to certain users, and individuals can be assigned rights to view, or modify whole projects' documentation or a single file.

View-only access is through a browser over the internet, with username and password access. Project Sponsors will assign view-only access and with their project manager determine individual users' and documents' permissions and rights.

The system is designed to present information visually and the intention is to move away from printed reports and towards on-screen reports, each saved within the system as a read only file, thus providing an audit trail of reports throughout the life of the project. Printed reports can be generated.

4.1.2. Microsoft Project

For large complex projects, Microsoft Project may be used as the scheduling tool. License costs must be picked up by the service concerned, as must training to use the tool, and the resulting Gantt chart file stored within Project in a Box so that the information can be extracted into reports, and for version control.

4.2. Skills building and training

Both councils are committed to supporting their staff in the successful delivery of projects, and in building capacity within their staff, developing skills, knowledge and experience.

A formal training and development programme for all Members and staff involved in project governance and delivery is available through HR, to ensure both a general level of background understanding, and some specific skills and knowledge, leading where appropriate to a qualification. Anyone who is assigned, as part of their job role, a project role or participation as a project team member should have participation in this training and development programme listed as a necessary training element, in their appraisal documentation (EDPR).

4.2.1. Outline Training Content: the methodology

1. Project Sponsors and board members (Members of JMT, some elected Members…)
Learning Outcomes:

Understand project management principles

Understand the SNC/CDC programme and project management methodology (suggest including copies of the PRINCE2 and MSP pocketbooks in the training)

> Projects in programmes

> Standalone projects

Understand the role of Sponsor/Member Champion

> Responsibilities – sponsor as corporate representative, not service champion

> Characteristics and relationship with Project Manager

> Project organisation and the other project team roles

> The role within a programme

> Setting up projects so Sponsors aren't bothered by constant questions from PMs!

Trust, tolerances and the meaning of exception reporting

Familiarity with the tools you will need to use, and which other project team roles will be using

> Suite of control documents (Brief, PID, project reports, project close and follow-on actions report)
>
> Suite of governance strategies and their objectives
>
> Project in a Box – accessing and viewing the project information being stored and updated by the Project Manager
>
> Performance Plus project scorecard and corporate risk register (owned by the sponsor, managed by the performance office). Training from Performance Team.

2. Project managers and project support officers

These people may be secondees, or external agency staff.

Learning outcomes:

Understand the SNC/CDC programme and project management methodology (suggest including PRINCE2 foundation exam in the training for secondees)

> Basic principles of PRINCE2 (supported by online learning package)
>
> Projects in programmes
>
> Standalone projects

Understand the relationship between the Project Manager and Sponsor

Understand the project board roles of Sponsor, customer and supplier

Understand the project controls and governance structures

Familiarity with the tools

> Suite of control documents and reports (Brief, PID, project reports, project close and follow-on actions report)
>
> Records: issues, risks, and financial logs
>
> Schedules and milestone reporting
>
> Definition documents: product definitions and work packages
>
> Major Projects governance strategies and how to use them
>
> Project in a Box – detailed training
>
> Performance Plus project scorecard and corporate risk register (owned by the sponsor, managed by the performance office, data provided by PM). Training from Performance Team.

3. Members of a project team

Learning outcomes:

Overview of the SNC/CDC programme and project management methodology

> Projects in programmes
>
> Standalone projects

Understand the relationship between the Project Manager and Sponsor, Project Manager and Project Team

Understand the project board roles of Sponsor, customer and supplier

Familiarity with the tools

      Definition documents: product definitions and work packages

      Project in a Box – detailed training in the specific areas they will be required to update

4. Corporate support (legal, finance, communications, performance)

Learning outcomes:

Overview of the SNC/CDC programme and project management methodology

      Projects in programmes

      Standalone projects

Understand the relationship between the Project Manager and Sponsor, Project Manager and Project Team

Understand the project board roles of Sponsor, customer and supplier

    Familiarity with the governance strategies and derived project plans for communications, resource management, the project budget, risk management

    Reporting requirements – frequency and format of updates

    Project in a Box – detailed training in the specific areas they will be required to update

Delivered to same-discipline groups (i.e. comms team, accountancy team..) via subject-specific briefing note (supported by personal briefing)

5. General interest

Learning outcomes:

There is a governance structure, and the reasons why

There is a project management methodology and the reasons why

That there is support and training for people involved in project delivery

Additional skills and support
The Programme Office can support the deployment of a range of useful techniques such as stakeholder engagement planning, risk identification workshops, resource planning and dependency mapping.

6.   Programmes and Portfolios

a. Programme Management

In May 2012, SNC's Cabinet and CDC's Executive approved the governance structure for the Council's major projects.

Nine major projects and programmes are organised into two programmes (Governance chart at Annex J):

i.   Place Programme:

- Two Sustainable Urban Extensions (Brackley and Towcester) (SNC)

- Silverstone (SNC)

- Bicester Eco-town programme (CDC)

- Bicester town centre (CDC)

- Brighter Futures in Banbury programme (CDC)

- Moat Lane regeneration (SNC)

- Banbury Developments programme (CDC)

ii.   Transformation Programme:

- ICT standardisation and harmonisation programme (SNC and CDC)

- Services transformation programme (SNC and CDC)

Each project has a Project Board. The Project Board comprises a Member Champion and Officer Sponsor, a representative of the main "customer" of the project's outputs, and a representative of the main "supplier" of the project's outputs.   Also on the Project Board is a representative of the Communications function, Finance function and Legal function. Project Boards may have other members, but this is the minimum.

The project board has a minimum standard agenda and a recommended meeting frequency of monthly; this is variable according to the needs of the project, and subject to approval of the Member Champion.

Each programme has a Programme Board, made up of the Member Champion and Officer Sponsor of each of the projects. The Programme Boards have Terms of Reference (attached as Annex K) but their primary function is to ensure the projects are delivering in line with corporate strategic objectives.

The link between the Project Boards and the Programme Board is the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO).

For the Place Programme, Calvin Bell, Director of Development is the SRO.

For the Transformation Programme, Martin Henry, Director of Resources is the SRO.

The Programme Boards are made up like this:

CDC Councillor	SNC Councillor	Officer/Project Sponsor	Project
Cllr Wood	Cllr M Clarke	Sue Smith	Programme Owners
Place Programme			
Cllr Wood	-	Calvin Bell	Bicester EcoTown
Cllr Bolster	-	Chris Stratford	Bicester Town Centre
Cllr Donaldson	-	Ian Davies	Brighter Futures in Banbury
Cllr Gibbard	-	Chris Stratford	Banbury Developments
-	Cllr R Breese	Andy Preston	Urban Extensions
-	Cllr Fordham	Andy Preston	Silverstone
-	Cllr Fordham	Chris Stratford	Moat Lane Regeneration
Transformation Programme			
Cllr Turner Deputy: Cllr Kerford-Byrnes	Cllr McCord Deputy: Cllr S Clarke	Jo Pitman	ICT Standardisation and Harmonisation
Cllr Wood	Cllr McCord	Jo Pitman	Service Transformation

b. What do the Programme Boards do?

Programme governance is concerned with ensuring that potentially high profile and large investments by the Council deliver outcomes in line with the Council's strategic objectives and priorities. The Board's serve a dual function; they ensure political buy-in, influence and engagement for all 9 major projects whilst also having a key role in maintaining focus on delivering the outcomes and managing any risks arising from the projects.

A key part of the Boards' role is to have oversight of the way resources are used by projects, agreeing and monitoring a strategy for resource management within the constituent projects (money, assets, people, information, skills) and resolving issues where scarce resources are demanded on by other projects in the Programme, or from "business as usual" requirements. Lack of clarity on resource usage can put projects, and the ultimate delivery of strategic objectives, at risk.

A further key role is to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged with the programme and to agree and monitor a strategy for engagement and communication in relation to the programme. Pro-active engagement with stakeholders is a key part of risk mitigation.

The standard Programme Board agenda item is a high level update from the project sponsor on the current position of each constituent project or programme, highlighting variance against planned time, cost and quality, any key risks that compromise overall delivery of the programme objectives, and any intransigent issues and the actions being taken to deal with them.

i.   Governance Tools

The Programme Boards have agreed a set of strategies to provide a standard approach to how projects connect with corporate functions. These are Programme-wide approaches in relation to resource management (including a standard approach to project accounting and budget monitoring), stakeholder engagement, issue resolution, and risk management. These provide the context for the constituent projects to develop their resource management plans, engagement plans etc.

c. Monitoring Delivery of the Programmes

In accordance with the objective of wanting to ensure transparency, accountability and Member awareness of all projects, standard milestones for major projects are included in the Corporate Performance Management Framework (PMF), giving clear visibility of progress being made to all Members, not just those with a role in the two programmes.

Formal reports will be produced on a quarterly basis as part of the on-going performance management process. Performance reports will be received by both Executive at CDC and Cabinet at SNC, and Scrutiny (CDC) / Review and Development Committees (SNC). Project and Programme Boards will review progress and performance on a monthly basis.

This approach to using the standard PMF to report progress will mean that all Members, not just those with a role of "champion" in the two programmes, will have ready access to information about how these important projects are developing in line with their priority status within each council.

In addition, project boards will receive detailed status reports from their project managers, a summary of which will be presented to the overarching Programme Board.

d. Schedule of Meetings

Dates for the Place Programme Board have been planned to coincide with Joint Arrangements Steering Group, which itself fulfils the function of Transformation Programme Board