

Project management

The Parish Council has identified pressures within our current model for delivering projects. By holding the majority of project delivery within the Built Environment Advisory Group, there has been a tendency to focus workload on a smaller number of people, whilst not necessarily drawing in skills and capacity from the wider Council. A minor restructuring of how we handle projects could easily resolve this, whilst enabling us to better identify Risk and ensure we remain compliant. This paper outlines a proposal to restructure our project delivery by drafting a proforma Project Plan and ensuring internal appraisal to underpin effective delivery of projects.

A proforma project plan

It is proposed that the Strategy and Communications Group draft a standard process for all major projects to be delivered by the Parish Council. Any project with a projected expenditure of £10k or over is regarded as a major project. This would identify the intended outcome(s) of the project, how key decisions on the project are to be taken, how approval from the wider Parish Council is sought, how financial sign-off is sought, and then how key mechanisms for delivery are put in place – including identification of risk. That plan should identify specific tasks on the projects timeline where additional support from Parish Council members might be needed, as well as any points at which engagement from City Councillors and officials might be needed, and where City Council Capital Spend might be sought. The more concise the Project Plan, the easier it will be to follow.

Decision making

Project proposals can come from any of the Advisory Groups, where they relate to their area of remit. Where a Group, within its routine discussion, identifies the need for a project to deliver an outcome, the group will need to identify what it feels that outcome should look like and what objectives it should achieve, including key benefits to the village and the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan. The Chair of the Group will present a short Outline Business Case to the Parish Council. If the Parish Council agrees to the outline the Council will then agree a 'Task and Finish' Group from amongst the whole council. This enables:

- a) the avoidance of onerous workloads within the busier Advisory Groups,
and
- b) to draw in expertise and resource from the rest of the Council.

Delivery

Once the Parish Council has agreed a project and selected a 'Task and Finish' Group, that group will be responsible for populating a Project Plan, including costings and a Risk management plan, which will then be assessed by SCAG before being presented to the Parish Council for financial sign-off and to sign-off any risk. It will then become the responsibility of the 'Task and Finish' Group, via the Lead, to report back to SCAG on general progress, and to the full Council for major milestones or for further sign-off where further expenditure is required or where there are significant changes in the project's outcome.