



Chelmsford City Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

14 October 2024

Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group Report

Report by:

Director of Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

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Purpose

To consider the main findings from the project evaluation and discussions undertaken by the Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group that was formulated on 19th October 2023.

Recommendations

- 1.) The thoroughness of the work of the Task and Finish Group be acknowledged and the contents of the comprehensive evaluation report be noted.
 - 2.) The Council ensures that the lessons learnt from the project, are used to inform future projects and that decisive action be taken on the recommendations outlined in the evaluation report to drive continuous improvement.
 - 3.) The new Theatre Director be requested to present to the Committee a detailed report as an inform and debate item, six months after their appointment. The report to encompass actual performance metrics, a forward-looking plan addressing financial, social and cultural objectives and projected returns.
 - 4.) Officers be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee, to provide a report on the use of the new project management toolkit. To allow the Committee to review the effectiveness of it and ensure that the lessons learnt have been effectively embedded within the Council.
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1. Introduction

1.1. On 21 November 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to review the Theatre Refurbishment Project once it had been completed. The purpose of the task & finish group was to undertake a systematic and objective assessment of the completed project to:

- Determine the level of achievement of the refurbishment objectives;
- Compare planned costs and benefits with actual costs and benefits;
- Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the approach and working arrangements practices adopted;
- Consider the overall value for money achieved.

1.2. An initial explanatory briefing with members was facilitated on 28th February 2023. The group was given a background on the theatre refurbishment project, reasons for cost pressures and delays, and some learning points identified by officers.

1.3. After the local elections in May 2023, the Theatre Refurbishment Project was reformulated at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 October 2023. The group has now met four times and considered information received from officers and external contractors involved with the project.

1.4. The project evaluation report of the Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group is attached as **Appendix 1**. The report covers the following areas;

- Introduction and overview of Terms of Reference
- Project inception, project scope and feasibility
- Project chronology, key milestones and decision points
- Governance, project management, design and professional services
- A review of the consents, approvals and permits that had to be obtained in order to deliver the project
- Details of the Construction contract
- Programming and timings of the different stages of the project
- A review of non-construction work streams
- Financial Variations
- Improving Accessibility
- Management of Variations
- Financial aspects including the budget setting process, professional fees, financial losses and the settling of account
- The performance achieved, salient points from user and customer feedback received to date
- Key issues, lessons learned and recommendations

2. Membership of the Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group

The following Councillors were members of the Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group;~

- Councillor Sue Young (Chair)
- Councillor Dan Clark
- Councillor Hazel Clark
- Councillor Sue Dobson
- Councillor Andrew Thorpe-Apps
- Councillor Terry Sherlock

Councillor Steve Davis was also appointed to the Task and Finish Group but did not attend any of the meetings.

3. Conclusion

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report from the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations made.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Report (includes the Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference and Project Management Toolkit Guidance)

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

None

Financial:

None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

None

Personnel:

Officers will be required to report back to future meetings as detailed in the recommendations.

None

Risk Management:

The findings from the project evaluation will improve the approach to risk management and project management in the future.

Equality and Diversity:

None

Health and Safety:

None

Digital:

None

Other:

None

Consultees:

Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task & Finish Group

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 October 2024

Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation

Report by:

Theatre Refurbishment Evaluation Task and Finish Group

Officer Contacts:

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1. Introduction and Overview of Terms of Reference

1.1 Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to undertake a project evaluation of the Theatre Refurbishment Project scheme. The terms of reference agreed by the Committee are set out in full at Appendix 1, but the main purpose of the project evaluation was to identify the lessons learnt and any recommendations that may need to be considered when the Council is planning or undertaking similar refurbishment projects in the future.

1.2 A comprehensive evaluation report has been prepared by Officers setting out:

- Project inception, project scope and feasibility
- The project chronology, key milestones, and decision points
- Governance, project management, design, and professional services
- A review of the consents, approvals, and permits that had to be obtained in order to deliver the project
- Details of the construction contract
- Programming and timings of the different stages of the project
- A review of non-construction work streams
- A review of financial variations and their management
- Improvement to accessibility
- Financial aspects including the budget setting process, key variations, professional fees, financial losses and the settling of account
- An overview of outcomes and performance achieved, salient points from user and customer feedback received to date and a summary of forward-looking financial performance/projections
- Key issues, lessons learned and recommendations

1.3 Recommendations

- The thoroughness of the work of the Task and Finish Group be acknowledged and the contents of the comprehensive evaluation report be noted.
- The Council ensures that the lessons learnt from the project, are used to inform future projects and that decisive action be taken on the recommendations outlined in the evaluation report to drive continuous improvement.
- The new Theatre Director be requested to present to the Committee a detailed report as an inform and debate item, six months after their appointment. The report to encompass actual performance metrics, a forward-looking plan addressing financial, social and cultural objectives and projected returns.
- Officers be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee, to provide a report on the use of the new project management toolkit. To allow the Committee to review the effectiveness of it and ensure that the lessons learnt have been effectively embedded within the Council.

1.4 Task and finish Group membership

- Cllr S Young
- Cllr D Clark
- Cllr H Clark
- Cllr S Dobson
- Cllr Thorpe-Apps
- Cllr T Sherlock
- Cllr S Davis

(Who was appointed as a member but was unable to attend any meetings)

The first formal meeting of the Task & Finish Group was held on 24 January 2024. Prior to this meeting, Members had been provided with a link to a SharePoint site which included:

- Full Tender Pack including Construction Drawings, Design Documents, Scope and Schedule of Works, Interior Design Pack
- JCT Contracts
- Planning Applications
- Variation Tracker
- Project Management Documents including Programme of Works, Project Board Minutes, Contractor Reports, Contract Administrator Reports, Site Inspection Notes and Risk Registers
- Relevant Full Council and Cabinet Agendas, Papers and Minutes

The first meeting commenced with the appointment of Cllr Young as the Chair of the group, followed by agreement to the terms of reference that had previously been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The focus of this initial meeting was to consider:

- Project inception, scope, and feasibility
- Project chronology, key milestones, and decision points
- Governance, project management, design, and professional services
- Construction contract

2. Project Inception, Project Scope and Feasibility

2.1 The Civic Theatre (now known as the Main House) was built/converted and opened in 1962, designed in an Art Deco theme. The Cramphorn (now known as the Studio) was added in 1982.

2.2 Both theatres have had partial refurbishments and decoration in previous years, but a capital investment was essential to ensure the building remained viable as a business and enabled it to play a more active role in delivering against Our Chelmsford, Our Plan.

2.3 Touring producers commented that they liked bringing shows to Chelmsford and general feedback was that they feel welcomed, and the audience is warm, but the physical environment and the customer experience let the business down and limited audience growth.

2.4 Customer feedback over many years included comments such as: “There are inadequate toilet facilities, and I usually spend the interval queuing”; “Bar area is always too crowded. A decent coffee shop would be welcome”; “Bar service is usually very slow. Toilets could do with an overhaul and update”; “More toilets for the ladies would be helpful. Long queues at intermission”.

2.5 Significant investments were being made in neighbouring districts and boroughs, with the Mercury Theatre in Colchester receiving a £10m capital overhaul, the £30m scheme to create a new multi-purpose arts and culture venue in Central Hertford, Queens Theatre in Hornchurch undergoing a £1.2m refurbishment, and the Stratford Waterfront and East Bank £1.1 billion cultural development, just 20 minutes away.

2.6 The need to continue the investment in our local cultural infrastructure was essential to:

- 2.6.1 Support the theatre’s recovery from the pandemic, rebuilding customer confidence.
- 2.6.2 Ensure the theatre remained competitive in an increasingly tough economic climate with many others competing for people’s disposable income.

- 2.6.3 Better meet the expectations of contemporary audiences where people are wowed by their visitor experience and more compelled to return.
- 2.6.4 Help diversify those visiting, making the venue welcoming, accessible, and inclusive to all.
- 2.6.5 Create a more flexible venue that lends itself to greater use (especially during the day), enabling us to engage with new audiences.

2.7 In February 2021, Full Council agreed to the Civic Theatre Enhancement Project being added to the Capital Programme. Neither the scope nor the likely cost had been established at that time, and authority to develop the project was delegated to Cabinet with a notional budget allocation of £1m.

2.8 In November 2021, Cabinet increased the sum allocated in the Capital Programme by £0.5m as it recognised that the original figure was insufficient to deliver the full scope to the quality that was desired. The increased figure of £1.5m recognised that there was volatility in construction and material costs, with shortages of materials leading to prices rising sharply, and noted that a budget could not be set before the scope had been finalised and the tenders returned.

2.9 The Council's own Building Services undertook a feasibility study to explore the possibilities. The study explored how a front of house refurbishment could best enhance the theatre customer experience and two additional transformative ideas:

- 2.9.1 The first was to replace the existing Main House seating with a dynamic, flexible seating system. This concept involved removable or retractable seating, a design that would not only increase capacity but also pave the way for standing concerts, adding a new dimension to the theatre's offerings.
- 2.9.2 The second idea was a creative transformation of the Main House Foyer into a vibrant café/bar environment. This transformation aimed to create a welcoming space where patrons could mingle and enjoy refreshments, further enriching their theatre experience.

2.10 The study encountered some significant obstacles. The limitations of the building, stringent fire regulations, and resulting capacity constraints presented challenges. After a thorough analysis, it was concluded that both transformative options were beyond the financial reach of the refurbishment project, and they were deemed unfeasible under the circumstances.

2.11 In October 2021, Harp Design, a team of interior designers, were commissioned to design a modern, durable design for the Front of House that was sustainable, easy to maintain and aligned with the Theatre's new brand, artistic vision, and commercial goals.

2.12 In November 2021, a new theatre director with a commercial track record was appointed to help transform the programming, customer offer and marketing to drive growth and enhance the audience experience.

2.13 As the project began to take shape, it became clear that a more substantial refurbishment than previously envisaged would be needed as new carpets and redecoration would not offer the opportunity to support the emerging ambition. The ambition and scope were increased and set to:

- 2.13.1 Modernise the front of house interiors of both Theatres.
- 2.13.2 Improve the exterior to increase the theatre's visibility and presence in the West End of Chelmsford.
- 2.13.3 Rebrand the theatre to better support renewed programming and marketing strategies.
- 2.13.4 Install a new state-of-the-art box office system and customer-facing website.

2.14 The refurbishment sought to unite two disjointed buildings into a single cohesive venue and visitor experience. To be the catalyst for wider change across all areas of the operation, giving the theatre the best possible opportunity for success and growth, and allowing the theatre to:

- 2.14.1 Provide a true 'red carpet' experience: a more cohesive and future-looking customer experience together with improved operations, new brand, box office experience and commercial offer.
- 2.14.2 Continue to build a core programme of quality content across all our stages and spaces, including a new strategy for creative engagement and outreach.
- 2.14.3 Develop as a destination venue and a 'cultural living room' for all residents and visitors; a place for public and patrons to enjoy and relax, ensuring the theatre and its activities are at the heart of the community. By transforming our spaces and offer, including a new daytime café, improved sales points and product range, the aim was to grow the net income from food and beverage and secondary spend sales.

2.15 Whilst the investment case was not predicated on an increase in revenue, there were a number of areas where we anticipated an uplift in income. With the new box office functionality also allowing the theatre to offer a membership scheme to improve customer loyalty for the first time.

2.16 The full scope of the interior refurbishment included:

- 2.16.1 The Studio foyer area and bar, including the replacement of the existing glazed façade and creation of an outdoor seating area.
- 2.16.2 The Main House foyer area, including the opening up of the wall dividing the two theatres and removal of the booking office and counter under the stairs.
- 2.16.3 The Main House bar area and kitchen.
- 2.16.4 The Main House first floor circle bar area, gallery, and offices.
- 2.16.5 The toilets throughout to be refurbished, and Building Services to specify the fittings, cubicles, tiles, and flooring materials.

2.17 During the design phase, several capital items that were originally planned for later years were incorporated into the current scheme. This strategic move leveraged the Theatre's

temporary closure, reducing future disturbances and potential revenue losses.

The advanced items incorporated into the scheme included the following installations:

2.17.1 High-level smoke vents positioned above the Civic Theatre stage, directly linked to the fire alarm system. This upgrade was prompted by a fire risk assessment that highlighted deficiencies in the existing smoke venting system.

2.17.2 A state-of-the-art PA sound system in both the Main House and Studio Theatre, designed to meet the demands and standards of modern touring shows.

2.18 The completed interior design scheme, along with the advanced capital items, underwent a comprehensive cost analysis by the appointed Quantity Surveyor, Low & Low. A detailed proposal, encompassing all aspects of the project and costs drawn from an open tender process, was presented to the Full Council on 22nd March 2022. Subsequently, the budget for the refurbishment was established at £2.75 million.

3. Project chronology, key milestones, and decision points

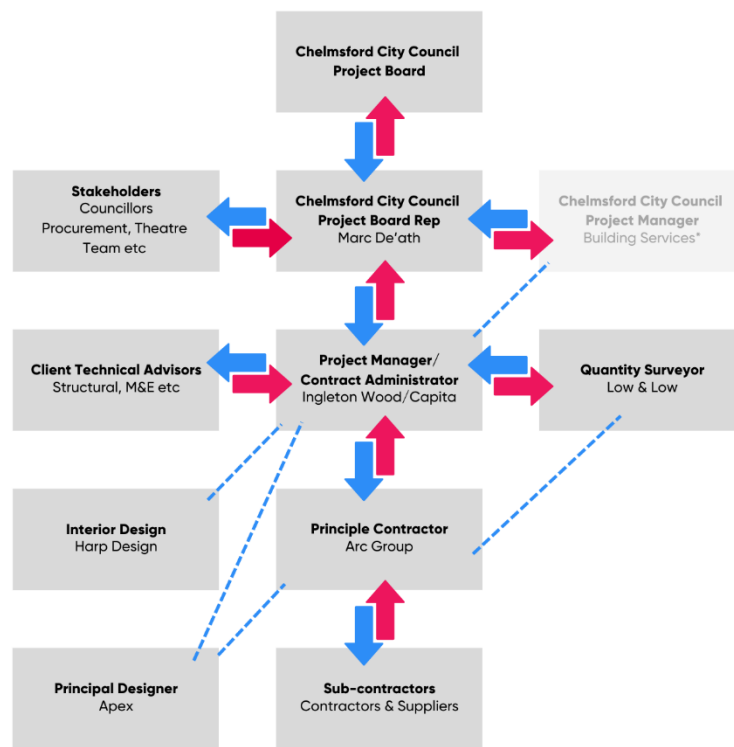
Conversation began to explore making an investment in a theatre refurbishment.	1 September 2020	The Scope of works was initially to explore a redecoration - replacing carpets and painting walls throughout.
£1m notional budget allocated as part of the council's wider capital programme.	24 February 2021	Approved by Full Council
CCC Building Services team led preliminary high-level feasibility, design and scope.	18 March 2021	
Budget increased by £0.5m recognising that there was volatility in construction and material costs, with shortages of materials leading to prices rising sharply, and noted that a budget could not be set before the scope had been finalised and the tenders returned.	November 2021	See Section 12.1
Inscribe awarded branding contract	1 September 2021	
Scope and ambition of refurbishment increased. A tender process was run to recruit an interior design consultant -	19 October 2021	

Harp Design was awarded the contract to support development of the scheme up to tender stage		
Construction tender goes live	11 January 2022	Advertised through Delta E Sourcing and on the CCC Website
Theatre branding signed off	24 January 2022	Uniting the two venues (Civic and Cramphorn) under a single Chelmsford Theatre identity.
Spektrix awarded contract as box office software provider	21 March 2022	Moving away from an obsolete and accessible system to a fully integrated market leader.
Tenders submitted	22nd February 2022	3 compliant bids received.
Investment case, interior designs and budget for capital expenditure on Theatre presented and approved by Full Council	22 March 2022	Capital budget of £2.75m approved by increasing the original scope, bringing forward and incorporating future planned capital works. The method of funding was identified and delegated authority was given to the Director of Connected Chelmsford to enter contractual arrangements
Arc formally appointed as main construction contractor	23 March 2022	Following the procurement exercise, Arc Group was appointed using a JCT Intermediate Form of Contract with Contractors Design 2016. The award price was £1,796,991.91
Building Services Team issued final design information, architect, and MEP drawings and stepped down as Project Managers and Contract Administrators.	27 April 2022	<p>When asked about the delay in issuing the final design after the construction contractor was appointed, Building Services explained that it's common for differences to exist between tender stage and construction drawings during the mobilisation phase. These differences are often technical and some details, which require disruptive exploration, can't be determined while the site is in use.</p> <p>In this instance, certain sections of the work, such as the bar and toilets, needed specialist input. It was at this stage that the project outgrew the capacity and experience of our in-house team.</p>
Capita appointed as Project Managers and Contract Administrators.	28 April 2022	After discussion at the Project Team level, the Council's Procurement team moved quickly to replace Building Services as PM

		and CA, sourcing and appointing experienced professionals via a CCS framework award to act on behalf of the Council to provide the main interface with the design team, coordinate project activity, undertake risk reporting.
Contractor begins to highlight issues	1 May 2022	The contractor found and raised missing detail in the design and structural information. This could have been addressed earlier and led to delays in their work
Parachute awarded the contract to develop new theatre website	5 May 2022	Parachute, using the Council's preferred CMS Umbraco, who has collaborated with Spektrix for several years, were appointed to develop the new site. They've enhanced the UK's arts, entertainment, and culture sectors' online presence through seamless Spektrix integrations and innovative web design.
Arc took possession of the Main House (formerly known as the Civic) Bar and Toilets, asbestos removal commences.	9 May 2022	The theatre remains open to the public
Structural design issues were found with the Studio Theatre windows and roof design (formerly known as Cramphorn Theatre)	11 May 2022	When Capita were appointed as Project Manager and Contract Administrator, they quickly clarified the missing design and structural information.
Ingleton Wood was appointed as Technical Advisor	12 May 2022	Procurement moved quickly to appoint experienced professionals via a CCS framework award to act on behalf of the Council to correct and fill gaps in design and structural information.
Arc took full possession of Main Bar Foyer, Balcony, Studio Foyer and Toilets.	20 June 2022	Theatre closed to the public
Design issues were identified with the platform lift – a redesign was needed by Technical Advisors	23 June 2022	See Section 10. Improving Accessibility
New theatre website launched	24 August 2022	
Extension of time claim submitted and issued as a result of having to undertake a	6 September 2022	56 Days, Extended from 23 September until 12th December 2022

significant redesign while on site.		
Pantomime cancellation announced	10 October 2022	
Cabinet approved an additional £500k	18 October 2022	Due to increased use of external consultants, unexpected issues with the supply chain caused by the challenging economic climate resulting in the need, in some cases, to specify new products and finishes.
Theatre reopens with its first show	14 January 2023	Reopening with CAODS, 9 to 5, which was almost 90% sold across 6 performances and one of their best attended productions by some way.
Partial possession awarded	1 June 2023	Work commenced on fixing snags, defects and outstanding work.
Final contract instruction issued.	27 November 2023	Requesting the completion of the remaining works, defects, operating and maintenance manuals and all required testing by 29th January 2024. This allowed over 2 months and 21 working days of unhindered access.

4. Governance, Project Management, Design, and Professional Services



Project Board and Working Groups

4.1 Following project inception, a panel of members and officers was established at the end of March 2022 to act as the 'Theatre Refurbishment Project Board'. The role of the Board was to oversee progress and to consider and provide advice on any issues of a strategic nature.

4.2 The major project milestones for the Board to consider were:

- The review and approval of the interior design
- The appointment of the main contractor
- Overseeing the progress on the design and refurbishment of the building from tender stage through to completion

4.3. The Project Board comprised of two councillors, including the Deputy Leader (also the Cabinet Member responsible for Culture), the Cabinet Deputy for Community Engagement, the Director of Connected Chelmsford, the Culture Services Manager, Chief Procurement & Risk Officer and Senior (Capital) Accountant.

4.4. The Culture Services Manager acted as the project owner, supported by the Contract Administrator and Project Manager, who was later replaced by external consultants provided by Capita and then towards the end of the scheme replaced again by Ingleton Wood.

4.5. During the construction phase, further project development and progress monitoring were also affected through a 'client team' and a contractor-led 'site progress

meeting’.

- 4.6. The client team included representatives from the Project Manager [Building Services, Capita and Ingleton Wood], the design team [Building Services, Ingleton Wood, Harp Design, Balm & Davis, Brontide], the Quantity Surveyor [Low & Low], and the City Council. Attendance and participation in the client team meetings varied according to subject areas and issues being reviewed.
- 4.7. A contract progress group comprised representatives from the main contractor [Arc], the Project Manager [Building Services, Capita and then Ingleton Wood], Lead-Designer [Ingleton Wood] and the City Council. Attendance and participation in the contract progress meetings varied according to subject areas and particular issues, but always included as a core the Arc Project Manager, the Arc Quantity Surveyor, the Director of Connected Chelmsford and the Culture Services Manager.
- 4.8. Apex, through its architectural services team, performed the role of Principal Designer to undertake the duties and obligations set out in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

Changes in Project Management and Contract Administration and the introduction of Technical Advisors

- 4.9. The original plan was to improve the interior of the foyer by re-decorating and re-carpeting. Our internal Building Services team set out the scope for this limited project and it was quickly recognised that this would cost several hundred thousand pounds and would not create any real impact on a part of the building that had been largely untouched for 60 years. The ambition for the project therefore grew to create a modern and welcoming community space that would match the cultural ambition for the city. A revised budget was produced based on a detailed tender process and subsequent successful bid by a preferred contractor. At this stage, when the contractor was on site and was in the approved mobilisation phase, it became clear that the specification was not sufficiently detailed for the contractor to rely on, and the specification did not have detailed and measured instructions.
- 4.10. It was quickly identified that this project had exceeded the capacity and experience of our internal Building Services team due to the growth of ambition and therefore the City Council needed to engage consultants to project manage a specialist design team to ensure that the specification was clear and detailed before works could begin. This resulted in additional cost pressures which were not budgeted for and in an extension of time whilst this work was undertaken.
- 4.11. On 28th April 2022, Capita was appointed as Project Manager and Contract Administrator via a CCS framework award to act on behalf of the Council to provide the main interface with the design team, coordinate project activity, undertake risk reporting and assist with the procurement of the main contractor.
- 4.12. The Project Manager immediately identified with the Contractor that there was missing design and structural information. By 12th May, Ingleton Wood was appointed via a CCS framework award as Technical Advisors to plug any gaps.

4.13. Capita Project Managed the Scheme until 17th August 2022 at which time it was felt that Technical Advisors Ingleton Wood had more detailed knowledge of the project and were in a better position to lead.

5. A review of the consents, approvals, and permits that had to be obtained in order to deliver the project

5.1. Statutory consents and approvals were required prior to commencement of works and during the refurbishment period, covering planning and building regulations.

5.2. Principal amongst these were planning consent and building regulations approval. Two separate planning applications were submitted, and consent was granted.

5.2.1. APPLICATION NO: 22/00707/ADV Installation of externally illuminated fascia signage, poster boxes, screens , and banner signs. (Externally illuminated).

5.2.2. APPLICATION NO: 22/00729/FUL Installation of aluminium cladding to the front elevation of the Civic Theatre and part of the side elevation of the Cramphorn Theatre. Replacement bi-fold doors to replace existing doors. Alterations to existing fenestration and entrance canopy. External lighting columns on the theatre frontage.

5.3. The project was also subject to building regulations approval covering all aspects of the design, building, and construction activities and operations. The Council's in-house Building Control Team provided the inspection and approval service to ensure compliance with building regulations.

5.4. Chelmsford City Council's Access Officer and the Chelmsford Area Access Group were fully engaged and played a significant role in influencing designs for the building from an accessibility / disability perspective. See Section 10. Improving Accessibility.

6. Details of the Construction Contract

6.1. After seeking expressions of interest, the Council undertook a two-stage procurement process. The first stage shortlisted seven contractors on the basis of suitable experience and capacity. These contractors were then asked to submit a response to the full tender pack with specification and drawings provided by Low and Low Quantity Surveyors and the Building Services team.

6.2. An appropriate OJEU notice for the appointment of a main contractor was published on 11th January for tender submissions to be returned by 22nd February 2022. Tender returns were evaluated against a specified award criterion.

6.3. Three experienced staff members were on the evaluation panel from Building Services. Costs were evaluated based on a weighted calculation against each other. Quality evaluation was

based on previous experience of similar projects to ensure a high-quality build and effective construction management procedures.

6.4. Following feedback from prospective contractors, the deadline for tender submissions was extended. The team had built two weeks' contingency into the process, recognising that the project requirements were extremely detailed and consequently, responses would require significant work. During this period, we also added two weeks to the work programme, again following discussions with contractors.

6.5. There were several items that were retained by the Council outside of the contract as, at the time of issuing the Tender, Building Services deemed they could easily be completed by our existing suppliers. In addition, there were a small number of additional capital items associated with the relaunch of the theatre where alternative suppliers were needed and would be managed directly by the council.

6.6. These items included (the value of this list is itemised in Section 10. Financial Aspects):

- Additional asbestos removal
- Mains service diversion to be commenced before the main contract
- Pram Park
- Replace all data cabling in theatres whilst closed
- Loose furniture/furnishings/post completion works
- Additional cladding, signage & Brightside screen to Cramphorn
- Additional Brightside screens internally (Digital Services works)
- Building work for a 2nd screen in the window of the Civic foyer
- M & E works (additional cost for duct works in the GF Civic bar)
- Smoke ventilation works
- Box Office system
- Requirement for additional equipment (2 tills, coffee fixtures & fittings)
- Auditorium PA
- Enabling works outside of contract

6.7. Three submissions were received. The financial elements were checked and evaluated by the quantity surveyor. The quality elements: experience, programme, site provisions, understanding of site, etc. were evaluated and scored by three experienced Building Services Staff. The highest scoring contractor was then invited for a further site meeting.

6.8. Following the procurement exercise, Arc Construction was appointed as the main contractor for the Theatre Refurbishment project using a JCT Intermediate Form of Contract with Contractors Design 2016.

6.9. Contracts were signed on 29th April 2022. Original completion date for works 23rd September.

Comments and discussion summary

- Members were keen to understand the chronology of the project, particularly in relation to both the setting of the original budget and the increase in costs. Officers set out the different decision-making points and explained that the first actual budget for the transformation project had not been approved until 22 March 2022 when the tender for the agreed works had been evaluated. It was explained the proviso that agreed figures had been for planning purposes to signal a funding need and were not based on costed works. Members expressed concern that this was not transparent and would like an exploration of whether this process could be made clearer in some way to avoid confusion moving forward. An initial discussion took place about the reasons for a further revision to the budget. It was agreed that this would be the subject of a future meeting.
- There was a detailed discussion about the letting of the contract and the governance surrounding the selection of the winning contractor. The Council's Procurement Manager attended to provide information about the route to market and the type of contract used and Members satisfied themselves that the route was compliant and the process appropriate. This challenge was further explored at a future meeting when the technical advisers were in attendance to give evidence.

- Members reviewed the governance of the project in relation to decision making and review and were satisfied that the appropriate measures were in place, supported by copies of minutes of all formal Project Board and other management meetings relating to the project.
- Officers presented information about changes in arrangements for project management and contract administration, the need for which was identified post contract award and during the period where the contractors were on site preparing to start work (mobilisation period). The original plan had been to use internal resource to fulfil these roles, but it had become clear that the change in ambition for the project meant that external support would be needed to create the design information needed to deliver the scheme. This resulted in additional costs and a time delay, all of which was explored in more detail in subsequent meetings.
- Discussions began about the actions taken by Officers in conjunction with the design team to minimise disruption and to support delivery of the project.
- Having received a comprehensive overview of the project, as well as information about the procurement process and governance, the group asked for the attendance of our external project manager at the next meeting. The purpose of this was to get an external and independent review of both the management and delivery of the project as well as to achieve an understanding of the contract variations and the project management challenges
- The group raised concerns about the high number of clarifications during the tender stage, questioning whether this indicated underlying problems with the design. Members noted that a substantial volume of queries from bidders often points to ambiguities or gaps in the design documents, which can potentially lead to misunderstandings, increased project risks, and potential cost overruns.
- It was agreed that future meetings would focus on
 - the financial and project management of the project and the increase in costs
 - look at a summary of the qualitative data since the theatre reopened and its cultural impact in the city.

The second formal meeting of the Task & Finish Group was held on 28 February 2024. Members requested a detailed overview of the programme, including works inside and outside the tendered contract, to understand the variations that led to a request for an additional £500k, approved by the Cabinet on 18 October 2022. Members requested that the project manager was invited to attend to share their perspective on the refurbishment project, highlighting key achievements, challenges faced, and recommendations for future projects.

7. Programming and timings of the different stages of the project

- 7.1.** The original programme envisaged a 20-week construction period, commencing in May 2022 with the refurbishment completed and open to the public at the beginning of October.
- 7.2.** At the time of the appointment of the main contractor, the programme identified a target for the new building to be completed in September 2022. The contractor advised that this would be a challenging programme to achieve, with little scope to accommodate unforeseen works or other delays.
- 7.3.** The foundational designs and drawings produced as part of the Tender were formulated without the benefit of an accurate measured survey or a topographical survey for the external areas, which meant that when the Contractor arrived on site and attempted to take RIBA Stage 3 drawings, there were discrepancies between the drawn areas and their actual dimensions, necessitating on-site adjustments and modifications to the final product. This, in turn, resulted in severe delays, claims, and additional expenses from the contractor.
- 7.4.** In response, Ingleton Wood was appointed as Technical Advisors to correct and fill gaps in design information.
- 7.5.** Once this revised design information had been prepared, in early September the agreed programme of works was rescheduled and provided in 'draft' by the contractor after liaising with their supply chain. The new schedule both factored in the delays caused by the redesign and included an extension of time claim for the delays. A new contract conclusion date was proposed for 12th December 2022. Essentially this needs to revisit much of the original design information resulted in the delay experienced during the programme delivery.
- 7.6.** Weekly site visits involving the Chief Executive, Directors, and Deputy Leader from the City Council and Contractor were initiated. Discussions were held and agreements reached to accelerate the works.
- 7.7.** As deadlines approached, it became evident that the 12th of December target would not be met. The contractor reduced their workforce, leading to a noticeable slowdown in progress. With dwindling confidence in the new programme, the theatre team began exploring alternative venues for the Pantomime, including New Hall School and CSAC Sports Centre.

- 7.8.** The costs of infrastructure in alternative venues for the Pantomime were prohibitive, and the potential disruption to neighbouring residents and existing users of the buildings was deemed unacceptable. In October, the Management Team made the difficult decision to cancel the Pantomime and some community hires rather than pursue an alternative venue. The financial implications are detailed under 'Financial Aspects' in section 12.
- 7.9.** In early January, due to the critical business need to reopen and minimise loss of reputation and revenue following the cancelled Pantomime, the theatre team took occupation of the building with the contractor still working on site to complete snagging, relying on the contract to manage this ongoing process.
- 7.10.** On the 14th of January, the theatre reopened with CAODS, 9 to 5, which was almost 90% sold across six performances.
- 7.11.** Between January 2023 and 2024, the contractor continued to progress through the list of snags, outstanding works, and emerging defects. On November 17th, a final contract instruction was issued by Ingleton Wood, requesting the completion of the remaining works, defects, operating and maintenance manuals, and all required testing by 29th January 2024.

8. A review of Non-construction Work Streams

- 8.1.** The successful launch of the refurbished theatre required the completion of various non-construction tasks. These tasks were effectively managed by the theatre team, with the support of various council departments and limited assistance from the project management team and other consultants. Despite the challenges, the team utilised their project management skills to coordinate a wide range of activities, aligning them with the shifting deadlines of the construction project. The key aspects of these non-construction tasks are outlined below.
- 8.1.1.** A new brand - The 'Civic' and 'Cramphorn' Theatres underwent a substantial rebranding process with the aim of modernising and unifying the venues under a single, cohesive image to attract a wider audience. This involved a change of name, a complete overhaul of their visual identity, and the creation of a new logo, signage, and marketing materials designed to appeal to a diverse audience.
- 8.1.2.** Food & Beverage Transformation - The refurbishment of the theatre's Front of House offered a unique opportunity to revamp the Food & Beverage (F&B) services. Changes included launching a daytime café, updating confectionery products and point-of-sale displays, modernising bars, enhancing standards and customer service, and ultimately increasing customer dwell time and spend per head. This transformation necessitated extensive planning, collaboration with current and new suppliers, equipment specification, and staff recruitment and training.

- 8.1.3. Online Presence Transformation – The team commissioned and oversaw the design and development of a modern, responsive, user-friendly, and accessible website to showcase the new brand. The site provides information about upcoming shows, ticket prices, and the theatre’s outreach offer, offering an online customer journey that matches the quality of the newly refurbished building.
- 8.1.4. New Box Office Ticketing System Installation - A crucial aspect of the new theatre’s operation was replacing the outdated Pro Venue Max booking system with a cutting-edge theatre Box Office system. The installed Spektrix system, a market leader used in many theatres, allowed us to completely revamp our customer interactions with improved booking and payment systems integrated into the website and a new mobile app, which has been well-received.
- 8.1.5. Complex Data Migration Oversight - The theatre and Marketing team, with technical support from Spektrix, undertook a significant volume of work, including a large data migration project. This involved extracting valuable customer information from an outdated proprietary system, a process that took over <insert months> to complete. It was crucial to deliver this in line with the theatre refurbishment to successfully launch and operate the new facilities.
- 8.1.6. Improving Operations – Conducting a root and branch review of operational and administrative practices. Driving health and safety culture and reviewing current practices, risk assessments, and fire strategies. Rewriting procedures, processes, ‘how to’ guides, contingency plans, standards, forms/paperwork, and show reports to ensure they are all fit for purpose and provide a solid foundation.

9. Financial Variations

- 9.1. In consultation with the external Quantity Surveyor, the Project Manager for the project, and our internal Senior Capital Accountant, the table below highlights some of the most significant variations that contributed to the need for an additional £500k, which the Cabinet approved on 18 October 2022.

Area of work	Costs
<i>Additional Fees</i>	
Capita: Project Management / Contract Administration	£50,000
Ingleton Wood: Project Management / Contract Administration / Technical Advising	£101,638
Extension of time delay claims	£84,000
<i>Significant Variations</i>	
Studio Theatre roof new construction variation	£55,149
Mechanical (Adcock)	£65,000
Mechanical Services (Balm & Davis)	£61,000
Amended cladding design	£52,800
Additional firestopping	£50,000
Total	£497,949

Comments and discussion summary

- Members invited the Project Manager to the second formal meeting of the task and finish group on 28 February 2024 to provide an independent view of the project, including the challenges faced, variations to the original contract which accounted for the increase in budget, and lessons learnt for the future.
- The Project Manager explained that the project had faced numerous challenges during construction. While this incurred additional manpower and resources to complete, the product was an overall success and delivered a wonderful new theatre experience for Chelmsford City. They went on to explain their role following the discovery that more detailed foundation plans were necessary to build out the project.
- There was much exploration of the governance surrounding the contract, particularly once the early delays were identified. Members were provided with copies of project documentation and had the opportunity to question the professional advisers on how this was managed. It was confirmed as industry standard.
- The group were presented with the contract variations which resulted in the £500K additional budget. These were summarised as increased use of external consultants, additional costs associated with inadequacies in the original drawings, and supply chain and product availability.
- The Project Manager advised that there had been inadequate pre-planning at the initial stages of the project, which would have been improved by a detailed project execution plan. The subsequent discussion with Members centred around what would have been included at this early stage and how this would have prevented the additional budget and delays. The Project Manager confirmed that while the requirement for a design team had not been identified at the outset, and therefore not budgeted for, it would always have been necessary and so was not a wasted resource.
- There was in-depth discussion around the lack of detail in the specification, which resulted in many variations to the original contract and subsequently additional cost.
- Members explored whether it was wise to specify named sub-contractors in the contract, as this felt like an additional complication and made it harder for the main contractor to manage. The Project Manager explained that while they could see the logic in this approach as they knew the building and services, it had caused wider issues.

- The Project Manager identified problems associated with noisy works, which affected the adjoining building and resulted in delays.
- Members challenged the cost of unforeseen asbestos removal and costs associated with firestopping measures to prevent fire spreading from one area to another. The Project Manager advised that this was often inevitable, as these things are often not known until exposed.
- The Project Manager recommended a number of lessons to be learnt that were further explored by Members of the group and are included in section 14.
- Members asked several questions about the new branding and design and agreed that it was in keeping with the refurbishment project and understood the need to introduce this at the same time. It was also acknowledged that the new box office system was a huge improvement.

The third meeting of the Task & Finish Group was held on 20th August 2024. Members requested a tour of the building to provide a better understanding of the areas that caused the refurbishment challenges and how accessibility was improved. They also requested an overview of the financial aspects and how the variations were managed.

10. Improving Accessibility

- 10.1.** As a result of the refurbishment, the Theatre team committed to not only enhancing access and inclusion but also fostering a culture of continuous improvement in equality, diversity, and inclusion within theatre programming and any future facility upgrades.
- 10.2.** Improvements to the theatre's customer experience complemented ongoing work to improve accessibility and inclusivity of its building as well as its program, to diversify its audiences and ensure the venue is welcoming to all.
- 10.3.** Accessibility improvements were always intended to be a key part of the investment and included:
- 10.3.1. A refurbished and enhanced disabled toilet – separating out the previously integrated baby change unit into its own space.
 - 10.3.2. A wider ambient cubicle installed in all toilet areas with handrails.
 - 10.3.3. The installation of new automatic doors to both the main foyer and Cramphorn Studio.
 - 10.3.4. Brand-new hearing loop technology installed throughout the entire building, across box office counters, bar/café/confectionery areas, and in the auditorium.

- 10.3.5. Wheelchair-friendly lowered counters throughout, across box office counters and bar/café/confectionery areas.
- 10.3.6. Improved website navigation and enhanced accessibility of the customer website with improved content that allows better pre-planning for visitors with accessibility needs.
- 10.3.7. Better wayfinding with more accessible signage, utilizing the Council's latest standards and best practices developed during the capital improvements made to Riverside and Chelmsford Museum.
- 10.3.8. To improve accessibility and wider inclusion, the theatre recruited a new Creative Engagement Manager. This role is responsible for ensuring the theatre reaches out beyond its walls, consulting with and involving communities in future programming decisions, whilst increasing awareness, and engaging and encouraging people to participate more in what is already on offer.
- 10.3.9. In addition, it was scoped and budgeted to install a new lift providing direct stair-free access between the main foyer and theatre bar next to the main house. However, structural issues, fire regulations, and building control meant it was not possible to achieve. Paul Houghton, the City Council's Access Officer, supported the Theatre to assess the impact and said, "The DAS (Design and Access Statement) is part of our Impact Assessment towards our 'Duties' for the Equality Act 2010."
- 10.3.10. The DAS shows that we have explored this avenue through the Building Regulations (Part M). There are many options for customers to access different bars in the new Theatre and we are maintaining access to the Main Theatre Bar via the Auditorium. Staff greeting customers with obvious mobility issues is the key. The bar outside the Studio theatre also provides a good alternative.
- 10.3.11. After extensive feasibility work, it was not possible to include a Changing Places provision within the refurbishment project. The theatre will utilize the Council's mobile unit to provide sufficient space and equipment for people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments and who are often not able to use the toilet independently. The mobile unit has undergone some essential maintenance and is being stored and used by Essex Cricket Ground where there is an agreement for other organizations, such as the Theatre, to book and utilize on an ad-hoc basis for relaxed performances. City Council Staff are currently working to source a supplier who can transport, clean, empty, and maintain the unit – maximizing its use.

- 10.4.** After a tour facilitated by Paul Houghton for the Chelmsford Area Access Group, Member Samantha Leftwich, who works for the Thomas Pocklington Trust, said,

"Thank you once again for a great meeting on Friday. I felt the theatre visit was a fantastic one and certainly is something that everyone should be shouting about! What a great team they are and one that is certainly looking at opening up its doors and smashing down so many barriers for people with access and additional needs to access the theatre"

11. Management of Variations

- 11.1. As demonstrated above, and not unusual with construction contracts, the need for variations often arises. The Contract has procedures to be followed in these instances to enable the agreement of costs associated with such changes.
- 11.2. In the first instance where the need for a variation was identified, the cost of such change was explored with the Contractor before agreement to proceed was reached. This often involved different options being evaluated and the most cost-effective solution being agreed upon.
- 11.3. However, JCT Contracts do not require such negotiation on cost and only recognize that where such an instruction is given which will give rise to a variation in cost, the Contractor complies with the Construction and the value of the change agreed. In some instances, this procedure was necessary as the speed of information exchange for cost options to be explored would have caused unnecessary delay and hindered progress, resulting in much more significant Loss and Expense claims.
- 11.4. Where this approach was necessary, the Contractor submitted costs after the event for the cost incurred. The project team then assessed the merit of the claim and, if agreed, went on to agree on the value. Firstly, tendered rates were used as a basis from the same work elsewhere or known construction costs, or finally from demonstrated costs from sub-contractors and suppliers. In all cases, each variation was reviewed and the value adjusted and agreed upon by Low and Low as Quantity Surveyors for the scheme

12. Financial aspects including the budget setting process, professional fees, financial losses and the settling of account

- 12.1. The table below summarises how the cost plan for the theatre refurbishment evolved.

Chelmsford Theatre Refurbishment Project added to the Capital Programme with notional figure.	February 2021	£1,000,000
£500,000 added to budget Cabinet increased the sum allocated in the Capital Programme due to volatility in construction and shortages of materials. It was noted that a full budget could not be set before the scope had been finalised.	November 2021	£1,500,000
£1.246m added to budget A budget for more substantial refurbishment was approved by Full Council, with the scope of	March 2022	£2,746,000

the project being increased to bring forward and incorporate future planned capital works.		
£500,000 added to budget Cabinet approved this due to inflation, increased use of external consultants, and variations due to design and supply chain issues caused by the challenging economic climate, resulting in the need, in some cases, to specify new products and finishes.	October 2022	£3,224,954

12.2. Breakdown of original approved budget March 2022

Areas of work	Costs
Contracted Refurbishment Costs [Arc]* ¹	£2,092,000
Preliminary Works	£172,000
Works outside of the contact	£389,600
Professional Fees	£92,000
Total	£2,745,600

*¹ Including Contingency

12.2. Breakdown of budget variation

Areas of work	Budget	Actual	Variance
Main Contractor Costs [Arc]* ²	£2,092,000	£2,387,709	+£295,709
Preliminary Works	£172,000	£172,000	£0
Works outside of the contact* ³	£389,600	£337,564	-£52,036
Finishing works	£0	£60,000	£60,000
Professional Fees	£92,000	£267,681	+£175,681
Total	£2,745,600	£3,224,954	£479,354*⁴

*² Including Contingency

*³ Value of works outside the contract were reduced as some works were moved into the Arc's contract

*⁴ A variance of £479,354 represents £20k underspend against latest approved budget

12.3. Breakdown of Professional Fees

There was a need to increase spend on external consultants to deliver the project, due to the complexity of the issues uncovered as the project progressed. The appointed consultants actively sought compromises and alternative shorter lead-in time solutions where possible with the appointed contractor.

Description	Costs
Capita	£50,355
Ingleton Wood	£101,638
Harp Interior Design	£34,704
Quantity Surveyor	£19,964
Asbestos Removal	£29,130
Various Surveys	£18,065
Misc Professional fees	£13,825
Total	£267,681

12.4. Financial Losses

As outlined earlier in the report, in October 2022, the Management Team made the difficult decision to cancel the Pantomime and some community hires rather than pursue an alternative venue. All the community hires were rescheduled to later dates, mitigating any loss to revenue. The financial implications of cancelling the pantomime are detailed below.

Income	
Ticket Sales	£400,000
Bar Sales	£46,000
Merchandise Sales	£17,000
Total Lost Income	£463,000

Savings	
Casual Staff	-£84,000
Overtime	-£7,000
Stock/Merchandise Purchase	-£21,000
Total Saving	-£112,000
Net Loss	£351,000

**In addition to the above figures there were £142k payments under contract for Artists that were factored in as part of the Theatre's wider annual co-production budget and represents an overall saving against the usual budget of £200k for that Pantomime Cast.*

12.5. Settling of the Account

Legal Counsel was sought from construction barristers who litigate, arbitrate and adjudicate the full range of construction matters and advise on the drafting of civil engineering and consultancy contracts. After seeking their advice, a Settlement Agreement was drafted by the City Councils own legal team. It was employed to address conflicts regarding amounts owed, penalties being claimed by both sides. Both parties agreed to a deduction from Arc's final account to cover any outstanding work that would subsequently be managed and undertaken in-house by the Council's own building services department and their regular suppliers. A settlement figure was proposed to Arc and subsequently accepted, thereby enabling both parties to avoid protracted and costly legal disputes, ensuring the contract could be concluded and allowing all involved to move forward.

Comments and discussion summary

- Members of the Task and Finish Group were taken on a tour of Chelmsford Theatre and shown specific areas in detail, highlighting insights into the transformation and the complexities overcome during the refurbishment of the old building.
- Members commented on the high-quality finish throughout the Theatre, noting significant improvements over the previous design and enhanced functionality of the building.
- Throughout the tour, the group asked several questions regarding the improved accessibility. The project manager highlighted the more accessible signage, enhanced disabled toilets, wider ambient cubicles, new automatic doors, hearing loop technology, and wheelchair-friendly lowered counters throughout.
- The group took an opportunity to query the omission of a stair lift from the scheme. While on site, the project manager highlighted the structural issues, fire regulations, and building control restrictions that made it unfeasible. Officers shared the options for disabled customers to access different bars in the new Theatre and explained how access to the Main Theatre Bar is being maintained via the Auditorium.
- Members inquired about the corporate lessons learned surrounding project management. Officers detailed the new skills and capacities added to the Building Services team and highlighted the organisation-wide Project Management audit. They also introduced the new project management toolkit (attached as Appendix 2), developed as a result of the audit, that in part, drew from the Theatre refurbishment experience, to aid future projects.
- The group heard from the Project Manager about how contract procedures were followed in managing variations throughout the project. Members queried the reasons for and the number of variations. The Project Manager explained that while some variations were expected, there had been a higher number than anticipated, which was largely due to inaccuracies in measurements and design specifications at the outset.

- The group queried whether the challenging economic climate had affected the timely and cost-effective sourcing of materials. The project manager noted that supply issues have severely impacted the project, however, no compromises were made on the building's finish
- Members revisited project governance, examining the establishment, role, and management of the Project Board, as well as the involvement of the Cabinet Member. Officers explained that the board was established in April 2022, immediately after the contract award, to oversee progress and provide strategic advice. They noted that the Cabinet Member consistently challenged decisions throughout the project.
- The group reviewed the detailed budget breakdown and queried how budget changes were managed. The project manager noted that Quantity Surveyors were appointed early on, providing crucial advice both at the tender stage and on securing value for money on variations throughout the project. They emphasised that the additional costs for professional fees, although not initially budgeted for, were always going to be essential to ensure the project's success. These fees facilitated accurate cost assessments and effective management of variations, ultimately safeguarding the project's quality and timeline. Officers highlighted that all extra funding was sought in line with the Council's financial regulations and approval processes, ensuring transparency and accountability in managing the project's finances
- The group were provided with a copy of the agreement produced by the Council's in-house legal team to reach a settlement with the main contractor. Members challenged, and it was verified that the agreement was checked by external counsel to ensure its compliance with legal standards and to safeguard the Council's interests.
- In line with their Terms of Reference, Members queried the Theatre's performance since reopening. Officers informed the group that a summary of key indicators to date would be included in the final report. Members requested a fourth and final formal meeting of the Task & Finish Group to review the outcomes and performance achieved since reopening.

The fourth and final formal meeting of the Task & Finish Group meeting was held on the 13th September 2024. Members requested an overview of outcomes and performance achieved since reopening.

13. The performance achieved, salient points from user and customer feedback received to date.

- 13.1.** The strategy post-refurbishment was to improve and diversify the programme. The programme dramatically increased, with 40% more productions programmed compared to the pre-refurbishment period, leading to box office income doubling.
- 13.2.** There have been 596 performances in the year post refurbishment including a total audience of 7974 for week-long runs with sold out performances of Blood Brothers and The Mousetrap.
- 13.3.** Since reopening, the Theatre has redefined its relationship with local hire and amateur groups, an important and respected part of our annual programme across both spaces.
- 13.4.** The Theatre has trialled a range of workshops and masterclasses for the community, which received a good response and paved the way for a brand new and emerging 'Discover and Creative Engagement' programme, which launched in mid-2024.
- 13.5.** After the unfortunate postponement of the previous year's pantomime due to the refurbishment project, the Theatre experienced its best-performing year, with 91% of sellable capacity reached, welcoming nearly 27,000 visitors. The box office benefited significantly, achieving its highest-grossing pantomime to date.
- 13.6.** The Theatre welcomed an astounding 145,000 people in the year after opening, with an 80% average show capacity reached and the majority coming from a Chelmsford postcode followed by Braintree, Witham, Maldon and Brentwood.
- 13.7.** The Theatre launched a highly successful membership scheme. By the end of the financial year, it had grown to just under 600 memberships. Members have proven to be our most active ticket bookers, expressing elevated loyalty to the Theatre in surveys.
- 13.8.** On average, there have been 123k monthly visits to the new Theatre website, with a 10k increase in people joining the Theatre mailing list.
- 13.9.** There has been a 120% increase in revenue since reopening, with a 42% increase in spend per head.

13.10. A solid financial management and baseline have now been achieved, including a much-improved commercial P&L (financial ledger), KPIs, and forecasting of key areas such as show box office performance. A summary of the key drivers, compared to 2019/2020, which is our last full year before the COVID pandemic, is shown below:

	FY 19/20	FY 23/24
Net Income	857,656	1,525,516
Staffing	-789,073	-1,010,653
Overheads	-278,319	-465,726
Net Position	-209,736	49,138

Above figures do not include central recharges (i.e. Marketing, Finance, Legal, HR, Digital etc) of £281,227 for 19/20 and £479,400 for 23/24.

13.11. 66% of our bookers have been new to the Theatre this year which outperforms the industry standard of 54%, as reported by The Stage.

13.12. 98.5% of customers surveyed who said they would visit us again with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5 on the overall visitor experience

Sample customer survey responses

13.13. “It was great to have an up-to-date celebrity in Chelmsford rather than having to travel to Southend.”

13.14. “Our first visit to the theatre but we already have another visit booked for later in the year. What a lovely venue.”

13.15. “Fantastic local theatre which my family use regularly. We are privileged by living close to such a well-run venue which holds excellent shows! Can’t wait until our next visit, keep up the great work.”

13.16. “We all really loved the panto this year! Its the best one we have seen so far! Great cast, loved the streamers and confetti. The theatre looks fab after the refurb too.”

13.17. “LOVE LOVE LOVED IT! Your panto is our new family tradition, best ever! “

Comments and discussion summary

- Members requested that a recommendation be put to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the new Theatre Director to provide a comprehensive financial report based on actual performance and a forward plan at a future Inform and Debate meeting after six months in post, and towards the end of the financial year, rather than at the meeting as previously proposed.
- Members questioned the difference in the overhead figures. Officers explained this was due to the increase in the content in the theatre as well as the costs for staff, including casuals, and the shows themselves. Members were reassured that figures would also be shown on internal revenue monitoring every month.
- Members recognised the 42% increase in spend per head but raised concerns that the café needed work. Members asked where the daytime trade could come from for the café. It was advised that one of the priority areas would be daytime shows and community outreach in the theatre.
- Members questioned the potential for further growth in the business. Officers noted that the theatre programme was already full for the upcoming year and explained that staff were being challenged to explore growth in other areas such as corporate sponsorship and continuing to expand the membership scheme and increase the creative engagement and outreach programme.

14. Key issues, lessons learned and recommendations

The following section outlines the key issues encountered during the project, the lessons learned from these experiences, and the recommendations for future projects. Each lesson is accompanied by a summary of the challenges faced, specific recommendations to address these challenges, and actions that have already been undertaken or are currently underway. This comprehensive review aims to provide valuable insights and practical guidance to improve the planning, execution, and management of future projects.

14.1. Lesson 1. The importance of accurate surveys for foundational plans and more detailed design information

Summary: The project faced several challenges due to the lack of an accurate measured survey of the building or a topographical survey for the external areas. This caused discrepancies between the drawn areas and their actual dimensions, leading to on-site adjustments, modifications, delays, claims and additional expenses.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that the foundational plans are based on reliable and up-to-date surveys of the site and the building.
- Prepare and use sufficient detailed drawings and data sheets for the proposed works and ensure that they are accurate and consistent with the design intent and the specifications.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- Reviewed and changed how and when the council appoints the design team including appointment of external consultants for large scale capital projects (e.g. Project Manager, Architect, Interior Designer)
- New skills and capacity have been recruited into the Building Services team with increased Project Management Experience.

14.2. Lesson 2: The trade-off between quality and risk in the JCT traditional form of contract

Summary: The Council used the JCT traditional form of contract for a project, which gave reasonable control over the quality of the project. However, this form of contract also requires flexibility in terms of time and cost, and the Council must bear the risk of any variances that might occur.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the pros and cons of different forms of JCT contract before selecting one for a project. Whether this be via a consultant or using the appropriate published JCT Guidance notes.
- Consider the level of risk that the Council is willing and able to accept, and how to mitigate or transfer it if possible.
- Consider transferring more risk to the contractor via utilisation of the Contractor's Design Portion (CDP) under the JCT contract. This will mean that the contractor assumes more of the design-related risks, including any discrepancies or issues that may arise during construction due to design.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- Consulting with both internal Legal, Procurement and Building Services and seeking external advice on contract options for large Capital Projects

14.3. Lesson 3: The drawbacks of specifying subcontractors/suppliers in the main contract

Summary: The project faced problems due to the specification of a number of subcontractors/suppliers in the main contract. This practice was unnecessary and resulted in the engagement of contractors who failed to deliver satisfactory performance (such as the window supplier).

Recommendations:

- Avoid specifying subcontractors/suppliers in the main contract, unless there is a compelling reason to do so.
- Ensure that the contract includes appropriate clauses and mechanisms to integrate and manage the subcontractors/suppliers, such as IC Sub-Nam Agreements.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- Reviewing and minimising the specification of subcontractors/suppliers in the main contract unless there is an operational reason to do so. An example of this could be using suppliers who have an existing, council-wide maintenance contract where there is a demonstrable value-for-money case.

14.4. Lesson 4: The consequences of inadequate structural and civil appointments for building projects

Summary: The project faced challenges due to the insufficient scope and quality of the structural and civil appointments. These appointments failed to identify and address fundamental structural issues, such as the windows, moving drainage clashes, and the corbel over an inspection chamber. These issues resulted in significant redesign, increased scope of work, and large claims for time and money from the contractor.

Recommendations:

- Allocate sufficient budget and time for the structural and civil appointments and ensure that they cover all the relevant aspects of the building and the proposed works.
- Hire more qualified and experienced structural and civil engineers to conduct the appointments and provide feedback and guidance.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- Reviewed and changed how and when the council makes civil appointments, ensuring they are properly budgeted for and resourced.

14.5. Lesson 5: The risks of a limited asbestos R+D survey for building projects

Summary: The project encountered additional areas of work that required asbestos removal and disposal (R+D) by the contractor. However, the asbestos R+D survey procured by Building Services before the works had a very limited scope and did not cover all the potential asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in the building. This resulted in increased costs, delays, and health and safety hazards for the project.

Recommendations:

- Procure a comprehensive asbestos R+D survey that covers all the areas and materials that might be affected by the works.
- Hire a competent and accredited asbestos surveyor to conduct the survey and provide a clear and detailed report.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- Where appropriate, projects will increase intrusive investigation work upfront and allocate a dedicated, increased provisional sum for high-risk buildings with concealed areas such as the Theatre.

- 14.6. Lesson 6:** The importance of verifying the qualifications, skills and insurance of the lead consultant and architect for building projects

Summary: The project involved the City Council's Building Services Team fulfilling the roles of Project Manager, Contract Administrator, and architect for the works. However, it was not clear whether staff had the relevant qualifications, skills and as a result whether the Council was insured for them to undertake some of their roles. This posed a risk of design negligence and liability for the project.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of the qualifications, skills and insurance of those performing lead roles, whether external consultants or internal staff, before engaging them for a project.
- Ensure that the contract specifies the roles and responsibilities of the lead roles and architect, and the level and scope of their professional indemnity insurance.

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- New skills and capacity have been recruited into the Building Services team with increased Project Management Experience.
- An organisation-wide Project Management audit has been undertaken and a dedicated, cross-department task force has been set up to scope and implement recommendations.
- Reviewed and changed how and when the council appoints the design team, including the appointment of external consultants for large-scale capital projects (e.g., Project Manager, Architect, Interior Designer).

- 14.7. Lesson 7:** The drawbacks of restoring outdated M&E systems and transferring design liability to the contractor

Summary: The project faced operational and financial challenges due to the decision to restore the existing M&E systems to their original state, rather than upgrading them to modern standards. This resulted in conflicts, fixes and local controls that increased the costs and complexity of the project.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of restoring versus upgrading the M&E systems, considering the operational and maintenance implications of each option.
- Avoid the 'design and dump' approach and ensure that the M&E design is completed and verified by the consultants before transferring it to the contractor as a CD

Actions already undertaken or underway:

- More consideration will be given to the cost-benefit analysis of restoring versus upgrading the M&E systems, considering the operational and maintenance implications of each option.
- More time will be allocated to the verification of M&E designs before handing over to contractors.

14.8. Lesson 8: The Impact of Staff Changeover at Key Moments

Summary: A changeover in Theatre Management led to a personnel shift at a critical stage of the refurbishment project. Additional time was required to onboard the incoming staff to ensure a thorough understanding of the design decisions and scope for variations.

Recommendations:

- Implement a comprehensive and structured onboarding process for new staff, especially during critical stages of a project. This process should include detailed briefings on the project's history, design decisions, and potential scope for variations.
- Where feasible, consider creating overlap periods where outgoing and incoming staff work together. This can ensure a smooth transition, help mitigate the impact of staff changeovers, and maintain continuity in project execution.

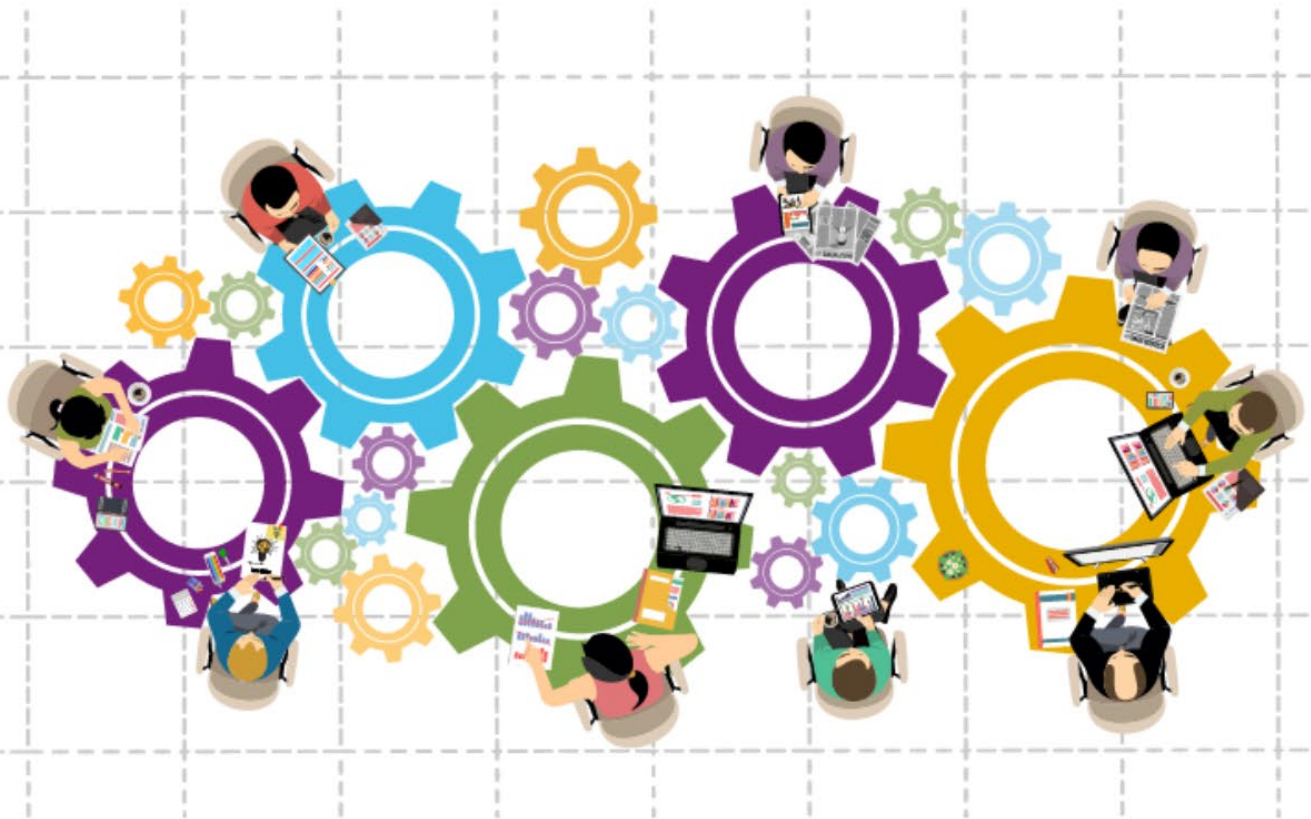
Actions Already Undertaken or Underway:

- The Culture Service Manager is currently reviewing the onboarding process for staff, with special consideration given to the change of personnel midway through the delivery of large-scale projects (both capital and non-capital).

2. Terms of Reference

<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Task and finish group to undertake a project evaluation of the Theatre refurbishment.</p> <p>TERMS OF REFERENCE</p>	
Background:	<p>The purpose of a project evaluation is to undertake a systematic and objective assessment of the completed project to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the level of achievement of the refurbishment objectives. • Compare planned costs and benefits with actual costs and benefits. • Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the approach and working arrangements practices adopted. • Consider the overall value for money achieved.
Objectives:	<p>The evaluation will examine, but is not limited to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial rationale for refurbishing the Civic and Cramphorn Theatres both culturally and financially and the sign-off by Cabinet. • Original tenders and refurbishment contract – including procurement options, appointment of main contractor, form of contract used. • Project inception and project objectives – including early-stage scoping and survey work • Financial information in detail, comparing planned costs and benefits with actual costs and benefits • Refurbishment programme and timings – highlighting the reason and cause of any delays • The losses in revenue due to the delayed opening of the Theatres • Project management – including the rationale, role and appointment of design and professional services, project manager, cost manager [quantity surveyor] and specialist consultants • The Theatre’s accessibility and any changes as a result of the refurbishment.
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the views of other project sponsors / funders, officers will prepare and present a detailed project evaluation report, for consideration and scrutiny by the task and finish group. • For each aspect of the project, the evaluation will identify the lessons learnt and any recommendations for consideration when planning or undertaking large scale construction projects in the future.
Members:	<p>Cllr Thorpe Apps Cllr Dan Clark Cllr Sue Dobson Cllr Sue Young Cllr Hazel Clark Cllr Terry SHERLOCK Cllr Steve DAVIS</p>
Director Lead:	Director of Connected Chelmsford [Louise Goodwin]
Co-ordinating Officer:	Cultural Services Manager [Marc De’ath]

Project Management Toolkit Guidance



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1. Introduction

1.1 Why do we have a toolkit?

This document aims to offer information and guidance relating to Project Management at Chelmsford City Council.

Projects delivered by the City Council have generally been well managed and successfully delivered. This owes much to the knowledge and experience of managers, but it is accepted that there is a lack of consistency in all aspects of the project management process.

Most well managed large projects will have used similar tools contained in this toolkit but by providing these templates in one place it will encourage Project Managers to ensure they follow a consistent approach and avoid missing something that could impact on the project.

This toolkit not only supports the project manager in the delivery of the project but encourages them to think of all stakeholders and ensures there is an appropriate level of communication.

The toolkit will be easily accessible for all staff and it is anticipated that a portfolio of case study documents can be stored and readily available to support future projects.

These tools have largely been adapted from those that have been used previously. Inevitably they can be improved upon and you are encouraged to share your experiences. A feedback form is available and you are encouraged to use this.

Should you need support or guidance on the use of this toolkit, you may contact the following:

- Jack Conington
- Emma Edgings
- Mark Owers
- Mark Penfold
- Jon Lyons

1.2 How to use this document

This document is set out in a number of parts.

1. **Back to basics** – this seeks to provide an overview of project management and may be helpful to those that do not regularly manage projects or act as a reminder to those that do.
2. **Early Project Considerations (how to determine the scale of a project)** - It should be fairly clear to most project managers whether their project falls into a large or medium scale project. This tool simply seeks to provide an assessment to help with this process. This may determine which tools you should use. This may need to remain fluid as it is often the case that projects that start off small can grow



into large projects, both in terms of resources and complexity. If in doubt talk to your Director or one of the project team.

3. **Process and Document Templates** – this section provides guidance on the use of the templates – you may want to look at these whilst completing any of the forms. This seeks to outline the main areas to cover but **please remember all projects are different in terms of scale and complexity and you may not need to deal with all the subjects raised in the guidance**. Equally the guidance points are not exhaustive and you will need to complete the forms in line what you feel is appropriate to your project.

The document is designed to aid individuals tasked with managing projects within the Council, regardless of their familiarity with project management or departmental role. While project needs may differ, the recommended project management methods and practices should ideally remain consistent.

It is recognised that this may take some time to fully embed, but the more that they are used, the more they will become familiar and part of the everyday delivery of projects – small and large.

1.3 Glossary of Terms

Due to the technical language used in Project Management a Glossary of Terms is provided at Appendix 1 (Page 62).

1.4 Use of Consultants

It may be necessary to appoint an external consultant to Project Manage a Project. In some cases they will run the whole project but in most cases will run key aspects of a project – often where there is a lack of in house technical skills. It will be worthwhile to send this Guidance note to the consultant as a reference point to ensure they understand the processes the Council follows. Some consultants will use their own templates as substitutes for the documentation referred to below but it would be useful to align where possible and certainly avoid any duplication.



2. Back to Basics

2.1 Definition of a project

A project is a set of tasks that must be completed within a defined timeline to accomplish a specific set of goals to deliver business products or services.

- For a project to commence, a Business Case must be in place, which can be either developed beforehand or as part of project initiation.
- A project is established with the goal of delivering one or more business products or services. Planning the project entails precisely defining the necessary steps to achieve this delivery.
- Projects are finite endeavors, each marked by a clear commencement, progression, and conclusion. They are not perpetual occurrences; instead, they have distinct durations and definitive endpoints.

2.2 Characteristics of a project

- a) **Objective:** It is a unique venture targeted to meet a specific objective or established goals, has an identified priority within the organisation, and uses supporting processes to meet the objective.
- b) **Timescale:** Has a specific start and end point.
- c) **Team:** Conducted by people often from different parts of the organisation.
- d) **Fixed Budget:** Constrained by cost, schedule, resources and quality.
- e) **Deliverable:** Delivers a product, concept or changes the way a business function operates.

2.3 What is Project Management?

Project management extends beyond the responsibility of the Project Manager alone. It encompasses the collective efforts of individuals in designated roles, the organisational framework, and the operational processes geared toward achieving the desired outcome. This inclusive approach fosters clarity regarding expectations among all stakeholders and aids in the effective management of cost, time, and risk factors.

2.4 Project Management and why?

All projects require managing for several reasons:

- **Coordination:** Projects involve multiple tasks, resources, and stakeholders that need to be organised and coordinated to achieve the desired outcomes efficiently.



- **Resource Allocation:** Effective project management ensures that resources such as time, budget, and personnel are allocated and utilised optimally to meet project goals.
- **Risk Management:** Project management involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that may arise during project execution, helping to minimise potential negative impacts.
- **Quality Assurance:** Project managers oversee the implementation of quality standards and processes to ensure that deliverables meet or exceed stakeholder expectations.
- **Timely Delivery:** Project management involves setting realistic timelines, monitoring progress, and taking corrective actions as needed to ensure that projects are completed on time.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Project managers facilitate communication and collaboration among project team members and stakeholders to ensure alignment and manage expectations.
- **Change Management:** Projects often involve changes to existing processes, systems, or structures, and effective project management helps to manage these changes smoothly and minimise disruptions.

2.5 Why do projects fail?

There are several reasons projects fail, a list is provided below:

- **Poor Planning:** Inadequate planning, including unclear objectives, unrealistic timelines, and inadequate resource allocation, can lead to project failure.
- **Unclear Requirements:** Projects may fail if requirements are not properly defined or understood, leading to scope creep, misaligned expectations, and deliverables that do not meet stakeholders' needs.
- **Lack of Stakeholder Engagement:** Projects often involve multiple stakeholders with varying interests and expectations. Failure to engage stakeholders effectively can result in resistance, conflicts, and project derailment.
- **Inadequate Risk Management:** Ignoring or underestimating risks can lead to unforeseen issues that derail the project. Effective risk management involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks throughout the project lifecycle.
- **Poor Communication:** Communication breakdowns among team members, stakeholders, or project managers can lead to misunderstandings, delays, and conflicts, ultimately jeopardising project success.
- **Scope Creep:** Changes to project scope without proper evaluation and control can result in scope creep, leading to increased costs, delays, and decreased quality.



- **Resource Constraints:** Insufficient resources, including budget, personnel, or technology, can hinder project progress and prevent the successful completion of deliverables.
- **Lack of Leadership Support:** Projects may fail if there is a lack of support or commitment from organisational leaders, resulting in inadequate funding, resources, or prioritisation.
- **Technology Issues:** Projects that rely on new or complex technologies may encounter technical challenges, such as compatibility issues, security breaches, or system failures, leading to project failure.
- **External Factors:** External factors such as market changes, regulatory requirements, natural disasters, or geopolitical events can impact project outcomes and contribute to failure.



3. Early Project Considerations

3.1 Categorisation of projects

Each project follows a project management lifecycle, yet the extent of control, documentation, and organisation necessary varies based on project size and complexity. Additionally, diverse projects can demand varying levels of project management proficiency.

Chelmsford City Council categorises projects into two tiers: **Medium and Large Projects.**

It should be clear to most Project Managers which category a project falls into but if in doubt a scaling tool (See appendix 2) has been created to help assess and assist with this decision. Every project is different though so if in doubt talk to your Service Manager, Director, or one of the project team. The below points define the differences between a Medium and Large Project:

- **Medium Project:** Consider all elements of project management and use necessary documents that are relevant to the project.
- **Large Project:** Implement a comprehensive project management approach which encompasses all vital documents.

*Please refer to section 4 of this guidance to ensure that your project has the right documentation prepared.

3.2 Procurement

All projects involving the procurement of goods or services must adhere to Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts as well as the EU Procurement Directive. The Procurement Team is available to offer guidance to the project team throughout the procurement process if needed. They will assess whether Legal Services should also be involved in the process. If in any doubt contact Procurement as early as possible for advice. If it is too early it will at least be on their radar for future resourcing.

3.3 Financial Consideration

Large projects should incorporate a finance representative within their project structure. Both the Project Board and Project Manager must possess the skills and expertise necessary to effectively manage and oversee the project budget, while also understanding the financial reporting obligations associated with projects within a Local Authority environment. For additional guidance on project financial management, contact the Capital Accountant or your Service Accountant when initiating a new project (medium or large)



4. Project Management Process and Document Templates

4.1 Chelmsford City Councils Project Framework

Chelmsford City Council's project framework embodies a comprehensive approach to effective project management, spanning from inception to conclusion. At the heart of this framework lies meticulous attention to four pivotal phases: **Project Initiation, Project Planning and Execution, Project Monitoring, and Project Closure**.

In the initial phase, **Project Initiation**, objectives are clearly defined, stakeholders identified, and feasibility assessed to ensure alignment with organisational goals. Subsequently, during **Project Planning and Execution**, strategies are created, resources allocated, and timelines established to guide the project towards successful completion. **These two phases often overlap and the documents within them will need regular review and updating.** Throughout the journey, **Project Monitoring** plays a crucial role, allowing for continuous assessment of progress, risk mitigation, and adaptation to evolving circumstances. Finally, with **Project Closure**, attention turns to formalising outcomes, evaluating achievements against initial objectives, and capturing valuable insights for future endeavours.

4.2 Project Documentation Flow

Chelmsford City Council's Project Documentation Flow (illustrated on next pages) ensures efficient handling and dissemination of project-related documents throughout the organisation. This process will assist project managers by providing them with a clear framework for managing project documentation. It ensures that relevant information is readily accessible, organised, and communicated to the appropriate stakeholders. This enables project managers to make informed decisions, monitor progress effectively, mitigate risks, and maintain accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

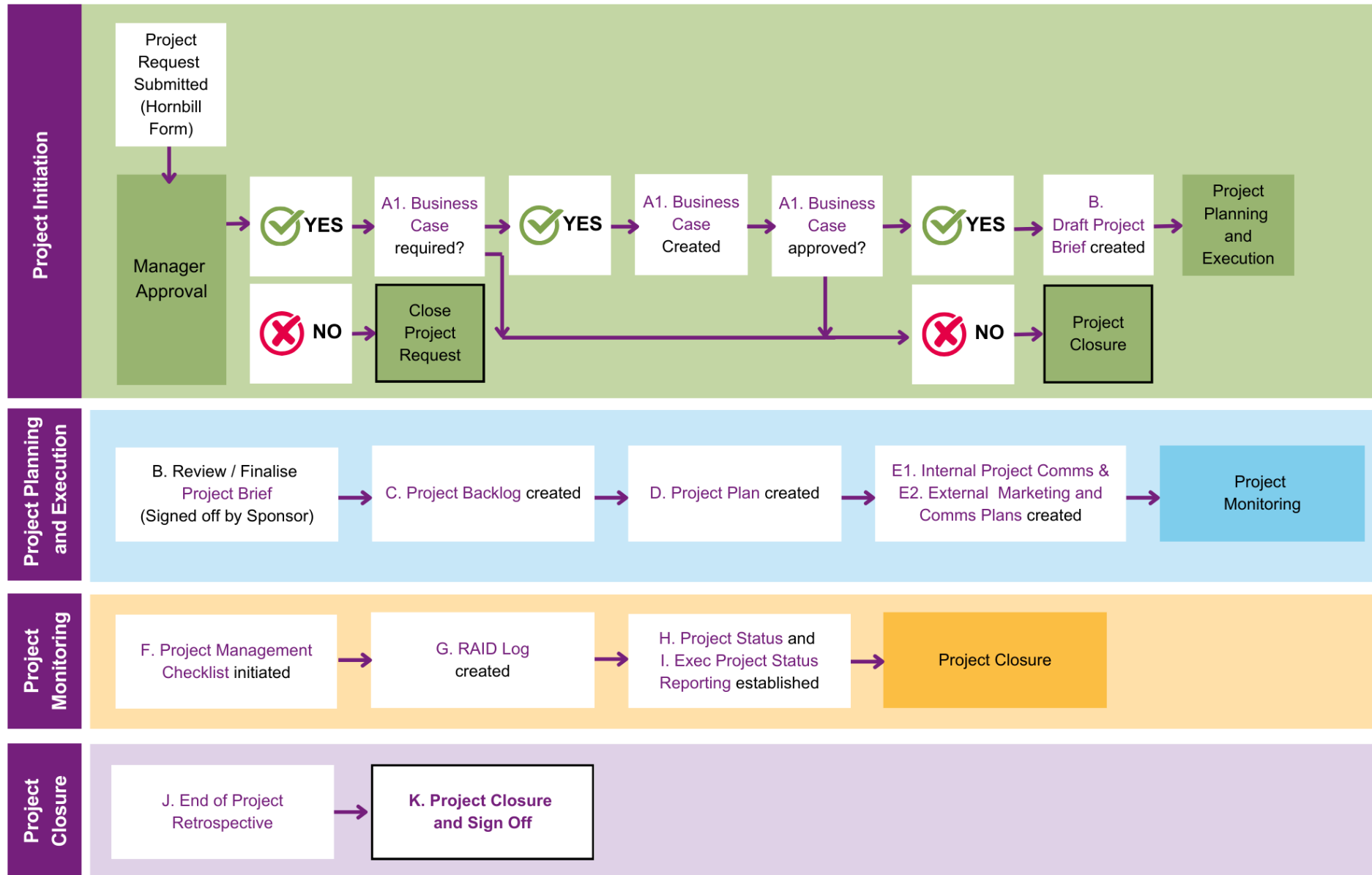
4.3 Toolkit Guidance

Chelmsford City Council has created a Project Toolkit which contains project templates to support project managers and teams throughout the lifecycle and phases of a project mentioned above. It serves as a centralised repository of tools designed to streamline processes, enhance collaboration, mitigate risks, and ensure the successful delivery of projects within scope, on time, and within budget.

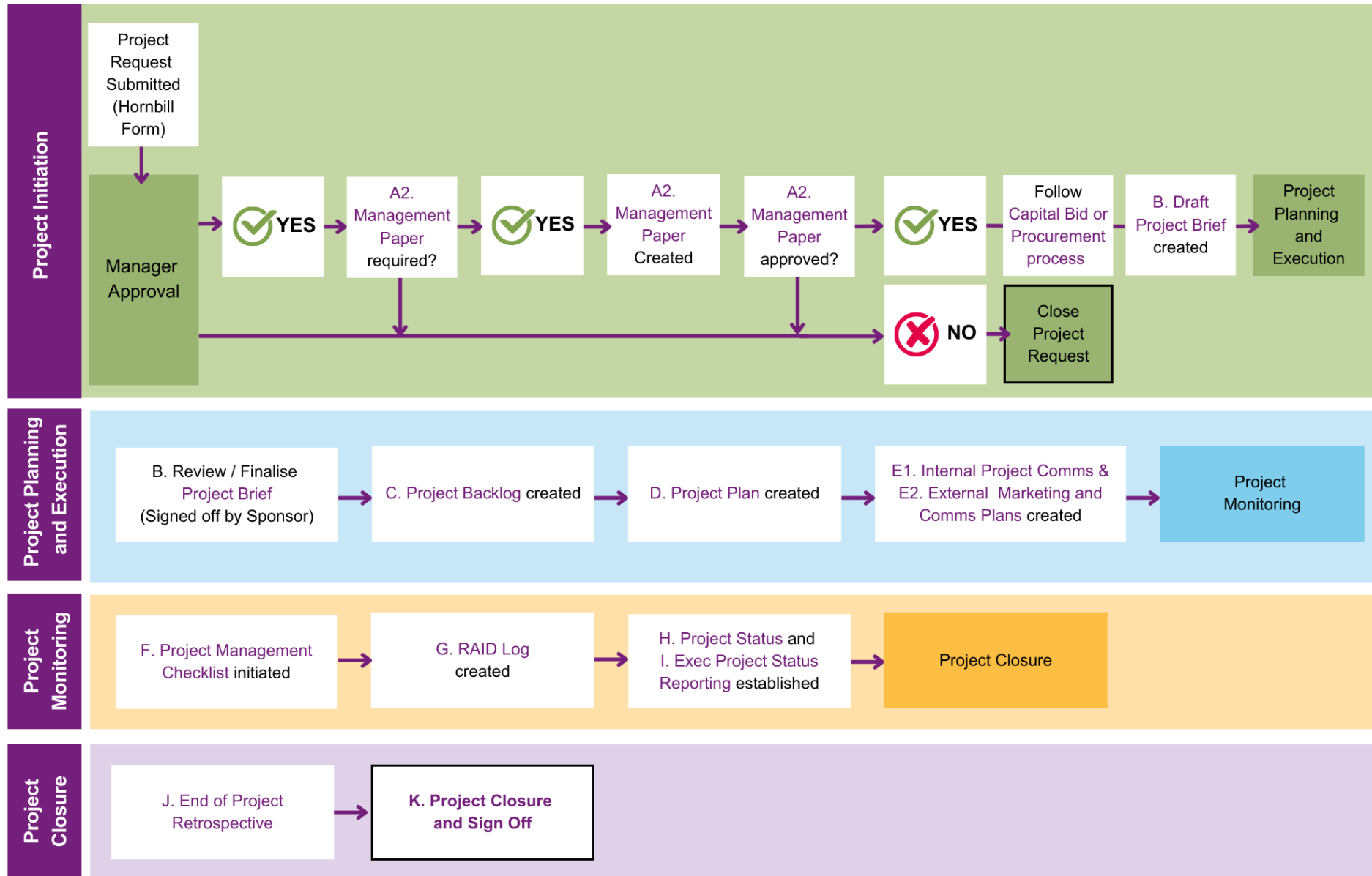
The Toolkit devised can be used flexibly. Initially it is proposed that larger projects should follow the framework very closely and use all the available tools. An important initial stage is to assess whether a project should follow the large project route or the medium project route.



Large Project Document Flow



Medium Project Document Flow



Large Projects – Documentation overview

The table below illustrates the project lifecycle, the documents attributed to each phase of the lifecycle and the purpose of the document. The business case and Project brief are static documents once published. All other documents can be dynamic.

Project Phases	Document Name	Purpose
Project Initiation	A1. Business Case	A business case is a document that's created during the initiation phase of a project to convince project stakeholders of the project's value by explaining the potential benefits it could have for the organisation.
	B. Draft Project Brief	The project brief is a document that captures and defines all the work management aspects of a project. The activities, deliverables and timetable for the project will be documented. It's an extremely detailed document that defines any terms and conditions agreed upon between parties and lays the groundwork for the project plan.
Project Planning and Execution	B. Final Project Brief	The draft project brief will be finalised by the Project Manager and shared with the project team and stakeholders.
	C. Project Backlog	A detailed list of requirements, snags, change requests, observations and their status. May be managed and owned by external supplier.
	D. Project Plan	<p>A project plan is a timetable that organizes tasks, resources, and due dates in an ideal sequence so that a project can be completed on time.</p> <p>A project timeline with start dates, end dates and milestones</p> <p>The work necessary to complete the project deliverables</p> <p>The costs, resources and dependencies associated with each task</p> <p>The team members that are responsible for each task.</p>



Project Phases	Document Name	Purpose
	E1. Internal Project Communication Plan	Enables effective communication and clear visibility of the project and status with the Project Team and Project Stakeholders. It sets out clear guidelines on how project information will be shared, as well as who's responsible for and needs to be included in the project communication.
	E2. External Marketing and Communication Plan	Defines the roles and responsibilities within the internal marketing and communications teams. Defines and overview of the campaign, linkages to the campaign, target audiences and how the campaign will be communicated.
Project Monitoring	F. Project Management Checklist	A checklist that provides guidance on all Project Management Considerations throughout the project lifecycle.
	G. RAID Log	Risks, Actions, Issues, Dependencies. A RAID log, is a project management tool that tracks risks, actions, issues and decisions. It's a simple way to organise and track this information.
	H. Project Status Reporting	A project status report is a document that describes the progress of a project within a specific period and compares it against the project plan. It is used to keep stakeholders informed of progress and monitor costs, risks, time and work. Recommended distribution every 2 weeks.
	I. Executive Status Reporting	An executive status reports is a document that provide the progress of a project within a specific period. It is used to keep the senior management team informed of progress and to highlight any high priority risks that may impact the project. Recommended distribution every 4 weeks.



Project Phases	Document Name	Purpose
Project Closure	J. End of Project Retrospective	A project retrospective is a meeting or a workshop in which teams reanalyse a completed project, with the purpose of understanding both its successes and its failures. The purpose of a project retrospective is to identify various actions and behaviours that lead to successful outcomes so they can be replicated on future projects. They can also help uncover the reasons behind any eventual failure to make sure they're not repeated.
	K. Project Closure and Sign Off	Verifies that the project has met with its deliverables



Medium Projects – Documentation overview

The table below illustrates the project lifecycle, the documents attributed to each phase of the lifecycle and the purpose of the document. The management paper and Project brief are static documents once published. All other documents can be dynamic.

Documents marked with an * are optional but recommended.

Project Phases	Document Name	Purpose
Project Initiation	A2. Management Paper	A Management paper is a document that's created during the initiation phase of a project to convince project stakeholders of the project's value by explaining the potential benefits it could have for their organisation.
Project Planning and Execution	B. Project Brief	A project brief is a summarised version of the project, geared towards an audience such as cross-functional teams or stakeholders who don't need to dive into all the details of a project management plan but still need to understand the project goals, budget, roles & responsibilities among other key aspects.
	C. Project Backlog	A detailed list of requirements, snags, change requests, observations and their status need to complete the website.
	*E1. Internal Project Communication Plan	Enables effective communication and clear visibility of the project and status with the Project Team and Project Stakeholders. It sets out clear guidelines on how project information will be shared, as well as who's responsible for and needs to be included in the project communication.
	*E2. Marketing & External Communication Plan	Defines the roles and responsibilities within the internal marketing and communications teams. Defines and overview of the campaign, linkages to the campaign, target audiences and how the campaign will be communicated.



Project Monitoring	F. Project Management Checklist	A checklist that provides guidance on all Project Management Considerations throughout the project lifecycle.
	H. Status Reporting	A project status report is a document that describes the progress of a project within a specific period and compares it against the project plan. It is used to keep stakeholders informed of progress and monitor costs, risks, time and work. Recommended distribution every 2 weeks.
Project Closure	J. Retrospective	A project retrospective is a meeting or a workshop in which teams reanalyse a completed project, with the purpose of understanding both its successes and its failures. The purpose of a project retrospective is to identify various actions and behaviours that lead to successful outcomes so they can be replicated on future projects. They can also help uncover the reasons behind any eventual failure to make sure they're not repeated.
	K. Project Closure & Sign Off	Verifies that the project has met with its deliverables



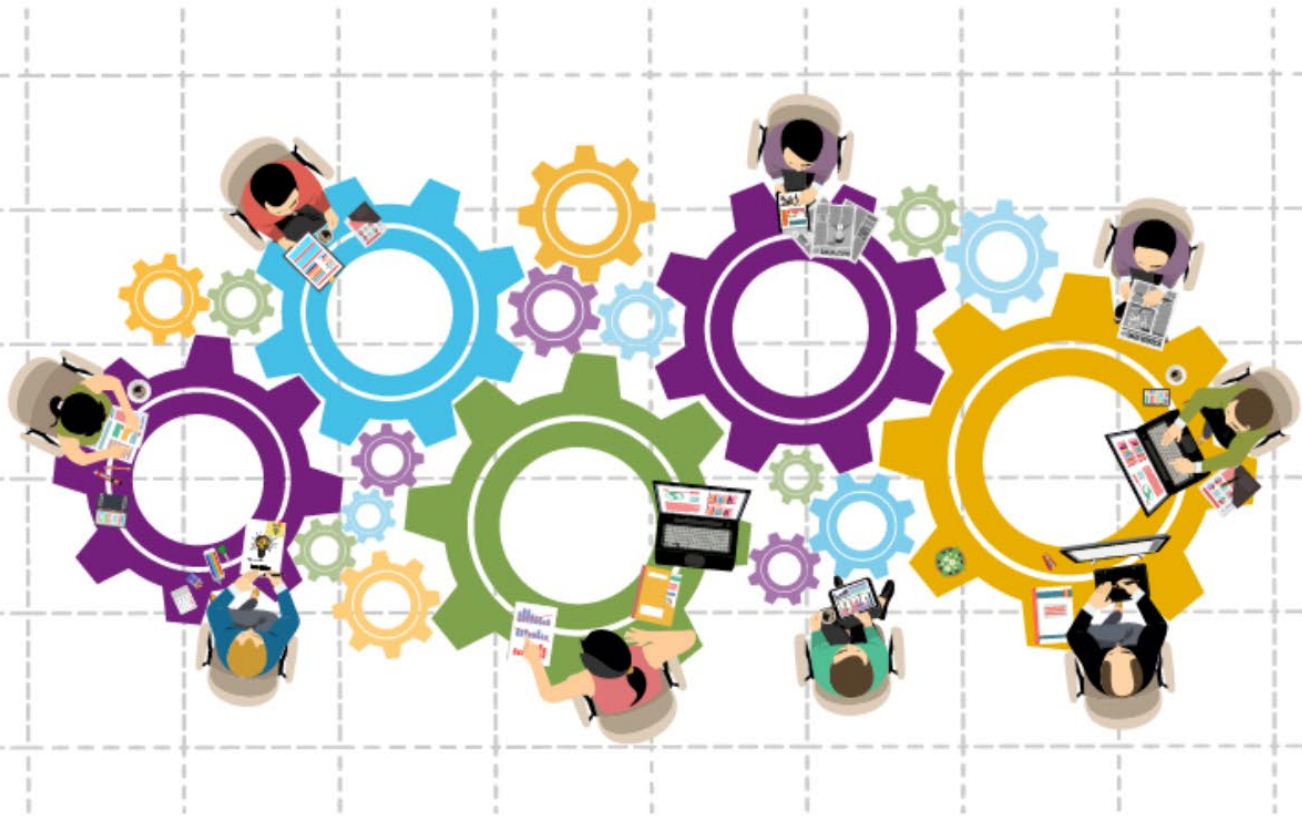
Medium and Large Project Documentation

	Document Type	Large	Medium	Optional Medium
Project Initiation	A1. Business Case	✓		✓
	B. Draft Project Brief	✓	✓	
	A2. Management Paper		✓	
Project Planning and Execution	B. Final Project Brief	✓	✓	
	C. Project Backlog	✓	✓	
	D. Project plan	✓		✓
	E1. Internal Project Comms and E2. External Marketing and Comms Plans	✓		✓
Project Monitoring	F. Project Management Checklist	✓	✓	
	G. RAID log	✓		✓
	H. and I. Project Status Reporting	✓		✓
Project Closure	J. End of Project Retrospective	✓	✓	
	K. Project Closure and Sign Off	✓	✓	



A2

Management Paper Guidance Medium Projects



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

1. Strategic Alignment – Strategic reason for the project

A simple “tick box” to identify why the project is needed – **Legislative, Contractual, Operational Improvement** or **Other** (eg a commercial opportunity) If **Other** explain in a few words.

2. Project Purpose – What are you doing and why?

Provide an overview of what the project is about and why it is needed.
Describe what this project will achieve and deliver for the Council/ residents.

As this is not a large project, just provide an appropriate amount of detail to reflect the scale and complexity of the project. Provide sufficient information so that it is understood what is required and what will be the impact of it cannot be delivered.

3. Procurement - Are you procuring goods or services?

For further advice and information please contact the Procurement Department on 01245 606598 or [Procurement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

4. Quantitative Considerations

A. Costs

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Total capital budget – required and funded
- Total revenue budget – required and funded
- As well as other information, including managing any funding gaps

B. Benefits / Savings

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Anticipated financial benefit – amount and cumulative
- Identify the programme or savings target this project is contributing to
- As well as other information

C. Income

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Anticipated financial income – amount and cumulative
- Identify the programme or savings target this project is contributing to
- As well as other information



5. Qualitative Considerations

Set out the benefits that will be secured from delivering this project.

Some may be simple as it may be a legislative or contractual requirement but given resources are scarce there will always be a need for prioritisation. Where possible show how your project will deliver one or more of the Council's strategic aims. A fairer and more inclusive place, a greener and safer place, a more connected place See link

[Our Chelmsford, Our Plan](#)

6. Risk Register

Start a risk register as early as possible even if you cannot fully assess those risks.

Every project will have some risks. You may think they are obvious, but they may not be as obvious to those who are making decisions.

Log risks in the first column – if you don't know all of the detail to complete the remaining columns, you can leave this and update them later.

If the project proceeds these risks will be carried forward to the Project Brief and RAID log as appropriate and will be continually reviewed during the project life cycle.

7. Equality and Carbon Impact Assessments – Impact on others

Your project may impact on the Council's Local Authority Carbon Action Plan (LACAP) if it includes a change in energy and/or fuel use. Information can be found on the following link - [Climate emergency declaration and action plan](#) (chelmsford.gov.uk)

8. List of Consultees – Impact on others in the Council

Please identify other key players within the Council who may have a view on the project or may contribute to how it is delivered.

Where it is appropriate consult with them now, otherwise please log them as a reminder to consult them later.

This is a very important part of the new project management process and an area all Services have agreed needs to be improved.

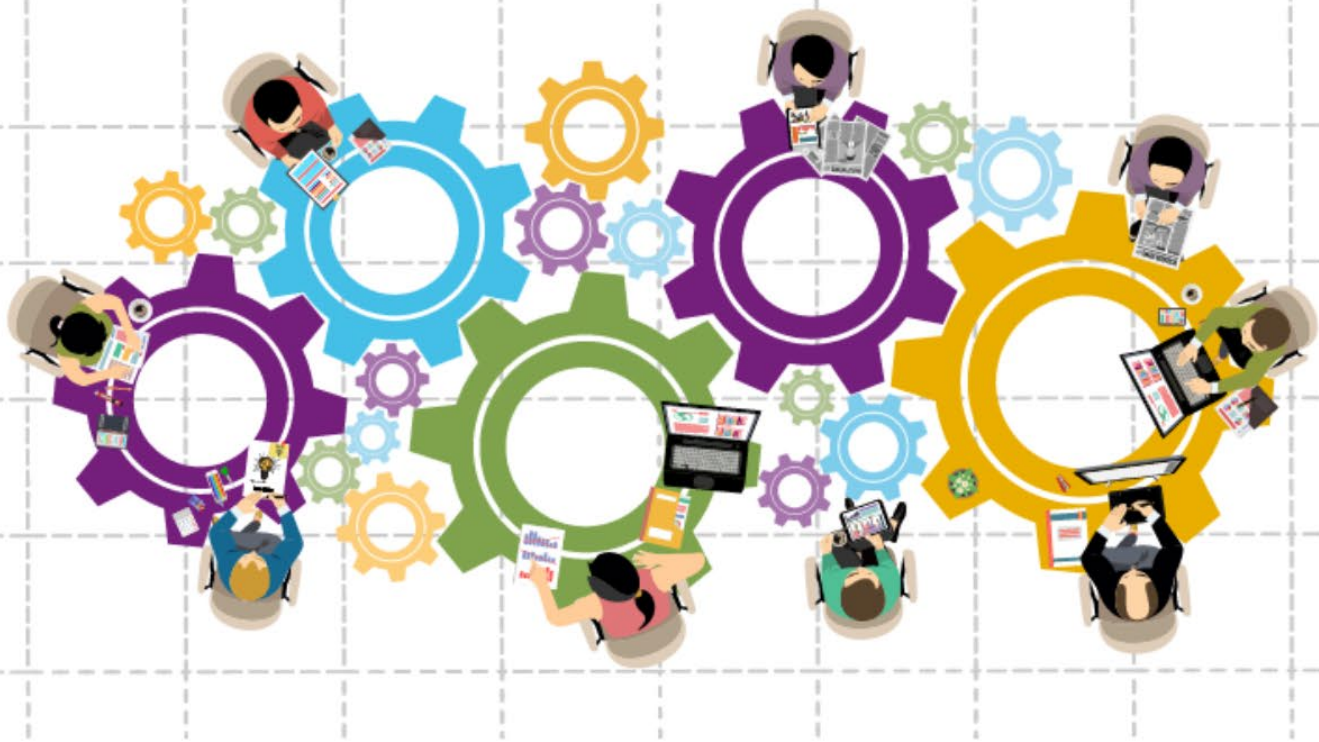
9. Approval to proceed

This authority ensures your Director/ Cabinet Member is supportive of this project. This does not necessarily provide authority to spend capital/revenue on this project and further or separate approvals may be required depending on the value of the project and if resources are already allocated. If in doubt check with your Service or Capital Accountant.





Business Case Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

1. Executive and Financial Summary

The Executive Summary should provide a short, informative headline summary of the Business Case document to follow. It should typically be no longer than 1 page.

Example paragraphs provided below:

- **Project Description:** Briefly describe the project, including the background information, objectives, scope, and purpose.
- **Market Opportunity:** Summarise the market opportunity that the project addresses. Highlight key market trends, customer needs, and competitive landscape.
- **Value Proposition:** Clearly articulate the value proposition of the project. Explain how it meets customer needs, solves problems, or creates value for stakeholders.
- **Business Model:** Provide an overview of the business model, including revenue streams, cost structure, and profit potential.
- **Key Success Factors:** Identify the critical success factors for the project. This may include factors such as market demand, technological feasibility, regulatory compliance, etc.
- **Risk Factors:** Highlight potential risks and challenges associated with the project. This could include market risks, operational risks, regulatory risks, etc.
- **Financial Summary:** Provide a high-level summary of the financial projections for the project. This may include key financial metrics such as revenue projections, cost estimates, profitability analysis, etc.

2. Introduction and Overview

This section should describe the setting, background, and context of the Business Case.

It should:

- serve to **clarify and elaborate the subject matter** of the Business Case
- clearly **state the purpose** of the Business Case
- **explain the objectives, needs or problems** addressed by the requirement
- **outline any relevant related initiatives** – is the project part of a larger programme?
- **detail whether there are dependencies** on the delivery of other projects to realise the benefits.



3. Market Analysis

- **Industry Overview:** Provide an overview of the industry in which the business operates, including its size, growth trends, major players, and any relevant regulations or external factors impacting the industry.
- **Target Market Segmentation:** Identify and describe the target market segments for the product or service, including demographics, psychographics, and any other relevant characteristics.
- **Competitor Analysis:** Analyze the competitive landscape by identifying key competitors, their strengths and weaknesses, market share, pricing strategies, and any other factors that may impact the business.
- **Market Trends:** Evaluate current market trends and future projections, including technological advancements, consumer preferences, and any other factors that may impact the market dynamics.
- **SWOT Analysis:** Conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to assess the internal strengths and weaknesses of the business as well as external opportunities and threats in the market.
- **Market Entry Strategy:** Outline the proposed market entry strategy, including pricing strategy, distribution channels, marketing and promotional activities, and any other tactics to penetrate the market effectively.
- **Sales Forecast:** Provide a sales forecast based on the market analysis, taking into account factors such as market size, growth potential, competition, and the business's capabilities.
- **Risk Assessment:** Identify and assess any potential risks or challenges associated with entering the market, such as regulatory hurdles, competitive threats, or economic uncertainties.
- **Market Research Findings:** Include any findings from primary or secondary market research conducted to gather insights into customer needs, preferences, and behaviours.

NOTE: Additional information can be provided as an appendices.



4. Assessment of Benefits

The benefits to be gained from the investment compared to the alternative of 'doing nothing' should be summarised.

Benefits should be identified and quantified, as far as possible in financial terms

As appropriate, this to include:

- projected cost reduction against investments,
- impact if no investment, reduction in risk,
- improvements in quality,
- reliability,
- accuracy
- and other tangible, non-tangible and consequential benefit i.e. 'what are the real benefits from making the investment?'

5. Assessment of Costs

A. Costs

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Total capital budget – required and funded
- Total revenue budget – required and funded
- As well as other information, including managing any funding gaps

B. Benefits / Savings

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Anticipated financial benefit – amount and cumulative
- Identify the programme or savings target this project is contributing to
- As well as other information

C. Income

This should cover:

- Financial year
- Anticipated financial income – amount and cumulative
- Identify the programme or savings target this project is contributing to
- As well as other information



6. Options appraisal and Recommended option

An option appraisal within a business case evaluates various alternatives to address a particular challenge or opportunity.

It typically involves assessing each option's:

- feasibility,
- cost,
- benefits,
- and risks.

The recommended option is the one deemed most favorable based on the appraisal, considering factors like strategic alignment, resource availability, and potential outcomes.

This recommendation should be supported by detailed analysis and justification within the business case, highlighting why it represents the best course of action among the available choices.

Additionally, the recommended option often includes a proposed implementation plan outlining how it will be executed and monitored to achieve desired results.

7. Key Assumptions and Dependencies

Key assumptions in a business case are fundamental hypotheses or conditions considered true for the proposed initiative's success. These can include:

- market trends,
- regulatory changes,
- or technology advancements.

Dependencies are external factors or preconditions that the success of the project relies on, such as:

- partnerships,
- infrastructure availability,
- or stakeholder cooperation.

Identifying and documenting these assumptions and dependencies is crucial for understanding potential risks and ensuring the project's feasibility and success.

They serve as foundational elements guiding decision-making and risk management throughout the project lifecycle.

Regular review and validation of these assumptions and dependencies are essential to adapt to changing circumstances and mitigate uncertainties.



8. Risk and Sensitivity Analysis

This section can be condensed by filling in the Risk Register located on the following page. A Risk and Sensitivity Analysis in a business case aims to assess the potential impact of various risks and uncertainties on the project's outcomes and to evaluate the sensitivity of key variables to changes in assumptions or external factors. Here's what it could include:

- **Identification of Risks:** Identify and categorize potential risks that could affect the project, considering factors such as market conditions, regulatory changes, technology disruptions, operational challenges, and financial risks.
- **Risk Assessment:** Assess the likelihood and potential impact of each identified risk on the project's objectives, considering factors such as probability of occurrence, magnitude of impact, and time horizon.
- **Risk Mitigation Strategies:** Develop strategies to mitigate or manage the identified risks, including preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and contingency plans to mitigate the impact if risks materialize.
- **Sensitivity Analysis:** Conduct sensitivity analysis to evaluate the project's sensitivity to changes in key variables or assumptions, such as sales volume, pricing, costs, and discount rates. This helps identify which variables have the most significant impact on project outcomes and assesses the robustness of the business case under different scenarios.
- **Scenario Analysis:** Perform scenario analysis to assess the project's performance under different plausible scenarios, such as best-case, worst-case, and base-case scenarios. This helps stakeholders understand the range of potential outcomes and make informed decisions considering different risk scenarios.
- **Financial Modelling:** Integrate the results of the risk and sensitivity analysis into the financial model of the business case to quantify the potential impact of risks on financial metrics such as net present value (NPV), internal rate of return (IRR), and payback period.
- **Risk Tolerance and Appetite:** Define the organisation's risk tolerance and appetite, considering factors such as risk aversion, strategic objectives, and financial constraints. This helps guide decision-making and risk management strategies aligned with the organization's risk preferences.
- **Contingency Planning:** Develop contingency plans and risk mitigation strategies to address potential adverse outcomes or deviations from the expected project performance, ensuring that the project remains on track to achieve its objectives despite uncertainties.
- **Communication and Reporting:** Communicate the results of the risk and sensitivity analysis effectively to stakeholders, including senior management, investors, and project team members, to facilitate informed decision-making and transparency regarding the project's risks and uncertainties.



Start a risk register as early as possible even if you cannot fully assess those risks. Every project will have some risks. You may think they are obvious, but they may not be as obvious to those who are making decisions.

Log risks in the first column – if you don't know all of the detail to complete the remaining columns, you can leave this and update them later.

If the project proceeds these risks will be carried forward to the Project Brief and RAID log as appropriate and will be continually reviewed during the project life cycle.

This is the Risk Register table:

Risk	RAG	Impact / Consequence	Mitigation / Controls

9. Resources and Requirements

The resource requirements and costs associated with the recommended option should be summarised accordingly.

Resources in a business case encompass the personnel, finances, materials, and equipment needed to execute the proposed initiative.

This includes:

- human resources,
- budget allocations,
- physical assets,
- and technological infrastructure.

Requirements outline the specific criteria, functionalities, or qualities that the project or product must fulfill to achieve its objectives.

These can include:

- performance standards,
- regulatory compliance,
- user needs,
- and technical specifications.

Clearly defining both resources and requirements enables stakeholders to understand what is necessary for successful implementation and delivery, facilitating effective resource allocation and project planning.



10. Funding Source, Timing and Certainty

A **funding source** in a business case identifies where the necessary financial resources will come from to support the project, whether internal budgets, external investments, or grants.

Timing refers to the schedule for securing and utilizing funds, including milestones for financial disbursements aligned with project phases.

Certainty assesses the reliability and stability of funding sources, considering factors like budget approval processes, contractual agreements, and market conditions.

11. Procurement

Procurement in a business case involves the process of acquiring goods, services, or works from external sources to fulfil project requirements.

This includes:

- sourcing suppliers,
- negotiating contracts,
- and managing vendor relationships.

Key considerations in procurement include cost-effectiveness, quality assurance, and compliance with regulatory standards.

Detailed procurement plans outline the steps, timelines, and budget allocations for acquiring necessary resources.

Effective procurement strategies ensure timely delivery of goods and services while optimizing value for the project.

Please ensure you consult with CCC's Procurement Team!

12. Timescales

The proposed start and end dates should be given together with a list of significant (particularly financially significant) milestones (events with dates).

Where relevant, the milestones to include dates on which the investment should be reviewed.

Milestone Plan (example)



13. Additional Comments / Issues to Consider

Additional comments in a business case provide space for stakeholders to offer supplementary insights, perspectives, or concerns not covered in other sections.

This section allows for addressing unique aspects of the project, potential risks, or opportunities that may have been overlooked.

Issues to consider highlight any unresolved challenges, uncertainties, or constraints that could impact project feasibility or success.

This section prompts further discussion and analysis to mitigate risks and enhance decision-making.

14. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions in a business case summarise key findings and insights drawn from the analysis presented throughout the document.

They often restate the problem statement, objectives, and key assumptions. Recommendations offer actionable suggestions based on the conclusions, outlining the preferred course of action or next steps for decision-makers.

These recommendations are typically aligned with the proposed solution or option appraisal and aim to address the identified needs or opportunities.

15. Appendices

Appendices are where to put the detailed calculations, figures, reference material and other back up data that may have a limited audience but is worthy of inclusion.

You should put all the detailed calculations in Appendices – and only have summaries in the main body (referring to Appendices) – if in doubt, put it in an Appendix.

Detailed Assumptions and Risks may also be placed in Appendices – but summaries should appear in the main body.

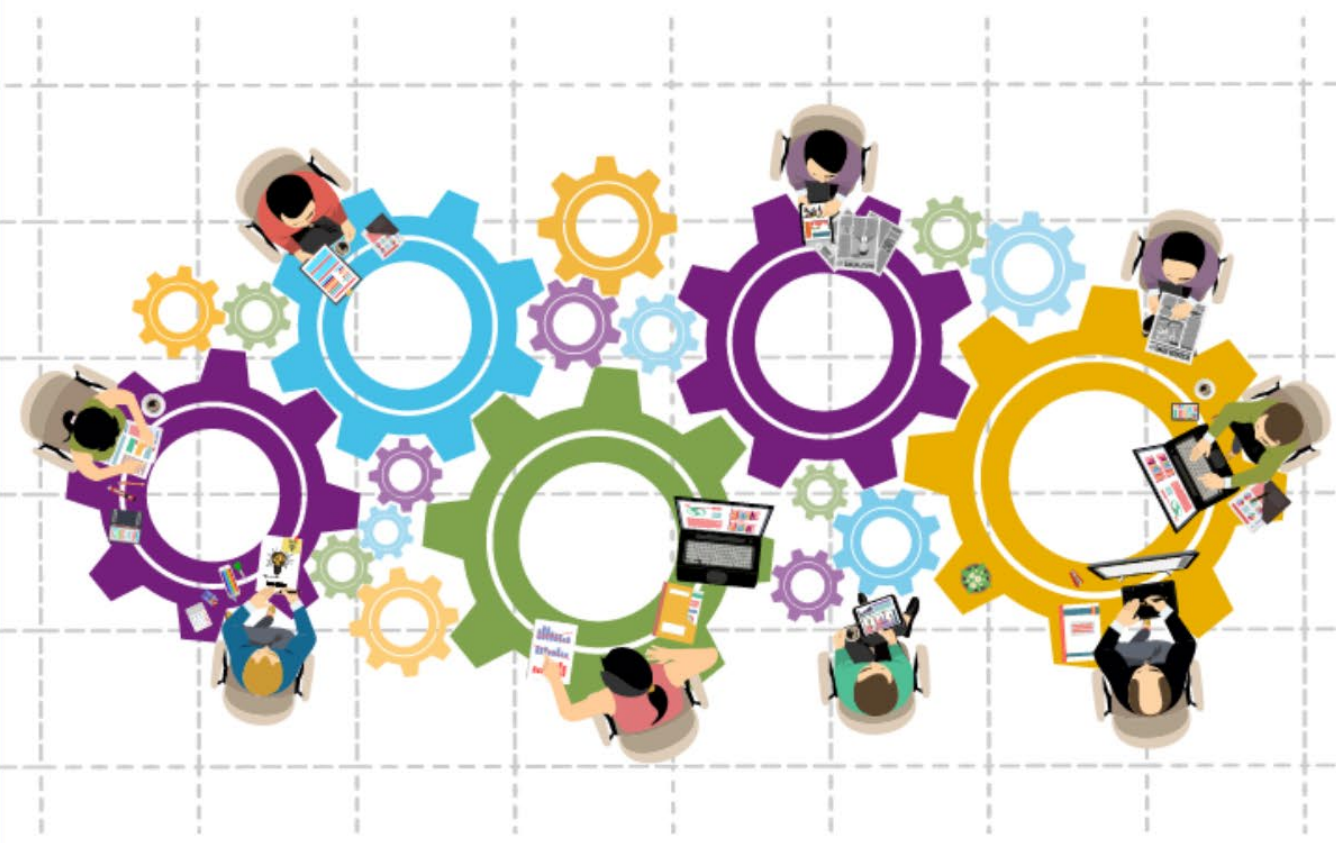
16. Approval to proceed

This authority ensures your Director/ Cabinet Member is supportive of this project. This does not necessarily provide authority to spend capital/revenue on this project and further or separate approvals may be required depending on the value of the project and if resources are already allocated. If in doubt check with your Service or Capital Accountant.





Project Brief Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit



1. Background

This should cover:

- Summary of the issues
- What the purpose of the project is, and
- What it needs to achieve.

2. Introduction and Overview

To deliver the project the business case selected the following solution/approach

Explain how this will achieve the following:

- aims / objectives
- benefits
- outcomes
- timeline
- cost and budget constraints
- assumptions made

These need to be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

3. In Scope

The project WILL include...

4. Out of Scope

The project will NOT include...

5. High Level Implementation Plan

Explain the actions and steps to take to deliver the project, by either completing the provided table (example below) or provide an alternative high level project plan.

Ref	Action / Task	Lead	Target Completion Date

6. Risks

The highest assessed risks for the project are:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. E

Also see document G. Risk Log/RAID for the full risk assessment.



7. Project Team – Roles and Responsibilities

This should be adapted to fit the specific nature and scale of the project and include all roles and responsibilities, both internal and external, as well as any that are additional or specific.

Roles include:

- Project Director
- Project Sponsor (Owner)
- Project Manager
- Project Co-ordinator(s)
- Finance
- Planning / Design
- IT
- Procurement
- Legal / Property
- Operations
- Communications / Marketing

Responsibilities for each of these roles are listed in the table on the template document. These can be added to or removed as appropriate.

Large projects may benefit from an additional team structure diagram.

8. Project Stakeholders

This should list all external and internal stakeholders that have an interest in the progress of the project, from initiation, through delivery and to end use.

Provide details on their external organisation or internal department, as well as their reason for interest in the project.

9. Related Documents and References

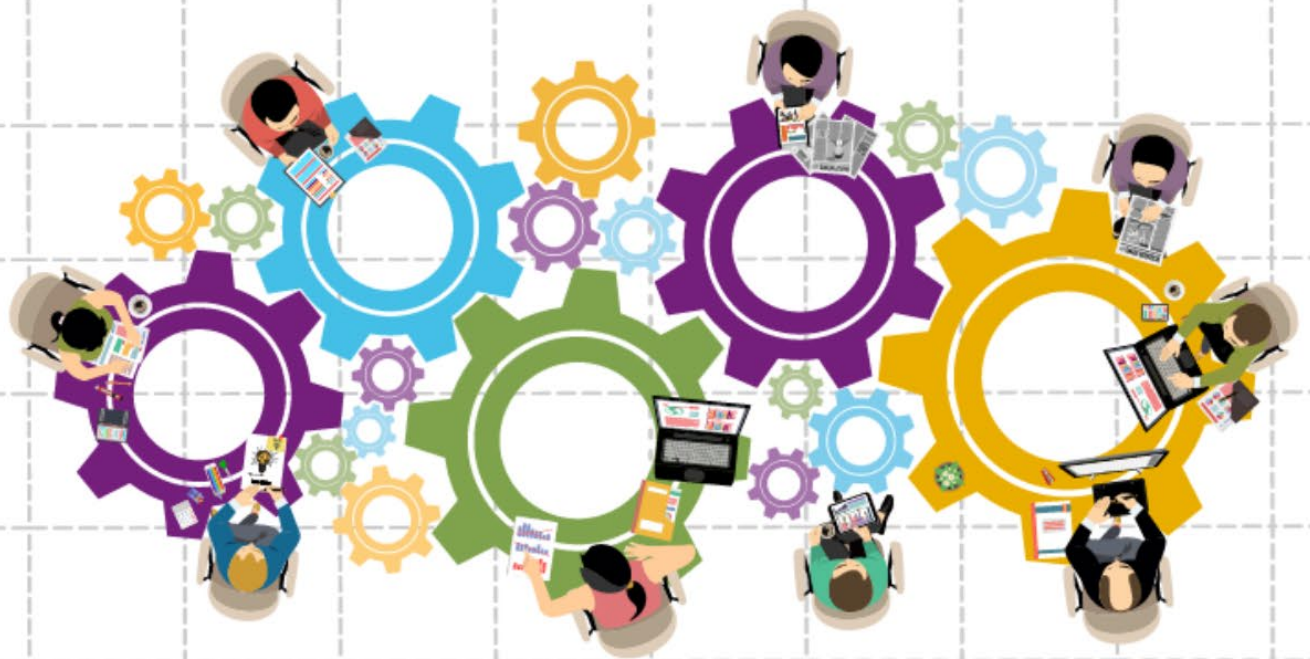
If a Large Project you should have already created a Project Business Case (A1) before creating this Project Brief (B).

Follow the Project Toolkit Flow chart to assess the additional documentation needed.





Project Backlog Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

A detailed list of requirements, snags, change requests, observations and their status. May be managed and owned by an external consultant on behalf of the Council.

1. Title

Create a concise and self-explanatory title.

2. Status

Create and maintain a status for your Task/Backlog item.

Suggested statuses:

- New
- In Progress
- On Hold
- Done

Further status suggestions, depending on application.

- In Test
- Under Inspection
- Recorded

3. Description

The description should contain:

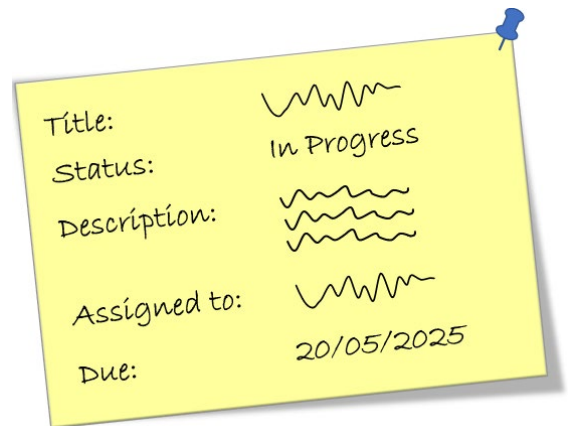
- Context – Explain what the task is for.
- Objective – What is trying to be achieved.
- Instructions – Anything relevant to the method of completion i.e. List or link.
- Tests – Any tests which need to be completed for item to be marked as done.
- Resources – Any resources that may be needed.

4. Assigned to

The person who will be performing the task

5. Due

The date the item is due.



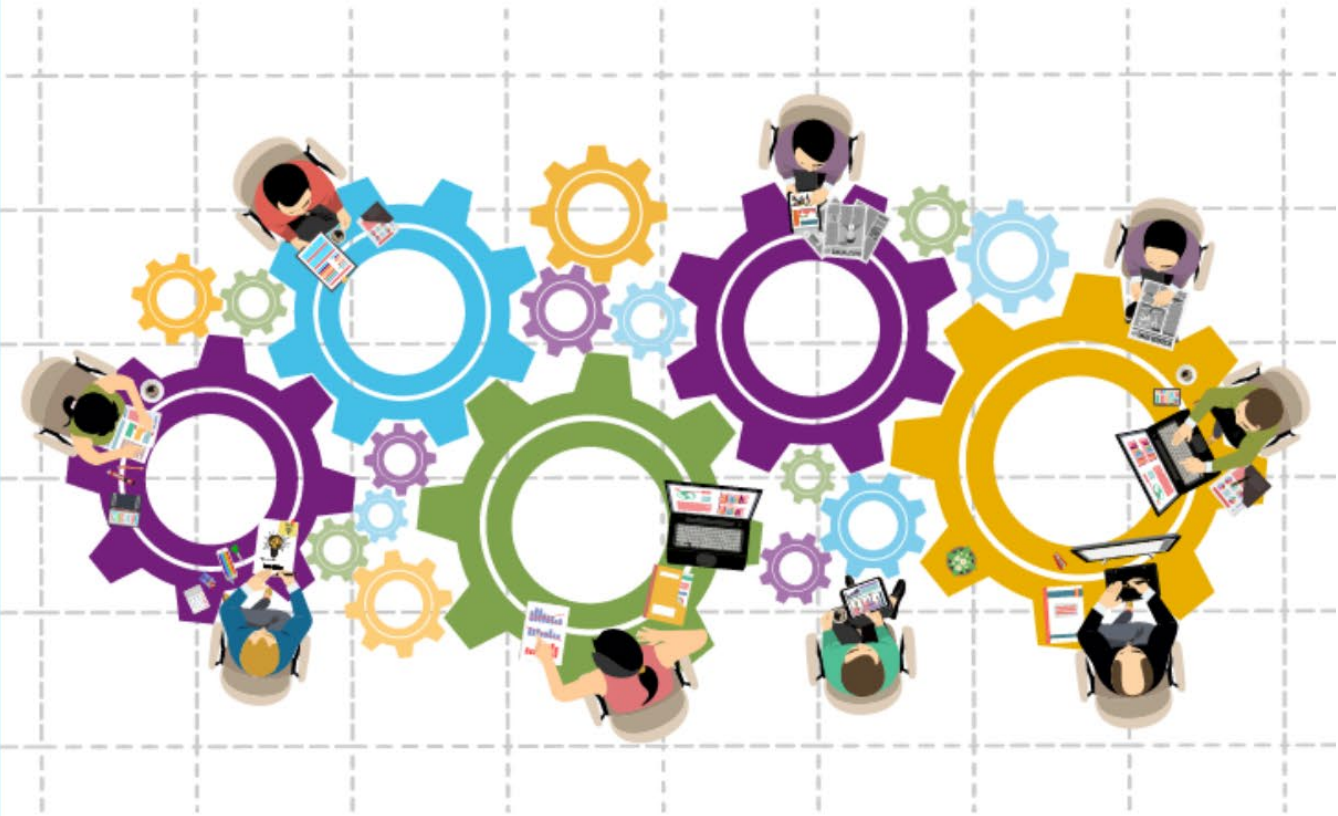
ID	Title	Status	Description	Assigned to	Due

*Example of Excel Backlog





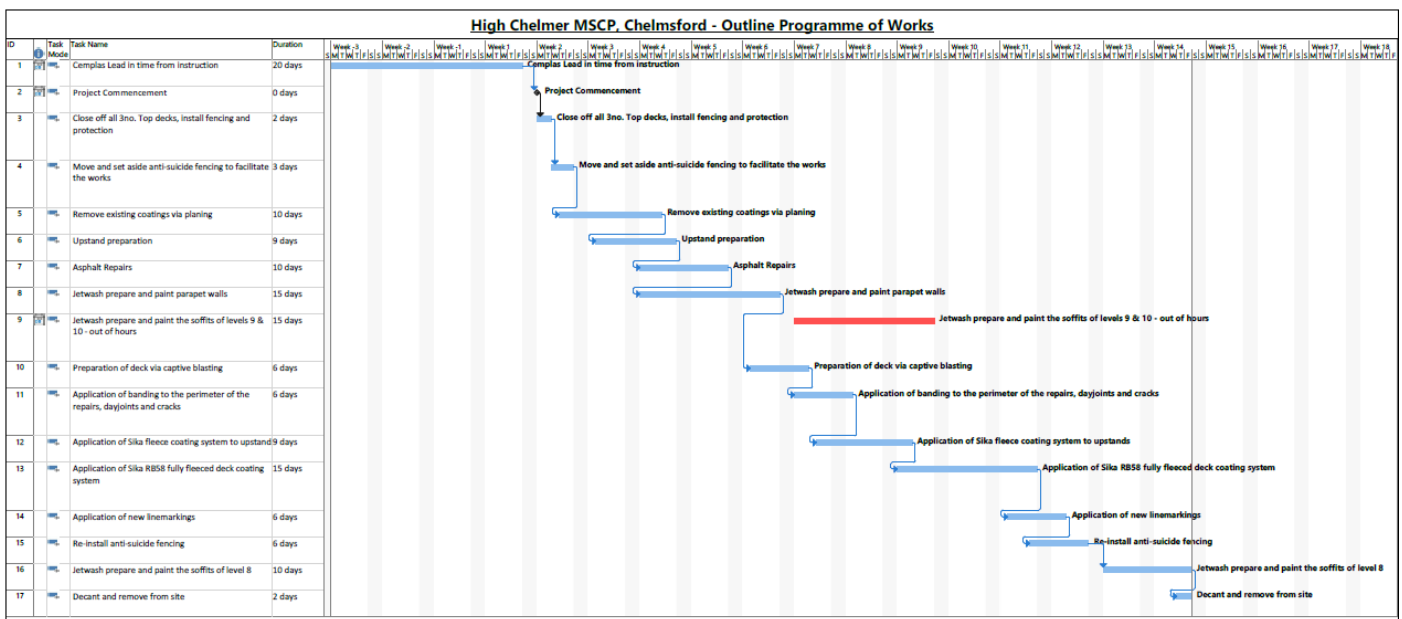
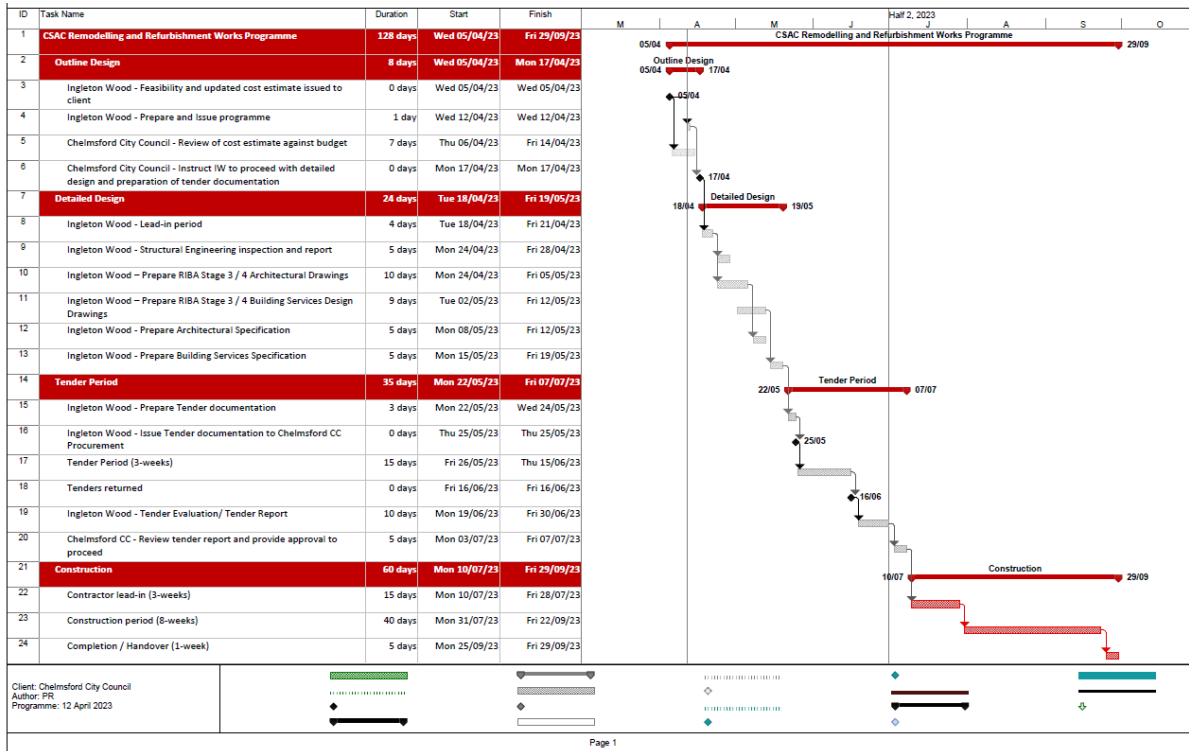
Project Plan Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

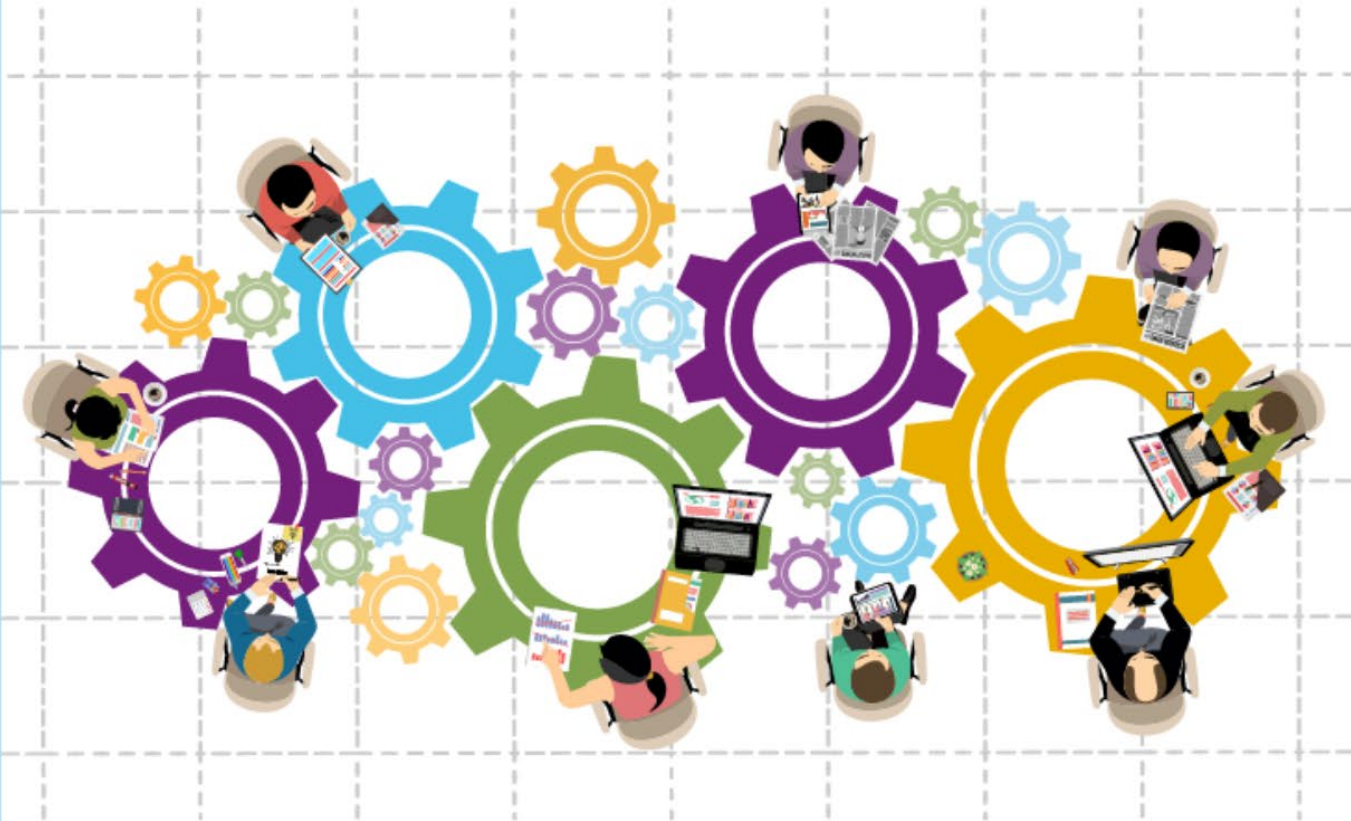
A project programme is essential as it provides a structured plan outlining the sequence of activities, timelines, and resource allocation required to achieve project objectives. It ensures that all team members are aligned, facilitates efficient coordination, and helps in identifying potential risks and bottlenecks early.

Inputting milestones is crucial as they serve as key checkpoints that track progress, ensure that critical deliverables are met on time, and provide opportunities for assessing project performance and making necessary adjustments. Milestones also boost team morale by marking accomplishments, thereby keeping the project on track and within scope. Examples are provided below:





Internal Project Communications Plan Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

E1 – Internal Project Communication Plan

The Internal Project Communication Plan will enable effective communication and clear visibility of the project and status with the Project Team and Project Stakeholders. It sets out clear guidelines on how project information will be shared, as well as who's responsible for and needs to be included in the project communication. A brief example is provided below.

Communication Type	Objective of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable	Format
Project RAID Review	Review status of the project with the team and overall Project Plan. For discussion of current topics, actions issues and risks.	Conference Call	Bi-Weekly	Project Team	CCC PM	RAID Log	Soft copy archived on project MS Teams site
Project Status Report	Report the status of the project for every component deliverable including activities, progress, milestones, completion dates, percentage completion, risks & issues. Status summary for the previous week and next planned week.	Email	Bi-Weekly	Project Team Project Stakeholders	CCC PM	Project Status Report Project schedule	Soft copy archived on project MS Teams site
Daily Stand Up	Each day the team will have an audio meeting to discuss	Conference Call	Daily	Project Team	PM	Project Control	Soft copy archived on

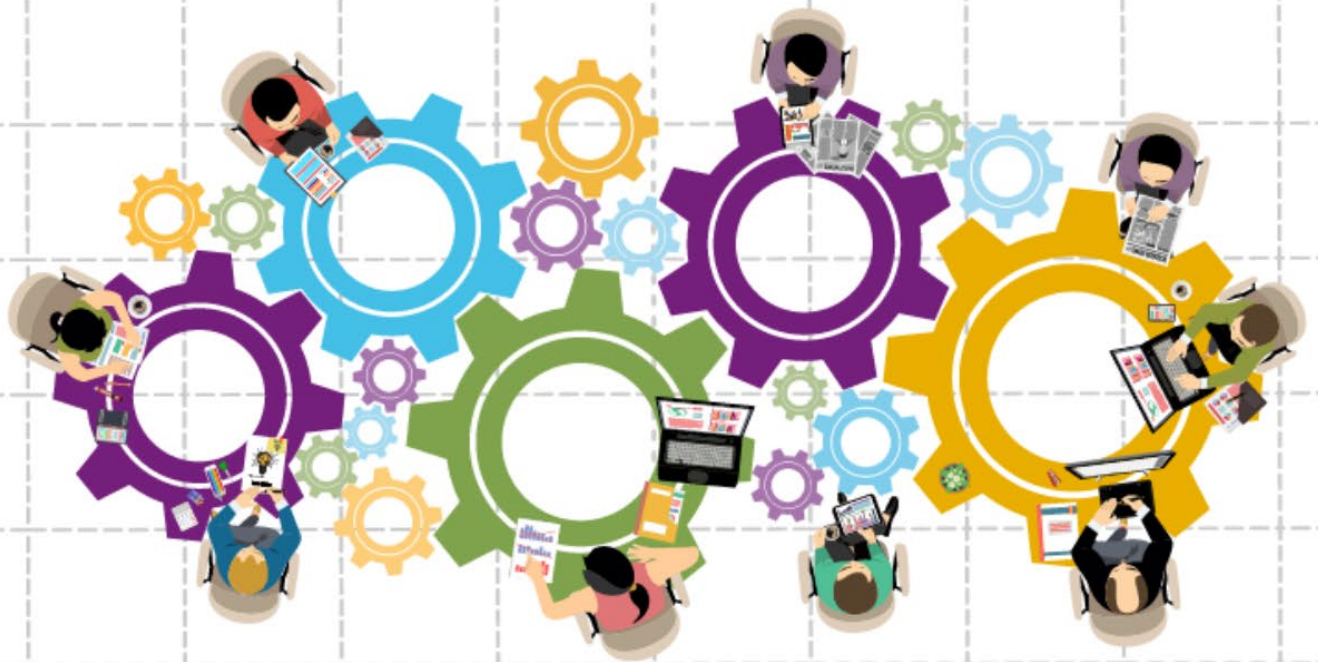


Communication Type	Objective of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable	Format
	what they have worked on, what they have planned and any blockers/issues					Project Deliverables	project MS Teams site
Exec Status Report	Report the status of the project to the exec team including high priority risks.	Email	Monthly	Senior Stakeholders	PM	Exec Status Report	Soft copy archived on MS Teams site.



E2

External Marketing and Communications Plan Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

E2 – External Marketing and Communications Plan

This document helps to define:

1. Roles and responsibilities of:

- Lead Communications Officer,
- Marketing Business Partner/Officer and
- other staff and key stakeholders

2. Campaign overview

- Key information and background
- Aims and objectives (such as income and/or attendance targets)
- Estimated marketing budget needed and whether it has been approved
- Accreditations or people/organisations that need to be credited
- Artwork requirements
- Campaign approval – who needs to sign off?

3. Linkages, that might impact on the campaign, with:

- Corporate plan and
- other service/industry plans

4. Key target audience

- who we need to reach with the campaign,
- reasons for their interest in the campaign, and
- best channels to use to reach them

Think about: stakeholders; the public and residents; other service areas within the council; other local authorities; schools and other education providers; associated groups, clubs and organisations; local press and media; staff and councillors



5. Channels

How we will communicate the campaign:

- **Channel distribution methods** – both corporate and service specific – such as:
 - Social media - Facebook and Instagram (organic and paid), X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, Threads, Nextdoor, Whatsapp
 - Web and email – e-newsletter, website, web listings (free and paid)
 - Press release
 - Leaflets and posters – digital and print, ads in newspapers and magazines
 - Digital screens – free in our venues and paid in town centre/bus stations
- **How will this success be measured?** Include targets and key metrics (open and engagement rates etc)

6. Action Plan

Use this to explain what you plan to do, including estimated costs and staff responsible for delivering these actions.

7. Issues and considerations

This is for proposed responses to potential questions and criticisms from press and/or public

After the campaign has ended, we also want to:

8. Evaluate success - explain whether we have achieved what we set out to do

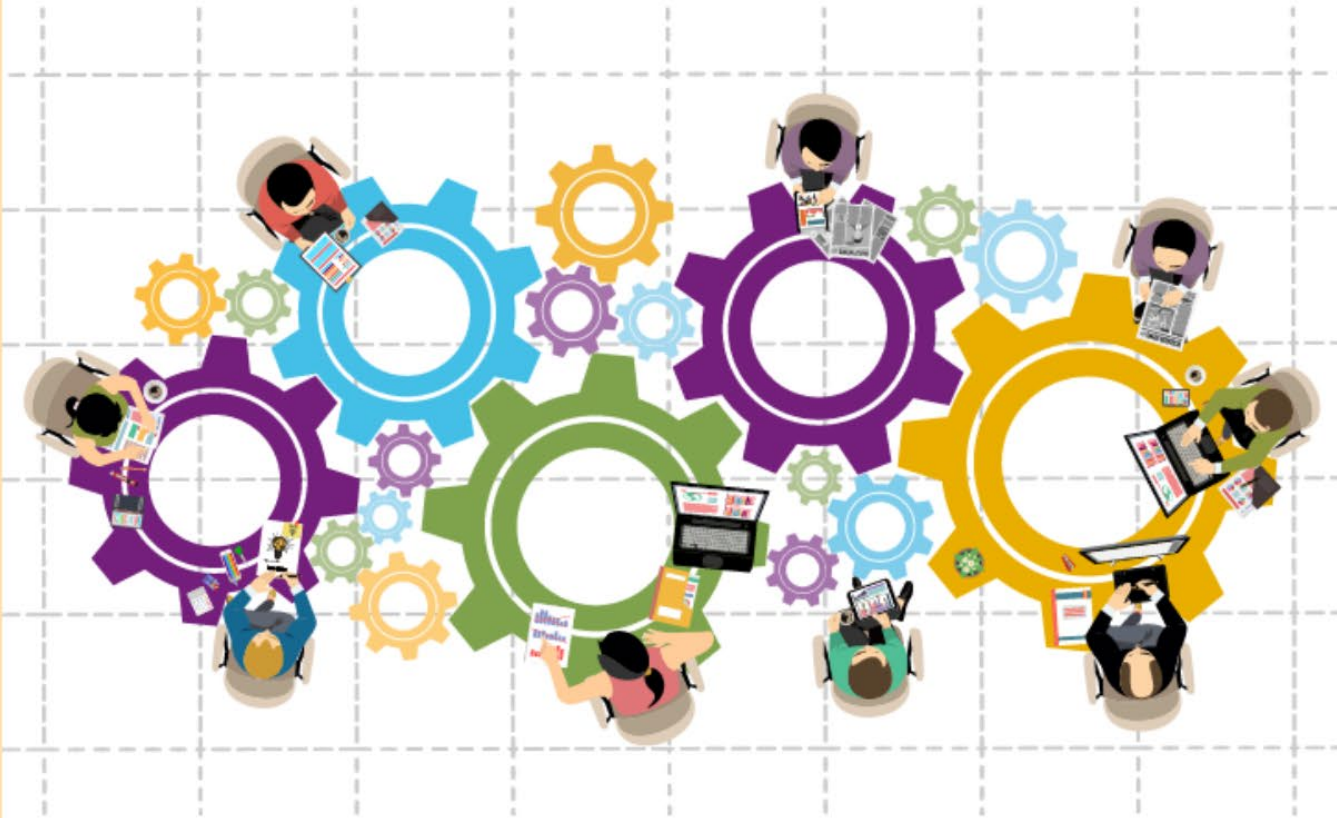
9. Legacy of this campaign for Chelmsford/the council – short and/or long term

10. Review – use our learning to shape future campaigns (was there anything that caused difficulties, what could we do differently next time and what went particularly well?)





Project Management Checklist Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit



This is a simple tick box checklist, primarily for the Project Manager, to ensure all aspects of the project are being considered during the different phases.

The template is not definitive and should be adapted to fit the specific nature and scale of the project.

It should be used and referred to during the whole lifecycle of the project. Comments can be noted and referred to as a record.

Answering “No” should be accompanied by the explanatory comments.

1. Project Inception

	Yes	No	Comment
Project Initiation Document created and approved?			
Business Case created and approved?			
Have the Project Stakeholders been identified?			
Have the required resources been identified and scheduled?			
Has the Individual Roles and Responsibilities of the Team been agreed and communicated to the Team?			
Have meetings been scheduled / communication routes put in place / project folder and access set up?			
Has a project communication and marketing plan been created?			
Have the necessary CCC Teams been consulted and engaged?			
Has a Risk Log been created (RAID)?			
Has a draft Project Brief been created?			
Have lessons learnt from previous similar projects been identified?			





Project RAID Log Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

A RAID log is a project management tool that tracks risks, actions, issues, and decisions on a project. It's a simple way to organise and track this information and ensure that the project stays on track. It's a living, breathing document and should be reviewed and updated on a weekly basis with the project team.

- **Risks** are the potential problems lurking in your project. Risks tend to be thought of as having an adverse impact on the project, but there are also positive risks.
- **Actions** are what you need to do throughout the project.
- **Issues** are when something goes wrong in the project. If an issue isn't managed and resolved it can derail the project or cause the project to fail.
- **Decisions** are how you decided to act in the project.

Example of a RAID log created in excel and all the relevant fields:

Risk Log

Risk ID	Date Raised	Raised By	Priority	Risk Description	Assigned To	Mitigation	Comments	Status	Planned Due Date	Overdue ?	Risk Impact (L, M, H)	Risk Probability (L, M, H)	Risk Owner
			*Low/Medium/High		CCC/Supplier			*Open / Closed					

Action Log

Action ID	Date Raised	Raised By	Priority	Action Description	Assigned To	Action Notes	Status	Planned Due Date	Overdue ?	Action Owner
			*Low/Medium/High				*Open / Closed			

Project Issue Log

Issue ID	Date Raised	Raised By	Priority	Issue Description	Assigned To	Resolution Plan Details	Status	Planned Resolution Date	Overdue ?	Issue Owner
			*Low/Medium/High				*Open / Closed			

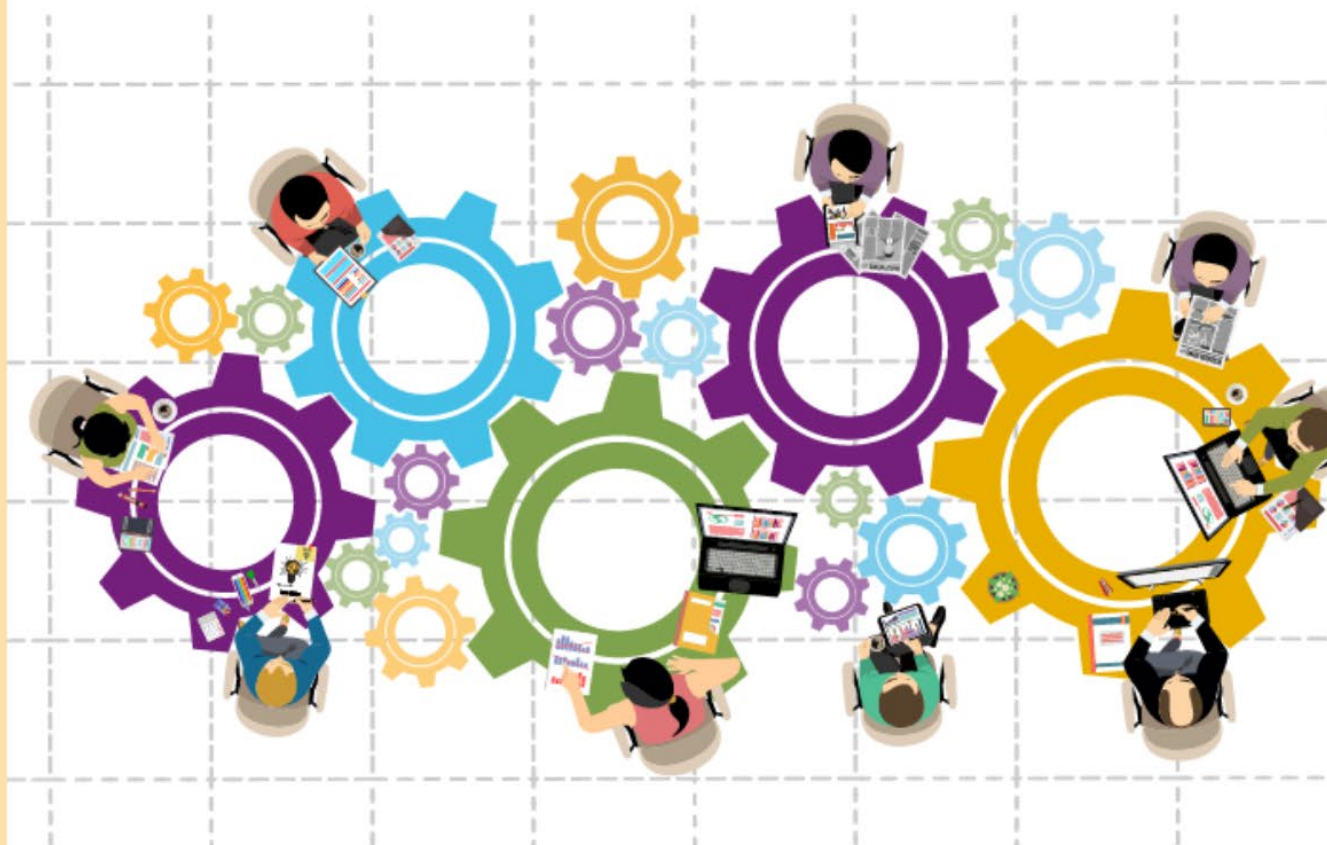
Decisions Log

Decision ID	Date Raised	Raised By	Priority	Decision Description	Assigned To	Decision Implementation Details	Status	Planned Completion Date	Overdue ?	Decision Owner
			*Low/Medium/High				*Open / Closed			





Project Status Reporting Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

A Project Status Report describes the progress of a project within a specific time period and compares it against the project plan and project brief. It is used to keep the project stakeholders informed of progress and monitor costs, risks, time and work. It is recommended to distribute the status report every two weeks.

Project status as of:

Frequency:

Green	Project as planned	Amber	Corrective action may be required	Red	Senior Management attention required
--------------	--------------------	--------------	-----------------------------------	------------	--------------------------------------

Amend the colour status alongside each based on the above key:

Schedule	Green
Is the project running to schedule? Is there a risk that it will over run? Is it already over running?	

Budget	Green
Is the project on schedule? Is there a risk that it will exceed the budget? Is it already exceeding the budget?	

Resource	Green
Is the project sufficiently resourced? Is there a risk that the project may require more resource? Is the project at risk due to lack of resource?	

Scope	Green
Is the project on track to meet with the specified quality standards? Have any changed to scope been made or proposed?	

High Priority Risks:
Describe any high priority risks that will hinder the delivery of the project.

Current Status Summary:
Describe what work has been completed on the project in the last two weeks.

Activities completed week commencing: xx/xx/xx
Brief summary of activities tasks and progress since last report

Activities scheduled week commencing: xx/xx/xx
Describe the work that is planned for the next two weeks.



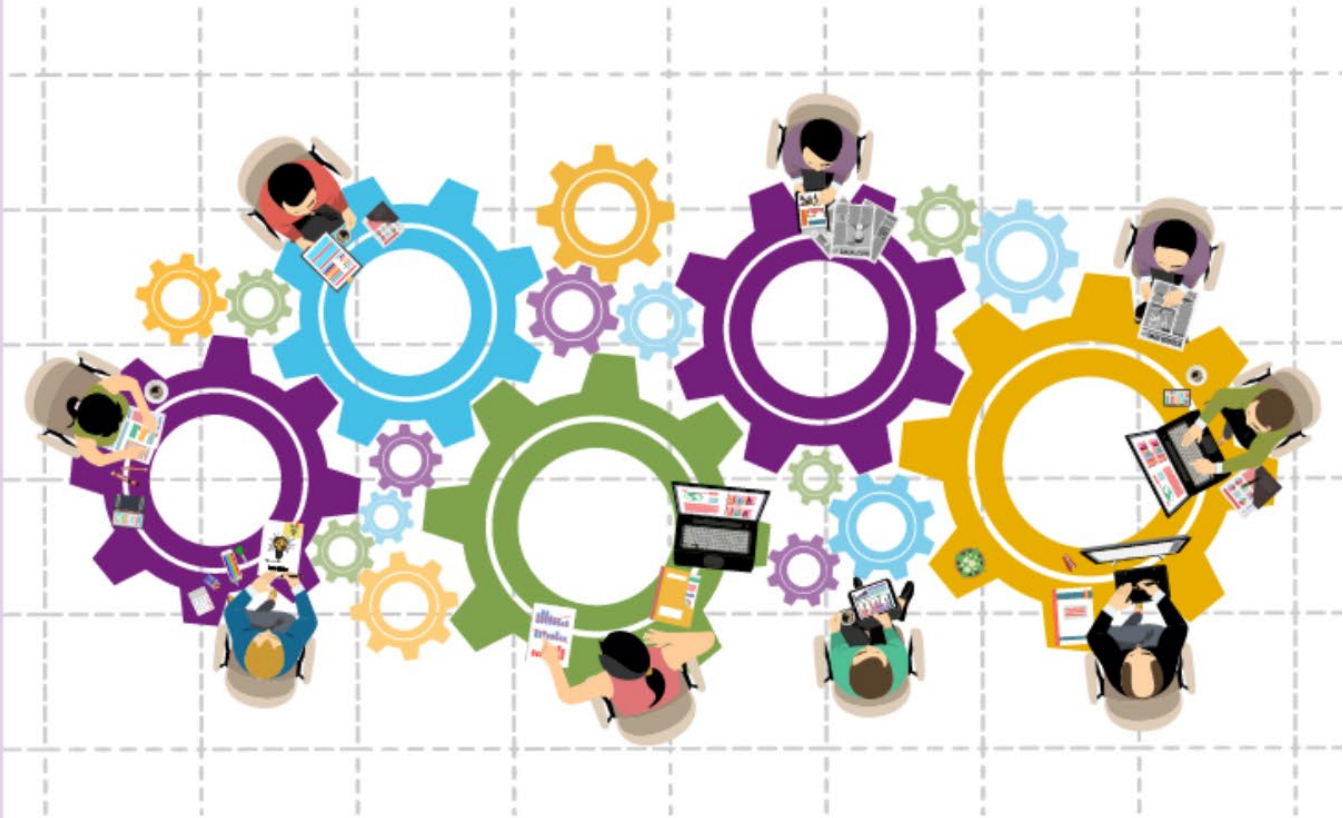
Example of the Project High Level Timeline

Detail:	Month: February				Month: March				Month: April
	01/02/23	14/02/23	15/02/23	28/02/23	07/03/23	14/03/23	21/02/23	28/03/23	04/04/23
Brief Scoping									
Sign of Brief									
Concept Design									
Detailed Design									
Design Freeze									
Technical Design									





Exec Project Status Report Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

Exec project status report should be used for large or highly sensitive projects. As a guide it should be distributed every four weeks to the senior management team.

Project status as of:	(add date)
Frequency:	4 weeks

Green	Project as planned	Amber	Corrective action may be required	Red	Senior Management attention required
--------------	--------------------	--------------	-----------------------------------	------------	--------------------------------------

Amend the colour status alongside each based on the above key:

Time	Green
Is the project running to schedule? Is there a risk that it will over run? Is it already over running?	

Budget	Green
Is the project on schedule? Is there a risk that it will exceed the budget? Is it already exceeding the budget?	

Resource	Green
Is the project sufficiently resourced? Is there a risk that the project may require more resource? Is the project at risk due to lack of resource?	

Quality	Green
Is the project on track to meet with the specified quality standards? Is there a risk of reduced quality? Has quality already been compromised?	

High Priority Risks:
Describe any high priority risks that will hinder the delivery of the project.

Current Status Summary:
Describe what work has been completed on the project in the last two weeks.

Next Steps:
Describe the work that is planned for the next two weeks.

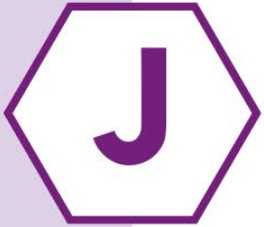


List here any high priority risks that senior management team should be aware of that could jeopardise the delivery of the project and how the risks will be mitigated.

High Priority Risks

Date Raised	Raised By	Priority	Risk Description	Mitigation





Project Retrospective Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

The Project Retrospective can take different formats depending on the size and scale of the project.

It should cover input from all key internal and external stakeholders, including the end users and any consultants or other departments that contributed to the project.

It can take the form of a Review Meeting(s) or Questionnaire and be as simple as recording what contributors would 'Do More', 'Do Less', 'Keep Doing' right up to a full overview and scrutiny report.

Other examples are available online and include – Liked, Learned, Lacked, Longed For; or Mad, Sad, Glad.

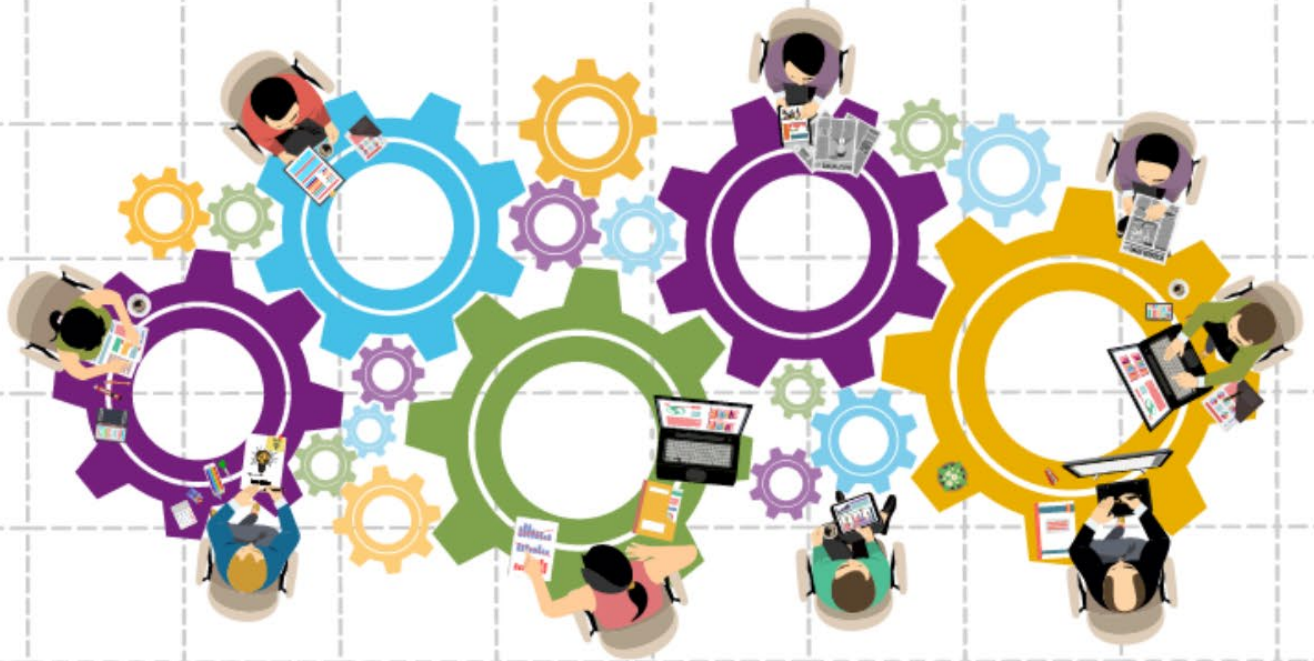
A simple Lessons learned feedback template is provided **as an example**.

However, the review is carried out the results should then be coordinated and summarised, with actions and recommendations reported back to the Project Owner and Sponsor then kept as a reference source for future similar projects.





Project Closure Guidance



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

1. Project Completion

This section identifies the criteria required to complete the project and any outstanding items which still need to be undertaken even though the project may be ready for completion.

1.1 Completion Criteria

List the criteria which must be met to confirm that the project is completed. For each criteria listed, assess whether or not it has been achieved to the satisfaction of the customer e.g.

Category	Criteria	Achieved (Y/N)
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project 'vision' has been achieved (as defined in the Terms of Reference) All project objectives have been achieved (as defined in the Terms of Reference) 	Yes
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full benefits have been realized (as defined in the Business Case) 	Yes
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All deliverables have been completed (as defined in the Terms of Reference) All deliverables have been accepted by the customer (as per the Acceptance Plan) 	

1.2 Outstanding Items

List any outstanding items which still need to be undertaken even though the project has satisfied the above completion criteria. For each item, list the actions required to be undertaken and the Owner responsible for undertaking the action.

Item	Action	Owner
Activities	List all activities or tasks which have not yet been completed (as defined in the Project Plan)	
Risks	List all business risks which have not yet been fully mitigated	
Issues	List any current issues which are impacting on the business and have not yet been fully resolved	
Handover		



2. Project Closure

This section outlines the next steps required to perform the closure of the project. This includes the handover of deliverables and documentation to the customer, the termination of supplier contracts, the release of project resource back to the business (or the marketplace) and the communication to all stakeholders that the project is now formally closed.

2.1 Deliverables

Identify a hand-over plan for the release of all project deliverables to the customer. An example follows:

Deliverable	Current		New		Handover Plan		
Type	Owner	Location	Owner	Location	Activities	Date	Owner
Financial General Ledger, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable system modules					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handover system maintenance Handover operational support Handover system documentation 		



2.2 Documentation

Identify a hand-over plan for the release of all project documentation to the customer. An example follows:

Documentation Type	Current		New		Hand-over Plan		
	Owner	Location	Owner	Location	Activities	Date	Owner
Project Initiation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Case • Feasibility Study • Terms of Reference 							
Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Plan • Resource Plan • Financial Plan • Quality Plan • Acceptance Plan 							
Project Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change Process • Change Form • Change Register • Risk Process • Risk Form • Risk Register 							



2.3 Suppliers

Identify a hand-over plan for the termination of project supplier contracts. An example follows:

Supplier Name	Contract Reference	Termination Activity	Release Date	Activity Owner
Supplier Name	Contract Ref. No.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify supplier of termination • Release supplier resources • Return supplier assets • Pay supplier invoices 	Date activity to be completed by	Name of person responsible for activity

2.4 Resources

Identify a hand-over plan for the release of all project resources (including staff and equipment). An example follows:

Resource Name	Current Designation	Release Activity	Release Date	Activity Owner
Staff Name	Project Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify staff member of release • Release staff member • Return staff assets • Pay final staff salary 	Date staff member released	Name of person responsible for activity
Equipment Type	Equipment Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new owner • Undertake equipment sale • Release equipment • Update General Ledger 	Date equipment released	Name of person responsible for activity



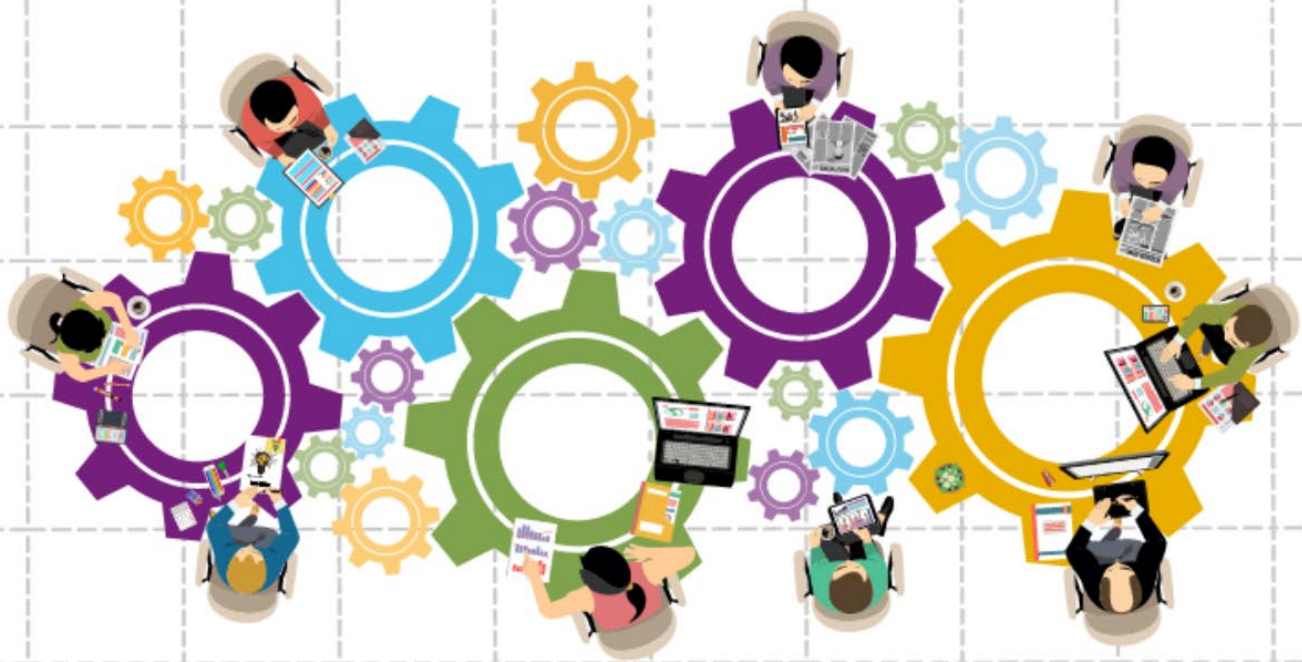
2.5 Communication

Identify a plan to communicate the project closure to all stakeholders and interested parties. An example follows or the Internal and External Communications Plan for the project can be inserted:

Target Audience	Intended Message	Method Used	Dispatch Date	Dispatch Owner
Recipient Names or Groups for receipt of messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project has been successfully completed and is now closed Benefits realized due to success of the project Lessons learned from project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and formal letter for each recipient Special Board presentation on benefits realized Undertake 'Post Implementation Review' and email to key stakeholders 	Date when communication should be released	Name of the person responsible for communication



Appendix



Part of our Project Management Toolkit

Glossary of Terms

Project Management: The practice of initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing the work of a team to achieve specific goals and meet specific success criteria within a specified timeframe.

Stakeholder: An individual, group, or organisation that has an interest or concern in the outcome of a project.

Scope: The defined boundaries of what a project will and will not include, encompassing deliverables, features, functions, and tasks.

Deliverable: A tangible or intangible item produced as a result of the project that is intended to be delivered to a stakeholder.

Risk Management: The process of identifying, assessing, and prioritising risks followed by coordinated efforts to minimise, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of adverse events.

Project Backlog: A Project Backlog is a prioritised list of tasks, features, and requirements that need to be completed for a project.

RAID Log: A RAID log is a project management tool used to document and track **R**isks, **A**ssumptions, **I**ssues, and **D**ependencies associated with a project.

Gantt Chart: A visual representation of a project schedule, displaying tasks, dependencies, milestones, and progress over time.

Critical Path: The sequence of tasks that determine the minimum duration of a project, representing the longest path through the project network diagram.

Change Control: The process of documenting, evaluating, approving, or rejecting changes to project scope, schedule, or budget.

Communication Plan: A documented strategy that outlines how project information will be disseminated, who will receive it, and when it will be delivered.

Quality Management: The process of ensuring that project deliverables meet the defined quality standards and requirements.

Stakeholder Analysis: The process of identifying, assessing, and prioritising stakeholders based on their influence, interest, and potential impact on the project.

Lessons Learned: Insights gained from the project that can be used to improve future project performance by identifying what went well, what didn't, and how to make corrections or enhancements.

Project Closure: The formal process of concluding a project, including finalising all activities, completing documentation, obtaining approvals, and releasing project resources



RAG : The RAG status in a risk register is a visual indicator that represents the level of risk associated with a particular item. It stands for Red, Amber, and Green, each colour signifying different levels of risk: Red: High risk, requiring immediate attention and action to mitigate. Amber: Medium risk, requiring monitoring and possibly action to mitigate. Green: Low risk, indicating that the item is under control and not currently a threat.



Project Scaling Assessment Tool

As early as possible within the project cycle, an assessment should be made to determine whether the project should follow a "mandatory" project management process. Such projects will be viewed as "key" projects and will inevitably be subject to closer scrutiny and oversight. If the project expands or changes significantly then this review should be repeated.

The project should be assessed against two key criteria - resources and complexity. The scoring is subjective and a reasonable assessment is needed. Score each criteria from 1-5. The details are on the following pages.

High	5	10	15	20	25
Resource	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
Low	1	2	3	4	5
	Low	Complexity			High

	Must follow the large Project Management process
	Must follow at least the medium Project Management process.
	The toolkit is there to assist your project.

Here is an example of a project that has been scored.

Resources See 2.2 for details	Example score
Estimated cost	5
Management resource	3
Member involvement	2
External support	4
Timescale	4
Total	18

Complexity See 2.3 for details	Example score
Stakeholders	4
Track record	2
Strategic targets	3
Contract complexity	2
Policy legislation	1
Total	12



Project Scaling Assessment Tool

Resources	1	2	3	4	5
Estimated Project Cost	Under £10k	£10k - 30k	£30k - £100k	£100k - £500k	Over £500k
Management Resource	Low staff involvement				Significant involvement of senior management and multiple services
Member Involvement	No Member involvement. Passive interest requiring infrequent verbal updates				Active Cabinet Member involvement e.g. Project Board, and regular Cabinet updates
External Support	No external resource. Self-contained project delivered by officers		Some external advice (e.g. Quantity Surveyor & Structural Engineer) but delivered by officers		External multi-disciplinary consultant team with external Project Manager/s. Significant external input e.g. consultants
Timescale (from concept to completion)	Short contained timescale. Up to 1 month	1 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 18 months	Extended timeframe over 18 months



Project Scaling Assessment Tool

Complexity	1	2	3	4	5
Stakeholders	Limited e.g. just 1 or 2 stakeholders		3 to 5 stakeholders		Multiple internal and external stakeholders, with competing objectives
Track Record	Regular identical project delivered numerous times successfully	Identical projects delivered by different staff	Similar projects delivered by experienced staff	New project delivered by experienced team	New type of project, no previous experience
Strategic Targets (potential impact and political / PR dimension)	Routine operational projects, such as renewals		Delivering a corporate objective		Delivering 1 or more key strategic objectives for the Council
Contract Complexity	Supplier prices fixed for goods / services. Straightforward procurement / order.	Established frameworks in place for a straightforward procurement	Established market involving some investigation to test quality / experience		Complex high risk procurement and contract. Procurement two stage or negotiation
Policy Legislation	No links to policy or legislation	Some link to policy / legislation			To meet external legislation. Significant impact or exposure (fines, reputation) if not delivered in line with requirements

