

Appendix 16: integrated assurance and approval plan

1. Introduction

Integrated assurance and approval provides organisation-wide visibility of the project portfolio and an agreed view of risk, and is key to the learning and dissemination of lessons. This is done in Newcastle through the Newcastle Project Management System (PMS).

The PMS provides a governance framework for managing all council and partner projects, with the benefits of:

- providing clear and accessible information on all programme and project activity - past, present and future
- supporting cross-council and partnership working
- ensuring a consistent approach to programme and project management, whilst allowing flexibility to adapt to service and project needs
- improving the effectiveness of programme management in controlling demand and prioritising project activity
- making the best use of programme and project resources
- developing and retaining skills
- improving the effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery.

At the core of the Newcastle PMS are six **stages**, linked to the gateways approvals needed for all new projects:

- 1 Mandate
- 2 Proposal
- 3 Business Case
- 4 Start-up
- 5 Delivery
- 6 Close

There are also a number of **processes** - such as resource planning and management, governance and reporting, risk management, stakeholder engagement and communications - which run through all of the stages.

1.1 Purpose of the IAAP

The purpose of the Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan (IAAP) is to determine how and when we will provide an independent challenge to the programme, bringing in external expertise and helping to identify and manage major risks. Effective project assurance requires senior management commitment to undertaking assurance activities and to acting on recommendations. The IAAP maps out how that will happen.

The objectives of the IAAP are to provide

- Proper definition to projects, making sure it's clear what will be delivered, by when, and with what resource, and that appropriate approvals have been given
- Clear roles and responsibilities, and clear delegation of responsibility
- Controls to provide early warning of deviations from the plan, as well as risks and issues, and a way of managing them
- Good communication channels, making sure management and stakeholders are involved at the right time, in the right way
- Regular reviews of the project to make sure it is still viable, worthwhile and deliverable
- A common language across the council and a process that is repeatable.

2. Scope

The IAAP will be used to

- Make sure it's clear what will be delivered, by when, and with what resource, and that appropriate approvals have been given
- Set out clear roles and responsibilities, and clear delegation of responsibility. Put in place controls to provide early warning of deviations from the plan, as well as risks and issues, and a way of managing them
- Set up good communication channels, making sure management and stakeholders are involved at the right time, in the right way

- Regularly review the project to make sure it is still viable, worthwhile and deliverable

3. Assessment of risks and determination of assurance requirements

Newcastle uses a project management toolkit which provides the tools and techniques to determine risk and for assurance activities (<http://community.newcastle.gov.uk/projects/content/project-management-toolkit>). The processes used are:

- Project planning
- Resource management
- Risk management
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Reporting and governance
- Project controls

Further information, tools and templates are used to help with some of the processes specific to a particular stage.

These are:

- Project impact and risk assessment (Stage 2)
- Options appraisal and Value for Money analysis (Stage 3)

The relationship between project processes and stages in the council's PMS are illustrated below:

| Processes | Stages and Gateways | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 1 Mandate | 2 Proposal | 3 Business Case | 4 Start-Up | 5 Delivery | 6 Close |
| Project planning | Objectives & targets | Outputs Outline timetable | Options appraisal Scope & activities Stages/milestones | Project Plan | (implement) Project Plan | Follow-on actions |
| Resource management | | Resource requirements Funding options | Project Budget(s) Funding plan | Cost Codes Project team | Budget monitoring | Budget reconciliation |
| Risk management | | High level risk review | Risk identification & description | Risk analysis → Risk register | Risk control & monitoring | Residual risks |
| Stakeholder management | | Stakeholder identification | Stakeholder analysis | Communications plan | (implement) Communications plan | Review and feedback |
| Project controls | | Corporate considerations | Lessons learned | Project Initiation Document (PID) | Issues log Change requests | Lessons (to be) learned |
| Governance and Reporting | | Risk & Impact Assessment → Project category | Project structure and approvals | (Project Board) | Traffic light reports | End project report |

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Directorate Programme Manager

Each Directorate in the council has an experienced Programme Manager who has overall responsibility for portfolio management of project activity in their directorate. The Directorate Programme Manager ensures the overall integrity and coherence of the relevant programmes and the effective planning, prioritisation, resourcing and control of projects. They also work closely with the council's Head of Programmes & Major Projects to develop the PMS according to the council's needs. The scheme comes under the governance of the Deputy Leader of the Council Joyce McCarty. The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is Harvey Emms.

The CCAF programme is managed through three programme groups:

- Programme management group
- Technical group
- Stakeholder group

4.2 Programme Manager

The Programme Manager (PM) for the programme will have a key role of co-ordination between groups. The PM will have the following key responsibilities:

- Overall responsibility for the successful delivery of the programme plan on behalf of Newcastle City Council, ensuring that objectives are achieved (in budget, on schedule, and within scope).
- Management of the programme delivery team's performance on specific schemes and tasks.
- Securing approval in relation to deliverables from the programme management, technical and stakeholder groups.
- Communication, including status reporting, risk management, escalation of issues that cannot be resolved by the team.

Key stakeholders and interested parties are listed in the Appendix 14 to the Cycle City Ambition Fund bid

5. Planned assurance coverage and scheduling

Assurance will be provided through the robust governance of the council's PMS as described above, which includes clear programme and project board and reporting structures.

6. Approvals

Approvals processes will be set out in Terms of Reference for the Project Board, including escalation criteria and channels. All projects in the council report through an aligned network of programme boards. This project will report directly to the Planning, Housing and Transport Board.

7. Cost and resources

Project management costs have been included in the overall costs of the scheme at 4% (that is £284,901). This will be covered within the council's contribution. Resource days will be allocated according to needs.

8. Reporting and communications

The governance through the PMS described above and the reporting arrangements for the scheme boards covers reporting arrangements. In addition, the scheme includes a communications plan.

9. Managing outcomes, consequential assurance and escalation

The SRO is Harvey Emms who will work closely with the Project Manager Gary Macdonald and the Directorate Project Manager to provide robust assurance. Details are set out in Appendix 12.

10. Schedule

Project Board meetings will be held monthly, Details of the schedule are included in the project plan, Appendix 11.