

Programme and Project Management Policy

Creator	Author(s)	Joanne Chapman, Portfolio Office Manager		
	Approved by	Executive		
	Department	Finance, Governance and Support		
	Service area	Strategy, Information and Governance		
	Head of Service	Ann-Marie Johnstone		
	Director	Erik Scollay		
Date	Created	2026/01/23		
	Submitted	TBC		
	Approved	TBC		
	Updating Frequency	3 years		
Status	Version: 0.6			
Contributor(s)	Head of Chief Executive's Department, Senior Portfolio Management Office, Senior (PMO) Business Partner, (PMO) Business Partner			
Subject	Portfolio, Programme and Project Management			
Type	Policy			
	Vital Record		EIR	
Coverage	Middlesbrough Council			
Language	English			

Document Control

Version	Date	Revision History	Reviser
0.1	2020/01/16	First draft	AM Johnstone
0.2	2020/01/21	Second draft	J Chapman
1.0	2020/02/10	Final draft	P Stephens
1.1	2022/10/27	Updated	J Chapman
1.2	2026/01/23	Updated	A Walpole
1.3	2026/01/30	Updated	J Chapman
2.0	2026/02/23	Revised	J Chapman

Distribution List

Version	Date	Name/Service area	Action
1.0	2020/02/10	Executive and all staff via the intranet	Approval
2.0	TBC	All staff via the intranet	Dissemination

Contact: Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk



Summary

1. This policy is part of the corporate governance policy framework that underpins the Council Plan and sets out how the Council will ensure formal programmes and projects are effectively managed, and opportunities exploited to deliver strategic priorities for the town.
2. The following sections outline:
 - the purpose of this policy;
 - definitions;
 - scope;
 - the legislative and regulatory framework;
 - policy statement;
 - roles and responsibilities;
 - supporting policies, procedures and standards; and
 - monitoring and review arrangements.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to set out a corporate approach to portfolio, programme and project management (PPM), to ensure there is an effective, consistent and joined-up approach across the organisation.
4. This will deliver the following benefits:
 - ensure that proactive PPM is embedded within the culture of the Council, and is integral to business planning and performance management;
 - ensure that the PPM governance and associated processes are implemented consistently and proportionately across the Council; and
 - communicate the Council's approach to PPM to all employees and stakeholders.
5. The main aim of programmes and projects is to deliver the agreed outputs so the intended changes and benefits in the business case are achieved. Implementing this policy effectively will ensure the Council's portfolio is appropriate and manageable for an organisation of its size, and that all programmes and projects are delivered, as far as possible, within agreed cost, time and benefit tolerances.

Definitions

Business Change Management	The process of identifying, planning, delivering and evaluating business change activities throughout the life of a project.
Corporate governance	The systems, processes and values by which local authorities operate and by which they engage with, and are held accountable to, their communities and stakeholders.
Portfolio	A set of programmes and projects managed together to achieve an organisation's strategic objectives.
Programme management	The coordinated management of interrelated projects and business change activities to deliver beneficial change.
Programme	A temporary structure used to manage a group of interrelated projects that work together to deliver specific outcomes and benefits aligned to strategic goals. A programme can only succeed if its constituent projects succeed. Programmes usually include several workstreams or phases made up of interrelated projects.

Project management	The process of planning and controlling project resources to achieve a specific aim.
Project	Planned work carried out over a set period to achieve a specific goal. Unlike routine operations, projects are temporary and introduce controlled change to the organisation or community. Once the change is embedded, it becomes business as usual.
Business-As-Usual (BAU) activity	Routine, continuous and ongoing activities that an organisation carries out to keep services running and meet its core responsibilities. BAU uses existing resources and structures and focuses on maintaining stability, service quality, and performance.
Project categorisation tool	A structured method used by organisations to assess and classify potential projects based on their size, complexity, risk, strategic importance, and resource requirements. It helps determine the appropriate level of governance, documentation, and oversight needed for each project.
Programme and Project Management Framework (PPMF)	Provides direction on programme and project governance arrangements; the programme and project lifecycle and gateway process, and a standardised set of project templates.

Scope

6. This policy applies to all formal programmes and projects undertaken by the Council (as defined in paragraph 13). PPM activity does not include planned and structured business-as-usual activity such as staffing reviews or reviews of existing strategies and policies. These will be managed through Directorate activity tracking.
7. It applies to all employees (both permanent and temporary), contractors and consultants working for or on behalf of the Council to deliver Council led programmes and projects.
8. In respect of partnerships and shared services, the PPM policy of the lead organisation will apply. Where this is not the Council, managers must ensure that arrangements are in line with the key principles of this policy.

Legislative and regulatory framework

9. The policy sets out a standardised methodology based on P3O, MSP and PRINCE2, which were developed as UK Government standards for Portfolio Management Office (PMO) and programme and project management. Key elements of the legislative and regulatory framework relevant to PPM are set out below:

Local Government Act 1999	General requirement to achieve best value for money. The effective management of programmes and projects reduces unnecessary expenditure and increases the likelihood of delivering organisational priorities.
Local Government Act 2000	General requirement to prepare strategic plans to improve economic, social, and environmental well-being. Projects must align to the Council Plan / strategic priorities, ensuring; clear outcomes, public value delivery and stakeholder and community involvement.
Local Government Transparency Code and Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014	Authorities have a duty of transparency and accountability on spending, performance, risk and major projects. The effective management of programmes and projects ensures accurate reporting, public accountability, clear audit trails, risk and impact visibility.
Best value standards and intervention: a statutory guide 2024	Authorities have a duty to have in place and properly deploy an effective internal control environment to safeguard the use of resources, and clear and effective processes to secure value for

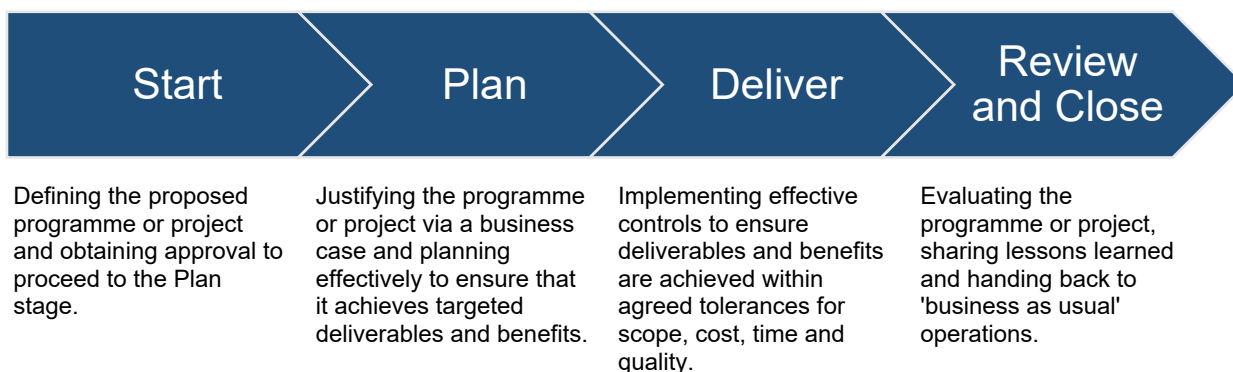
	money. The effective management of programmes and projects enhances governance and the effective use of resources.
--	--

Policy Statement

10. To be effective, organisations need to balance day-to-day operations with delivering business change. The Council will manage a corporate portfolio of programmes and projects that aligns with its strategic priorities and improves outcomes for residents.
11. Where possible, all projects will link to wider programmes and sub-portfolios to show how they support strategic priorities. Projects that do not contribute to the Council's priorities will not be progressed unless there is a legal requirement to do so.
12. Programmes and projects within the Council will be defined using a common categorisation tool, aligned with the Council's risk appetite, which will also determine the governance arrangements to be applied to the programme or project, proportionate to scale, cost, risk and benefit.
13. The most complex activities involving major change, risk, or financial impact will be categorised as a formal project and follow the governance standards set out in the Programme and Project Management Framework (PPMF).
14. Low-risk, one-off tasks will be managed within Directorate Business Plans.
15. Formal programmes and projects will be subject to the governance and monitoring arrangements set out in the Programme and Project Management Framework (PPMF), to ensure the approval, initiation and continuation of activity through the lifecycle via gateways, including routes for escalation and change control where required is proportionate.
16. Programmes and projects will be managed within 5% of agreed tolerance for cost, and 10% of agreed tolerance for time and benefit before a formal change control process is required. For example, if a project has a budget of £100k a change control would only be required if the total costs are estimated to exceed £105k. On occasion it may be necessary to increase or decrease the level of tolerance depending upon the type of project, which will be agreed by the Project Sponsor before project delivery begins.
17. The application of tolerances, managed by the Sponsor, will ensure that there is a sound balance between governance and delivery to enable projects to continue to progress where there are only minor impacts on the agreed tolerances.
18. This flexibility will empower project managers to deliver projects within a framework that ensures leadership time and capacity is focussed on significant issues that may impact the successful delivery of the project and / or its benefits, rather than minor changes.
19. Any significant concerns, issues and risks that might impact upon the successful delivery of the programme or project and its expected benefits outside of approved tolerances, will be escalated to Integrated Performance and Budget Clinic Boards for steer and where necessary, corrective actions will be agreed.

20. Reporting and escalation to corporate Leadership Team will be by exception and integrate with overall arrangements for performance and financial management outlined in the Council’s Performance and Financial Management Policy.

21. All programmes and projects will be managed through the lifecycle summarised below and set out in detail in the supporting PPMF.



22. For projects that do not require a full options appraisal or public consultation, the project lifecycle may be concertinaed to ensure delivery at pace while also being consistent with the requirements of good PPM governance.

23. At the end of each stage, programmes and projects will be reassessed for time, scope, cost, benefits, and risk to decide whether they should continue. They must be stopped immediately if risks cannot be managed or if the expected benefits can no longer be delivered unless there is a legal requirement to deliver.

24. No approvals or funding (internal or external) for programmes or projects should be sought if the activity has not concluded the Plan stage i.e. does not have a justified business case.

25. Business change management principles will be used as standard within programme and project management arrangements and delivery plans, where implementation of a change will result in a significant impact on staff roles, service delivery processes and customers.

Roles and key responsibilities

Executive members	Overall responsibility for programme and project management across the Council, including agreeing the PPM policy, and ensuring that organisational performance is managed, monitored and reviewed regularly.
Elected members	Agree the Mayor’s priorities for Middlesbrough, the Council’s Strategic Plan, Revenue Budget and Investment Strategy (as Council) and scrutinise service performance in line with this policy. The role of elected officials is restricted to either scrutinising or approving activity in line with agreed authorities and delegations and being briefed accordingly in a timely fashion. It is not appropriate for elected officials to sponsor or otherwise lead projects or to fulfil any other project role as this would be highly likely to represent a conflict of interest with their scrutiny or Executive role.
Audit Committee	Review the effectiveness of PPM and receive an Annual assurance report on progress being made.

Leadership Team	Ensure the Council's portfolio fully aligns with achieving the outcomes of the Council Plan and continued delivery of the Council's legal and statutory duties and provide appropriate challenge, scrutiny and support to escalated programmes and projects with significant issues that require Leadership Team steer and / or a decision to progress.
Integrated Performance and Budget Clinic Boards	Identifies PPM activity in response to opportunities identified that require project activity to exploit them or from the business plan of the directorate; review escalations for under-performance of programmes and projects outside of Sponsor approved tolerances and identify appropriate recovery action, providing appropriate challenge, scrutiny and support.
Local Programme / Project Boards	Review and approve programme documentation for Directorate level approval; provide guidance to unblock issues and address risks to programme and project objectives. Boards will include the Sponsor, Programme / Project Managers and senior representatives of the customer, user and supplier (as relevant).
Programme Sponsors	A nominated Council Officer (usually Head of Service or Subject Matter Expert), ultimately accountable for the success of programmes; champions and sells the programme to stakeholders; provides strategic direction and secures resources for the programme; acts as escalation point for decisions outside of programme manager's authority; represents programme at Directorate or Corporate Portfolio Boards.
Project Sponsor	Ultimately accountable for the success of projects; provides direction and secures resources for the project; acts as escalation point for decisions outside of project manager's authority; represents project at Directorate or Corporate Boards.
Programme Manager	Completes programme level documentation as required by this policy and its supporting framework; plans, coordinates and controls delivery of the programme; provides progress reports and escalates issues to Sponsor or Board where required.
Project Manager	Completes project level documentation as required by this policy and its supporting framework; plans, coordinates and controls delivery of the project; provides progress reports and escalates issues to Sponsor Programme Manager or Board where required.
Project Teams	Responsible for delivering the project tasks to the set objectives, within budget and timescale, working to the Project Manager within a matrix management environment.
Portfolio Management Office (PMO)	Strategic oversight of the Council's portfolio and compliance with this policy and its supporting framework, providing guidance training and support as appropriate; coordinates Board activity, reviewing monthly programme / project progress reports and reporting by exception to Boards.

Supporting policies, procedures and standards

26. The following policies, procedures and standards will be implemented across the Council to support effective PPM.

Information Governance Framework	Sets out a framework for effective information governance within the Council, meeting all legal obligations and underpinning the achievement of strategic objectives.
Risk and Opportunity Management Policy	Sets out how the Council will ensure that risks are effectively managed and opportunities exploited to maximise delivery of strategic objectives, fully integrated with performance management arrangements.

Performance Management Policy	Sets out how the Council will ensure that performance is effectively managed to deliver strategic priorities for the town.
Project and Programme Management Framework	Sets out the Council's approach to the governance and management of Council led formal programmes and projects.
Project and Programme Management risk impact matrix	Sets out guidance on risk and opportunity scoring within the PPM environment to ensure consistency and appropriate escalation.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

27. The Council's expectations around PPM are clearly set out within its corporate values and associated staff performance frameworks.
28. All managers and employees are required to comply with this PPM Policy to ensure that the Council effectively manages programmes and projects in pursuit of its strategic objectives. Managers and employees will be provided with a range of resources and, where appropriate, training, to support the effective implementation of this policy.
29. An annual assurance report on the Council's PPM arrangements will be submitted to Corporate Audit Committee. This will be supported by a targeted internal audit as appropriate, which will be listed in the Council's annual audit plan.
30. This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there is significant development that would require a more urgent review e.g. new legislation.