

<b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
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<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Executive, Erik Scollay
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Date:</b>	16 April 2026
<b>Title:</b>	Programme and Project Management Framework – Annual Assurance Report
<b>Report for:</b>	Decision
<b>Status:</b>	Public
<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Delivering Best Value

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
<p>That the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOTES</b> the arrangements in place to manage programmes and projects within the Council.</li> <li>• <b>CONSIDERS</b> whether the information provided has given the Committee sufficient assurance that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place in relation to programme and project management.</li> </ul>

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>This report provides an overview of the Council’s programme and project management arrangements, to demonstrate assurance that they are robust and fit for purpose and that they support the delivery of the Council’s priorities and aims. It also provides an update on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Council’s portfolio of projects delivery performance for 2025/26</li> <li>• Improvements delivered during 2025/26</li> <li>• Further planned improvements for 2026/27</li> </ul>

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's Programme and Project Management (PPM) approach, summarise activity in 2025/26, and set out planned developments for 2026 and beyond, providing assurance that robust PPM arrangements are in place to support delivery of the Council Plan ambitions.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:

- **NOTES** the arrangements in place to manage programmes and projects within the Council.
- **CONSIDERS** whether the information provided has given the Committee sufficient assurance that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place in relation to programme and project management.

## 3. Background and relevant information

- 3.1. The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's Programme and Project Management (PPM) approach, summarise project performance for 2025/26, and set out planned PPM developments for 2026 and beyond, providing assurance that robust PPM arrangements are in place to support delivery of the Council Plan ambitions.
- 3.2. The PMO has responsibility for the strategic oversight of the Council's portfolio of programmes and projects that follow the corporate Programme and Project Management Framework (PPMF), which ensures a consistent approach to the governance and management of programmes and projects.
- 3.3. The PPMF is supported by a set of standardised project templates and provides clear guidance for managing programmes and projects at every stage of their lifecycle, helping to further embed the framework and methodology across the Council.
- 3.4. Compliance with the PPMF is assured through periodic project health checks, and performance is reported quarterly to the Executive within the performance outturn report.
- 3.5. The Council maintained a portfolio of corporate and transformation programmes and projects in 2025/26 to support of achievement of the Council's strategic priorities.
- 3.6. During 2025/26 projects within the Transformation Portfolio were reviewed to ensure ongoing alignment with transformation themes. Some were incorporated into the Council's overarching portfolio of corporate programmes and projects as a result, with progress against performance reported accordingly.
- 3.7. Monthly Directorate and Corporate Performance Boards were in place in 2025/26 and included monitoring the performance of progress against the delivery of all

strategic programmes and projects, Executive actions and Council Plan workplan initiatives.

### Performance of programmes and projects in 2025/26

3.8. During 2025/6 there were 40 projects in the corporate portfolio at the point of reporting. Projects are categorised as either Level 1 (the most complex projects) or Level 2 (lighter-touch projects), and their performance is assessed and reported using Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) indicators that measure how well the project is delivering against expectations.

3.9. The table below shows the performance of all corporately monitored projects (corporate and transformation), at the end of February 2026, with 76% reporting as Green or Amber and on track to deliver the expected outputs and benefits but remaining below the expected 90% performance target.

Level	RAG	Target	Feb 2025/26	On target
1	Red	N/A	21% (5)	N/A
	Amber	90%	8% (2)	No
	Green		71% (17)	
2	Red	N/A	25% (4)	N/A
	Amber	90%	12% (2)	No
	Green		63% (10)	
Totals	Red	N/A	23% (9)	N/A
	Amber	90%	10% (4)	No
	Green		67% (27)	

3.10. Eight of the nine projects RAG rated Red were transformation projects with associated financial savings. Following the Council's improved financial position and change in approach, these projects are now under review and if the expected benefits can no longer be achieved the project will be formally closed as part of the closure plan for the current transformation programme, following the Executive decision to cease it on 11 March 2026.

3.11. In the event of project closures with savings attached, Directorates will be required to identify alternative savings proposals, which will be delivered either through the initiation of new projects or embedded into the forthcoming business-as-usual performance and financial management integrated arrangements.

3.12. The remaining project RAG rated Red is delayed due to a change in delivery approach but is expected to get back on track to Green by the end of March 2026.

3.13. The four projects RAG rated as Amber are in the close and review stage of the project lifecycle, with closure reports expected to be submitted in the next reporting period.

### **Improvements delivered during 2025/26**

- 3.14 Due to capacity constraints within the Portfolio Management Office (PMO), it has not been possible to progress some of the planned improvements outlined in the last PPM Assurance Report to this committee. Action has been taken to increase the capacity of the PMO manager to deliver these improvements. These actions will be carried forward for delivery in 2026.
- 3.15 In early 2026, work was undertaken to refresh the content of the Programme and Project Management Policy of the organisation to ensure it set out an appropriate governance framework for proportionate governance of programmes and projects and reflected the cessation of the Transformation programme and the transition into Continuous Improvement.

### **Further improvement activity planned for 2026/27**

- 3.16 On 11 March 2026, Executive approved bringing the Transformation Programme to an end in its current form and the Council will move to a model of Continuous Improvement to deliver lasting change for residents.
- 3.17 As set out above, the PMO has already refreshed the PPM policy to reflect this new direction of travel. During 2026/7 it will review any remaining legacy transformation projects and will either continue to be delivered, and progress reported through the corporate portfolio of programmes and projects or will transition to business-as-usual activity where they do not meet the threshold that requires additional governance in the form of project management. The Council is also putting in place governance that will ensure oversight of critical BAU activity within its revised performance and financial management policy, due to be considered by Executive in April 2026.
- 3.18 A refresh of the PPMF and project documentation is planned in 2026/7 to ensure alignment with the revised Programme and Project Management Policy.
- 3.19 A revised project categorisation scoring tool will be implemented. This will ensure the Council's portfolio is appropriate and manageable for an organisation of its size and to reduce the volume of BAU activity being managed as formal projects.
- 3.20 Further planned improvements carried forward, will focus on improving the standards of programme and project management delivery practice through the implementation of enhanced collaboration and training opportunities for PPM staff and a Centre of Excellence model for programme and project management, which will include:
- Establishment of cross-directorate project management champions to share best practice and propose improvements.
  - Refresh of programme and project management training materials, with a roll-out of scheduled training opportunities for Programme and Project Managers and Sponsors.

#### 4. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

4.1 The Committee could decide that it does not have sufficient information to be assured about the governance of the Council's programmes and projects and request further information on this. This is not recommended as this report provides a detailed overview of the governance arrangements that are in place.

#### 5. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	There are no new direct financial implications arising from this report in relation to Programme and Project Management (PPM). Maintaining a robust approach to PPM governance and delivery plans, the Council is better positioned to identify and mitigate potential financial impacts. Any projects with financial savings attached that can no longer be achieved are closed and alternative savings proposals required. This is in line with good practice. Financial considerations are embedded throughout the PPM Framework, ensuring that all programmes and projects are assessed for affordability, value for money and deliverability before approval.
Legal	There are no new direct legal implications arising from this report in relation to Programme and Project Management (PPM).
Risk	There are no direct risk implications arising from this report. The PPM framework provides for the effective identification and management of programme and project risks, aligned to the Council's corporate approach to risk management.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	There are no direct implications from this report on human rights, equality and diversity. The PPM Framework reinforces the assessment of Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion impacts by ensuring projects undertake an Equality Impact assessment as part of the project business case before approval.
Reducing poverty	The PPM Policy and Framework supports projects to deliver the Council Plan that has within it a commitment to ensure tackling poverty is at the heart of everything the Council does.
Climate Change / Environmental	Not applicable.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	There are no direct implications arising from this report in relation to Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers.
Data Protection	There are no direct implications arising from this report in relation to data protection. The PPM Framework reinforces the Council's existing data protection and information governance requirements by ensuring projects undertake a Data Privacy Impact Assessment as part of the project business case.

#### Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee	PMO Six monthly report	06/06/2019
Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee	Annual Assurance Report: Portfolio Management Office (PMO)	25/07/2019
Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee	Performance and Risk Management: Annual Assurance Report 2020	04/02/2021
Executive	Transformation: Governance Arrangements	13/03/2024

Audit Committee	Project and Programme Management Annual Assurance Report:	13/03/2025
Executive	Resetting the Council's Approach to Transformation and Delivery of the Council Plan'	30/04/2025

**Contact:** Joanne Chapman, Portfolio Management Office Manager and Ann-Marie Johnstone, Head of Chief Executive's Department,

**Email:** [Ann-Marie\\_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk)