

Executive response to the recommendations contained in the Castle Hill Scrutiny Panel Report: Progress Update
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Stage 1 – Revision of Corporate Property Services Project Management Handbook: status almost complete

Corporate Property Services (CPS) has reviewed its internal Project Management Handbook and has looked at the comments of the scrutiny panel, where appropriate, and incorporated them into the revised handbook. The CPS Handbook has been created as a tool for CPS staff acting as a project manager (i.e. leading, managing and co-ordinating the project team on a day-to-day basis). It is intended once the CPS Project Management Handbook is completed to use this as a basis for the Corporate Project Management Handbook, which will effectively govern how larger scale projects are managed throughout the council.

Within the framework of the CPS Project Management Handbook the recommendations made by the Executive would be undertaken by the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) on any future projects. The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is the individual who ensures that a project meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits. They should be the owner of the overall business change that is being supported by the project. The SRO should ensure that the change maintains its business focus, has clear authority and that the context, including risks, is actively managed. This individual must be a senior officer and must take personal responsibility for successful delivery of the project. They should be recognised as the owner throughout the organisation and for the duration of the project.

The SRO (along with the project board on large projects), is responsible for ensuring agreement with all stakeholders as to what are the desired objectives at the outset are and to provide clearly defined project goals to the project manager (PM). With projects of this magnitude a full project brief is required to formally detail the objectives and operational requirements of the finished project. It is the SRO to whom the project manager (PM) reports and obtains agreement to proceed. Similarly the responsibility lies with the project board and the SRO to dictate the required level of communication.

It is the responsibility of the project board and the appointed SRO, that the aims of the project are agreed, circulated and owned at an early stage by all concerned. Agreement on the projects terms of reference should be written down and signed off by all stakeholders.

In addition the CPS Project Management Handbook whilst following the principals of PRINCE2 also provides an operational tick list for staff with specific terms of reference and items of information relevant to the types of work undertaken within the projects section.

The project board/SRO should have a full understanding of PRINCE2 and use these principals to agree the scope and project approach (as this could differ from project to project). They should also acknowledge and be aware of their own roles and responsibility in progressing the project. All project board/SRO's must meet the requisite competencies of PRINCE2 and have the experience and expertise (and time available), relative to the complexity of the project.

Corporate Property Services will circulate the principals/processes incorporated into the revised CPS Project Management Handbook to each department for comments/ suggestions prior to release.

Stage 2 – Corporate Project Management Handbook.

It is intended to use the completed CPS handbook as a basis for the Corporate Project Management Handbook. This will be a simplified version of the CPS Handbook which will establish the roles and responsibilities of individuals assigned to the project, and also the organisational structure, clear reporting arrangements and the set of processes to deliver the required outcome. This will all be completed in accordance with Prince 2 methodology. It will ensure that everyone involved knows what is expected of them and the processes to keep cost, time and risk under control. It will ensure the lines of accountability and the responsibilities of individuals are clearly defined. Similarly that the processes are documented and repeatable, and that everyone involved knows what is expected of them in terms of the project scope.

A Project Team will be established to undertake this work with departmental representatives and chief officer as steer.