

Kent LINK – 22 January 2009

Project Management – Discussion Document.

While the LINK continues to develop its approach on governance, there is an overriding need to ensure that it adopts a positive “why not” approach. The fact that a process is not in place or not fully developed should not lead to the LINK turning away requests for assistance or support.

1 Background – projects and project management

1.1 In any organisation, a distinction can be drawn between process and projects.

1.2 Process tends to be about tasks such as communications, field work and financial monitoring, characterised by routine and repetition.

1.3 Projects, in contrast, are characterised by a specific aim, limited by cost, time and resources, comprise a set of tasks with defined starts and finishes, and usually involve a team of people.

1.4 The existence of the Pyramids suggests that the concept of project management has existed for thousands of years. However, contemporary approaches are derived from mid 20th century US industrial methodology, developed to address common causes of failure to deliver, such as:

- Lack of a valid business case to justify the project
- Objectives not properly defined and agreed
- Lack of communication and stakeholder involvement
- Outcomes and/or benefits not properly defined in measurable terms
- Lack of quality control
- Poor estimation of time, cost and resources
- Inadequate definition and acceptance of roles
- Insufficient planning and coordination of resources.

1.5 It follows that project management is to ensure, so far as possible, that a project is delivered on time, within budget and to the desired quality and/or performance.

1.6 Delivery of a project is usually seen in three phases: preparation, execution and closure. There is also a defined relationship which puts distance between those responsible for commissioning the project and those delivering it

2 Developing an approach for Kent LINK

2.1 In the context of Kent LINK and based on the issues already identified by participants, the outcome of a project is most likely to be used to

- influence part or whole of the NHS , Social Services or other relevant body
- change the way in which the LINK operates

2.2 The LINK has adopted a Decision Making and Priority setting process, which it is assumed, will act as a filter for projects. It is suggested that approval criteria should ensure that a LINK project will:

- be justified in relation to an approved LINK activity
- have defined objective(s) and
- a list of steps to achieve them
- a clearly stated start and finish date
- involve a number of people, depending upon size and complexity
- an indication of cost and resources and
- an indication of the major risks which might hinder or prevent completion
- be concluded by a final report, which includes full details of the outcome

3 Managing a Kent LINK project – the issues

3.1 As indicated, approaches on project management, training and IT applications are founded in industry and commerce. The language of project management is littered with esoteric terminology - business case, initiation documents, stage reviews, product descriptions, critical path analysis, program evaluation review technique, network diagrams, gantt charts, risk analysis, and many more.

3.2 This should not create a problem where, for example, the LINK engages a professional public opinion consultancy to conduct a survey. It would be fair to assume that the host and contractor would be familiar with the concept of project management.

3.3 It is likely, however, that the majority of people or community based organisations who engage with the LINK about local issues will be volunteers. The development of an effective approach in that setting requires a dialogue with those volunteers, and a relatively informal and supportive approach.

3.4 There may be a third level where the scope, complexity or cost of a project, or the availability of management skills, place it somewhere between these two extremes.

3.5 There is another issue: who commissions a project and who delivers it? In a business setting, it is common for a project to be commissioned at board level, with project management as an operational responsibility. In the case of the LINK, it may well be the case that those who request assistance with a project will be delivering it themselves. In that situation it may be necessary to create a surrogate commissioner who is able to provide support and an objective assessment of progress.

3.6 Finally these is the need to ensure that projects pay regard to equality issues, irrespective of whether or not there is a direct relationship to the project.

3.7 All this suggests that that there will be no “one size fits all” model for managing a LINK project. However, if a project fails, it is likely to be for one or more of the causes set out above, irrespective of who is involved. Those issues need to be addressed, in some way, for every project.

4 Principles for the LINK

4.1 Given this background, it is suggested that the following principles are appropriate

- the LINK may not be a business in the conventional sense, but it does need to be businesslike in its approach
- the need to strike a balance between that which is desirable in a business setting and something that is realistic for the LINK and those who it aims to support.
- methods should be simple, commensurate with the risks (in terms of cost, wasted resources and damage to credibility) involved.
- the process must help and not hinder community involvement.
- there is a need to learn from experiences gained

4.2 To illustrate a possible approach, a scenario based on a community-lead project on primary care has been used. The management system is based on:

- a pro forma application form which covers the essential requirements of project management. Simple updates can then be appended as the project progresses.
- a simple risk assessment procedure

These documents can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

4.3 An example of something more complex (not related to LINK activities) is contained in the Project Scoping Document at Appendix 3. The crucial issues here were strict adherence to a succession of delivery dates, and the relationship of part of this project with budgeting processes. Costs and human resources were small.

4.4 This may be suitable for projects that are more complex and/or costly than the first example but are capable of management without a full suite of documentation. This form would be used in conjunction with a simple event log, variation requests and a signing off report, all in plain form. It also illustrates that the volume of information for what is a straightforward project might prove daunting for someone who is not used to the territory.

4.5 Beyond that level, given the likely cost, resource implications and duration, and the need for quality assured data analysis and coordination, this should be a fully documented procedure, possibly supported by a proprietary software package.

5 Issues for consideration and further development

- is this approach on the right lines?
- should cost or other defined limits be a determining factor in assessing the level of information and/or degree of supervision required?
- support for outside bodies on the design and execution of projects – where will it come from?
- how should equalities be built in to the process?

Evan Stirzaker
Lead for Project Management, Kent LINK Governor's Group

Project title: Out of Hours' GP Services – Isle of Oxen	
Responsible Body/Person I Stirem-Upp (chair) on behalf of Oxen Health Action Group	
Justification: Three Parish Councils have drawn OHAG's attention to problems with the out of hours' access to GP services. A local GP practice has itself expressed concern about the way its patients have been treated by the OOH service provide by the PCT.	
Project objective(s) To assess community experiences on out of hours GP services on the Isle of Oxen, by carrying out a postal survey of 10% of households.	
Estimate of cost and resources	
Questionnaire design	£100
Stationary and printing	£200
Postage	£30
Data analysis	£Nil (£250 contingency)
Who will be involved? Four members of Oxen Health Action Group have agreed to be responsible for all aspects of the survey, apart from data analysis. This will be undertaken free of charge by NumberCrunchers Unlimited, who use a local telecottage facility	
Assessed and approved by the LINK priorities group 01/05/09.....	
Timetable	
Start Date	01/06/09.....
Programme	Questionnaire design complete by 15/06/09..... Sample selected by 15/09/09..... Printing completed by 22/06/09..... Distribution completed by 25/06/09..... Deadline for returns 21/07/09..... Returned questionnaires to analyst 28/07/09.. Analyst report 18/08/09..... OHAG meeting to discuss findings 25/08/09.. Draft final report 08/09/09..... Report and findings submitted to LINK 15/09/09..
Finish Date	15/09/09.....
Outcomes – identified need for better information for residents on scope of and access to out of hours' GP services. Full report attached.	
(Signed) Date	

Kent LINK - Risk Template

Appendix 2

Impact – the seriousness of the effect of an event or occurrence on achievement of the project objectives		Probability – the likelihood of its happening		Risk Value = Impact x Probability		
				Risk Value	Effect	Actions
Negligible	1	Highly Unlikely	1	1-4	Low	be aware of need for action if risk escalates
Moderate	2	Possible	2	6-9	Moderate	show one action for risk reduction
High	3	Probable	3	12-16	Significant	show two actions for risk reduction
Significant	4	Highly likely	4			

	Description	I (1-4)	P (1-4)	Risk Value	Actions for Reducing Risk	Target Date	Responsible Person
1	Illness of Team Members during pre- distribution stage	3	2	6	Identify additional volunteers able to cover absences	01/06/09	I S-U
2	Data analysis offer not honoured	4	2	8	Contingency of £250 for professional analysis	01/06/08	I S-U

Project Scoping Document		
Version >>0202	Date 23 September 2003	Page
<p>Project Title London Borough of >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>. Environmental Health - Environmental Protection Division Procedures for planning, monitoring, training, promotional and budgetary purposes</p>		
Commissioning officer R Martin		
Project manager Evan Stirzaker		
<p>Justification for project Various service planning, monitoring and management tools need to be prepared and put in place within the current municipal year. This will not be achieved by existing in-house staff, due to the broader pressures of service delivery</p>		
<p>Project Objectives</p> <p>Production of the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Performance Monitoring system - monitoring templates for each objective (Nos. 1 to 16 inclusive) in the list of Divisional objectives for 2003-2004, using the Corporate Performance Target Project Plan template • BVPI 166 - enforcement policy and procedure; customer satisfaction reporting system • Scheme of delegations for the Division • RIPA and CPIA - procedures and training plan • Service marketing - the identification of functions and areas, and the engagement of Programmes and Strategy Team • Anti-dog fouling campaign - strategy document • A detailed review of Divisional budget 		
<p>Products / Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of individual pieces of work in relation to the objectives listed above • Completion of all work by 31 January 2004 		

<p>Scope of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stocktake of existing position in respect of each individual objective • Consultation with officers within the Division, and as necessary with colleagues in other parts of the authority • Preparation and submission of reports and other documentation <p><u>Exclusions from scope of work</u></p> <p>Any matters not listed above, unless agreed between commissioning officer and project manager.</p>		
<p>Acceptance criteria</p> <p>Report and other documentation covering the key elements set out in the previous sections produced (where appropriate in Corporate format) to the reasonable satisfaction of the Commissioning Officer.</p>		
<p>Assumptions and Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information required for the stock take of the existing service is readily available at commencement and/or as required during the project ▪ Staff in the Division will be made aware of and briefed by management on the project before commencement and will offer their full co-operation towards its completion ▪ The Borough Council will provide an acceptable and workable form of agreement to allow access to and transfer of data outside the Council's premises for the purposes of this project ▪ That all reasonable precautions are to be taken to protect such data, and that it will be returned or destroyed as appropriate at the conclusion of the project ▪ Attendance at the Council' s offices will be required only for work which cannot reasonably be carried on at any other location ▪ Hours to be worked will not be limited on a daily or weekly basis, but will be generally be constrained by the estimated duration for the project at the agreed hourly rate ▪ The Commissioning Officer will, if necessary, ensure that monies set aside for this work within the current financial year can be carried forward to the 2004-2005 financial year 		
Risk identification and management		
Risk	Index	Compensation
Information not available in useable form or within timescale of project	Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estimates or assumptions to be made as agreed with Commissioning Officer ▪ Exclusion from consideration
Information not available or	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estimates or assumptions to be made as agreed with Commissioning Officer

impracticable to access or retrieve		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusion from consideration
Adverse weather	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reordering of work so far as practicable
Non availability of principals, other staff or stakeholders within project timescale	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification/Provision of effective substitutes before commencement ▪ Exclusion from process ▪ project rescheduled (financial overrun provision)
<p>Project control/review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly written progress report to Commissioning Officer - following commencement until completion ▪ Draft documentation five working days before interim finish dates ▪ Variation requests as and when required 		
<p>Timetable</p> <p><i>Corporate Performance Monitoring system - monitoring templates for objectives 3 to 6</i></p> <p><i>Corporate Performance Monitoring system - monitoring templates for objectives 1,2 and 7 to 16</i></p> <p><i>BVPI 166 - enforcement policy and procedure</i></p> <p><i>BVPI 166 - customer satisfaction reporting system</i></p> <p><i>Scheme of delegations for the Division</i></p> <p><i>RIPA and CPIA - procedures and training plan</i></p> <p><i>Service marketing - identification of functions and areas</i></p> <p><i>Service marketing - engagement of Programmes</i></p>	<p>Start</p> <p><i>12 September 2003 for all objectives</i></p>	<p>Finish (no later than)</p> <p><i>10 October 2003</i></p> <p><i>15 November 2003</i></p> <p><i>22 November 2003</i></p> <p><i>29 November 2003</i></p> <p><i>5 December 2003</i></p> <p><i>12 December 2003</i></p> <p><i>19 December 2003</i></p> <p><i>9 January 2004</i></p> <p><i>16 January 2004</i></p>

<i>and Strategy Team</i>		<i>23 January 2004</i>
<i>Anti-dog fouling campaign - strategy document</i>		
<i>Detailed review of Divisional budget</i>		
Resources <i>E Stirzaker + officers within the service</i>	Budget <i>£8000 maximum (+ agency charges)</i>	Duration <i>150-160 hours overall</i>
Author <i>Evan Stirzaker</i>		
Agreed by	(name)	
(signed)	Date	