

Leisure Development Programme - Learning Points from Phase One

Project Governance

- Involving Councillors through a Members' Working Group worked well in engagement terms for all political parties. It helped to disseminate accurate information about the progress of the project and it enabled all parties to provide input into the design.
- Ensure that all members of the Project Board have a positive input to make to the project, otherwise the Project Board can become a update presentation rather than a meeting.
- The project sponsor needs to be involved at the start and to be part of the initial relationship development with the project management company. Regular briefings for the project sponsor throughout the project are essential.
- Close involvement of Project Sponsor and relevant Portfolio Holders was beneficial to the project . This was particularly valuable to the progress of the project at times when key decisions (e.g. on funding) were required.

Project Management

- Ensure that the Project Manager has sufficient time to devote to the project and that the respective officer roles are clear at the start of the project to avoid duplication or poor communication within the wider project team.
- Ensure a better record of the management process (and particularly the change process) is maintained in electronic and paper form in-house. Do not over-rely on the Project Management Company to do this for you.
- Ensure that Client Instruction Requests are normally completed in advance of work being agreed.
- Be aware if two or more work streams are likely to cause resource implications at the same time, and ensure that both are resourced adequately. The term 'adequate resources' includes resilience within the structure of the team so that work is not too concentrated in a few individuals for long periods of time.
- Be aware that some tasks (such as ordering changes to services or doing any work in conjunction with the Highways Department at the County Council) have long lead-in times, and so it may well be urgent that preparations and ordering are completed long before the finished works are required.
- If using the NEC contract, ensure that the contractor takes "single design point responsibility".
- Ensure that project team schedule time in advance for planning activities.
- People take on board information in different ways – ensure that information is available in different formats (including plans, drawings etc).
- Be prepared to take difficult decisions for the longer term benefit of the project if required (eg delaying start of works if this would mean works would progress more smoothly once difficult issues resolved).

The design process

- Do as much as possible to engage early with utility providers in order to under the most appropriate surveys to accurately locate all utilities/services on the site as early as possible in the project .
- Do not communicate a precise cost on the project too early in the design process – refer instead to a likely range of costs until the point of cost certainty is reached.
- We should see more examples of completed facilities at different stages, such as one year after project completion and three years and so on. The project team would have been better able to make selection choices on things like fixtures and fitting if more examples of previous installations had been investigated.
- Make sure that the Project Management Company/architect takes the client through the designs in some considerable detail and then ask them to point out small details that can make a big difference to the design, in order to save time and money later on. Examples are colours of tiles and location of power points.
- For areas to be refurbished, make sure that all existing fixed equipment and plant is thoroughly surveyed so that all equipment that is close to the end of its useful life is replaced, rather than having to add new items for replacement later in the project.

Consultation

- Consult the public twice – once at RIBA Stage 0 and once at RIBA Stage 2. At the appropriate point once designs finalised, be very clear about what the finished product is in order to manage expectations of the public.
- There were times when responding to public enquiries in detail took up too much resource. We need to devise a method of engaging the public without allowing conversations around issues of minutiae to take up too much officer time, perhaps with a single point of contact and an allocated resource.
- Run a design workshop for staff and Councillors at the same time as public consultations.
- Involve the Green Spaces team early on in any considerations of impact on the environment or the green infrastructure to be installed.
- Giving the media an exclusive viewing of completed Phase 1 works was effective and resulted in positive coverage of the work carried out.

Project Resources

- Having regular (weekly) access to specialist internal officer resources (eg Media, Finance) was effective during key periods of the programme. Consider other internal resources that this could work with.
- Do not underestimate the benefit of specialist procurement and legal expertise (NEC contract etc). Early engagement and forward planning with these officers would benefit the project.