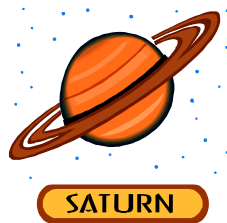


CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT

Unit O45

Principles of Project Management



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Youth Offending Team

In 1996 an Audit Commission Report 'Misspent Youth' identified shortcomings in the Youth Justice System and made recommendations for radical change. In 1998 major new legislation contained in the Crime and Disorder Act required that Local Authorities form new multi-agency Youth Offending Teams.

Swindon Youth Offending Team (Yot) began in June 1999, starting with five main contributory partners, Social Services, Police, Probation, Health and Education. I was one of the 'founders' of our team when I was seconded from the Police to the team at its inception. The aim of the team is to 'prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people'.

Over time the team has grown to 40 staff and 60 volunteers. My role now is 'Head of Service', my main responsibilities are: -

- Line manage 4 operational managers
- Foresee and respond to strategic developments
- Prepare strategic plans and develop new services
- Negotiate budget and resources and deliver services on budget
- Analyse and evaluate performance and data management
- Collaborate with partners at a senior level for joint working
- Promote the service through effective public relations
- Motivate staff to fulfil their potential and improve services

Terms of Reference

This management report will demonstrate my skills, understanding, knowledge and abilities in the principles of project management.

On completion of my report I will have demonstrated my understanding of:

- The criteria which affect the selection of a suitable project approach.
- Defining the success criteria for a specific project.
- Defining and setting up a suitable project management organisation structure for a specific project.
- Selecting and fine-tuning a methodology or a body of knowledge.
- Defining a support environment for a project and how support office services would be integrated into a specific project.
- Creating a business case for a project.
- Stakeholder management on a project.

On completion I will draw conclusions and make recommendations for future projects. An overview of the project that I refer to throughout this report is at **Appendix B**.

Part A – The Nature of Projects

Introduction

A project is 'a structure to complete a specific defined deliverable or set of deliverables. A project has a specific begin date and end date, specific objectives and specific resources assigned to perform the work. A project manager has overall responsibility and authority over a project. When the objectives are met, the project is considered complete'. (www.tenstep.com).

A project is also unique, in that it is different in some way from the normal functions of the organisation. Subsequently, it is my experience that regardless of the size and cost of the project it is very unusual for it to conclude on time, in budget and fitting the original specification.

Why Projects Fail

According to the study guide there are a number of common reasons why projects can fail. I have related this to a near complete project that I have running at the Yot at this time, this is to refurbish part of a building used to meet with service users in an informal and friendly atmosphere.

RISK FACTORS	CAPITAL SPEND PROJECT
Project goal is not SMART	The project goal was SMART as it had to fit a stringent criteria before being approved. There was a national bidding process with only the best plans accepted.
Goals are SMART but things change	Shortly after the project was agreed and funding provided it was disclosed that the building may not be available for our use in the near future. Plans were changed for a 'flexible refurbishment' so that much of what was purchased could be relocated, but not all was possible.
Good planning but poor resources	There was a contingency built into the plan to ensure there were adequate resources. However, people commitment was not consistent, leaving too much work on one or two people.
Bad planning	Initial planning was good using a 'reverse planning' method. Later in the project a key member went sick causing all sorts of problems.
No contingency planning	Initially there was not thought a need for a contingency plan, but one was quickly agreed when news of the temporary nature of the accommodation was discovered.

Poor project management	Despite having no formal project management experience the problems have been well managed. That said, experience may have helped foresee these problems and to take evasive action.
Roles and responsibilities	Initially these were clearly defined. When a key member went sick it became very unclear who would lead from this agency and take responsibility for decisions that needed making.
Limited support from senior management	At times people have been left to manage the project without the appropriate support from one agency or another. This has caused considerable stress on some staff.

From this comparison it can be seen that this seemingly simple and straightforward project began its life well planned, resourced and prepared for. Unforeseen circumstances have twice put it in risk of failure, plans have had to be reviewed and changed to keep it on track. The result is it will be late and different from the original brief.

The Project Life Cycle

The self-study guide gives examples of the 4 main phases that larger projects tend to have, these are

- Phase 1** - Concept or start-up
- Phase 2** - Development or planning
- Phase 3** - Execution
- Phase 4** - Transfer or closing

I have reviewed the key stages of each of the above phases against the Yot capital project:

Phase 1 - Concept or start-up

This phase was initiated by the Youth Justice Board who were aware that there was a need by some Yots for one-off cash to improve access by young people to buildings or services. They put together a 'Capital Grant' bidding or expression of interest template. Yots completed the template stating the benefits to service users and submitting a detailed plan. I have compared this against the self-study guide checklist.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purpose ○ Strategic Fit 	<p>Yes, improve access for service users.</p> <p>Yes, better access = better compliance = better interventions = reduction in failed appointments = reduced offending.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

○ Objectives	Yes , overcome access problems.
○ Scope	Yes , the template was clear on what the grant could be spent on.
○ Terms of Reference	Yes , clear in the grant papers, matched funding required and penalties for non-compliance.
○ Draft Schedule	Yes , it was clear when work and invoicing would be completed by (2006/ 07 budget).
○ Budget Estimate	Yes , costs for the project had to be sought and matched funding agreed in principle.

One problem with this method was that we had to fit our needs (based on data analysis of access use/ need) into the unmovable YJB template, so we were not asking for what we really needed, but a hybrid to make it fit the specification.

Phase 2 – Development or Planning

Once our initial bid was in and had been approved, we then had to submit a more detailed plan. This brought together a small team of people who had to consider the following:

Team Members	This is a multi-agency project with benefits to service users from other agencies. Representatives from those agencies were identified and contacted.
Objectives and plan deliverables	These details were agreed and included in the detailed plan.
Budget schedule and baseline budget	The money had to be spent by 30 th March '07 and was a fixed amount.
Risk issues alternatives	None were identified at this stage, other than not being successful with the bid.
Sketches and drawings	Refurbishment drawings were made and accepted by all on the group. (Hand drawn)
Approval	This was very quickly given as the plan was SMART in its construction.
Communication plan	There was no formal communication plan, other than for the group to meet regularly.

This development and planning stage went very smoothly with lots of enthusiasm from all concerned. On reflection the enthusiasm did limit the amount of control and

detail that should have been considered at this stage. An example of this is it was not clear who would do what and when, and who was accountable to whom for completing tasks or making decisions.

Phase 3 – Execution

This phase is where the detail in the previous phase of development and planning becomes very important.

The comfortable position of talking and planning moves to real work and decision-making relating to quality, costs and time. Out of the 4 phases this is the busiest one. The effort required by staff needs to increase. The knock on effect can be felt by trying to continue ‘day jobs’ as well as the project.

Mobilize the project team Execute the work	This went astray when one of the team went long term sick and no replacement was found for some time.
Monitor and control Testing	There is a detailed plan and check list which is being followed so this is working very well.
Procurement Forecasting Technical issues	Decisions about what ‘moveable goods’ would be bought were repeatedly delayed and then changed at the last minute by one of the partners.
Resolve issues Risk assessment	Painting and decorating that was to be completed by young people will now need to be done by professionals following a Risk Assessment.
Time management	Reminders and chasing suppliers and contractors, as well as getting decisions made.
Communication	Keeping everyone informed of progress, including stakeholders.

This stage did not go too well and needed a lot of extra input from a few key people to keep the project live and deliverable. Innovation, problem solving and flexibility saved the day.

Phase 4 – Transfer or Close-out

This final phase is the completion of the project and confirming that it has achieved its overall aims and objectives. To do this it should be measured against the original business case with all payments made or received. There is a lot that can be learnt by evaluation and feedback and it is important that I ensure that this happens. The capital spend project is not yet complete, but when it is I will consider the following:

Contract closure	Report to the Youth Justice Board on the completion of the project and money spent.
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Team feedback Stakeholder feedback	Gather feedback from those involved and the service users.
Lessons learned	Share learning, make recommendations for the future.
Acknowledge good results and hard work	This is often forgotten, but is very important to do either in person or by letter (good for PDP).

Our project was very small, delivered in a short time and with a very small budget, so the closing jobs are relatively simple. There will need to be some transfer later as the building may not be available and alternative accommodation will need to be found. This might be considered as a 'Mini project'. It would be good practice to write a final report including the feedback for everyone to learn from in the future.

Part B – Making My Case

Introduction

As the manager of a multi-agency team I am frequently approached by staff, operational managers, other Heads of Service, voluntary organisations, the YJB (and so on) to consider taking on or taking part in a new pilot or project. There is no way I could pursue them all and not all are suitable for helping me to achieve my aims and objectives of "Preventing offending, and re-offending by young people". If it does not do that, or I cannot afford it, then its not going to happen.

Alignment with my organisation mission and strategic objectives is important. All established organisations should have a mission statement. When considering projects, it first has to satisfy my objectives and aims as above, then it needs to pass my mission statement, which is "Children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending will be offered the opportunities and support they need to become valued and productive numbers of our community".

Presenting My Case

As my project did align with my organisations strategic objectives I was then able to produce a business case. The self-study guide suggests the following to be contained in the business case:

A rational for the project	This showed my understanding of why the project is feasible and informs others outside our team.
The projects objectives	This was very clear as it had to fit both the YJB objectives as well as my local objectives.

A list of constraints and success criteria	These were included in the bid template making this very clear and what the penalties would be if not delivered to the original plan submitted.
The scope of the project	Whilst this confirmed which organisations would be involved, it did not include sufficient detail as to who and what the process would be. How it would affect existing work practices was included.
Relevant options	The template for the project was very limiting, also, too much deviation could lead to a failed bid. However, we did build in some flexibility for delivery, as experience tells us partnership working can be challenging.
An investigation of all relevant costs	All costs given were estimated, but they were estimated at 'highest cost' to allow for flexibility.
Realistic return projections	This could relate to a financial benefit, however, in this case it was to achieve more accessible services for service users.
Possible risks and contingencies	On most projects there is a contingency plan. On this one there was not, as in the worst-case scenario, we would just have to give the money back to the YJB. This would mean that there was no improvement to service users at this time.
Communication proposals	The 'Steering group' that formed for this project agreed to meet regularly and confer by phone and e-mail. This seemed sufficient. Where it was lacking was in keeping senior managers 'in the loop'.
Monitoring, control and evaluation methods	It is important that the sponsor (YJB) and the customer (Service users) are kept informed and consulted at each stage. Seeking feedback and sharing findings is planned on completion of the project. This should be written into the plan.
Final recommendation	The project proposal recommendation should reinforce the costs and benefits. This was included in the final 'conclusion' paragraph.

This exercise has shown that a good case was presented, but possibly lacking in a little detail. The decision was made to prioritise this project over others less beneficial or timely. It was aligned to our strategic aims and a proper specification was made leading to its successful go-ahead.

Part C – Project Managers, Project Teams and Project Resources

Introduction

Having a good project plan is a good start. However, the success of the project is down to the skills and abilities of the project manager, team and stakeholders.

The Project Manager

'A project manager is the person (or firm) responsible for the planning, co-ordination and controlling of a project from inception to completion, meeting the projects requirements and ensuring completion on time, within cost and to required quality standards'. (www.tenstep.com). This role is not dissimilar to what would be expected of any manager and subsequently they should have relevant training for this role, as in any other management role. The self-study guide suggests key roles and responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Organising** – Internal and external resources and assigning particular tasks, ensuring responsibility and accountability. For my project, I passed responsibility to one of my managers who took responsibility for these actions.
- **Planning** – Project objectives must be SMART. I know this project was 'SMART' as this was part of the original bid.
- **Controlling** – The original plan should be reviewed at each crucial stage and compared with data collated and analysed. Corrective action should be taken as needed. When a partner in the project changed the specification, this was not agreed by the project team, but due to financial deadlines it had to be accommodated or put the whole project at risk of failure.
- **Communicating** – The project manager must be good at this. The communication skills of the project manager and the core team members saved the project at the 11th hour by working together to find solutions.

The Project Team

The study guide suggests that Meredith Belbin's study on team roles indicates that a team needs to have a mixture of types of roles in order to work well and succeed.

I am certain that such a formal consideration was not taken in selecting this project team. However, I am sure that informally the team was selected on known skills and abilities e.g. 'so-and-so would be great at working with the stakeholders'.

Using the study guide team roles I have applied this to the project team.

Project role	Team member	Role type	Contribution	Allowable weakness
Team manager Overall responsibility	KL	Completer Finisher/ Implementer	Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Punctual, delivers on time. Seeks errors or omissions.	Somewhat inflexible, slow to respond to new possibilities. Inclined to worry. Reluctant to delegate.
Project manager	BS	Resource investigator	Extrovert, enthusiastic. Communicative, explores opportunities, develops contacts.	Over optimistic, loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
Staff Stakeholder link	KS	Implementer	Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical solutions.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Staff Partnership link	TT	Team worker	Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction.	Indecisive in crunch situations.

Having now reflected on Belbin's team roles and the roles in the team I have concluded that it is a good balanced mix with KL having an overview at a strategic level. BS driving the team operationally, KS making things happen and TT offering support. This worked really well until TT dropped out. This left KS unsupported and overloaded until a replacement could be found.

It is useful if people know their own team role, completing Belbin's personal assessment sheet reminded me of my role (Completed in the past) and my limitations. It is my intention to complete this exercise with the whole team at a future training day – for future reference when putting together a project team.

Tuckman's Team Stages

It is important to stand back from a team and form an understanding of what stage they are at in their development. The self-study guide uses Tuckman 1965 as a clear example of the stages. They are:

- Stage 1** **Forming** This is comfortable but not too productive.
- Stage 2** **Storming** Real people issues start to surface. Cultural differences develop.
- Stage 3** **Norming** All sorted, working hard, working together for common goal.

Stage 4 **Performing** Seamless 'cooking on gas' all energies fixed on the task.

Stage 5 **Adjourning** Completion of task, splitting up, sense of loss by members.

This project has had a short life, with few people, so it has only reached stage 2. When relating this to the whole team we have been at stage 4 on a number of occasions, but have dropped back to 3 when times have been tough.

Project Resources

As any project is unique, estimating all the resources that I might need will undoubtedly be 'informed guesswork'. The self-study guide suggests typical resources to consider.

- **People** – Using Belbin's team roles is a clever way of working to peoples strengthens when building a team. Having a project 'champion' is a great way of promoting the project whose value should not be underestimated. I think, on reflection, we did have a project champion in KS, but not at a senior enough level.
- **Finance** – It needs to be clear, who is paying what and when. Our project will only pay on completion and will withdraw part or all funding if the original aims are not met.
- **Time** – Initially it seemed there was plenty of time to have everything done by the end of the financial year. As it worked out, there were last minute changes, taking spending up to the very last minute of the last day.
- **Information** – The project manager brings together all the information throughout the project and shares it with the team.
- **Equipment and Materials** – This is what caused challenges to our project. We could not purchase from the preferred provider, we sought permission to buy elsewhere. When it was all sorted, a partner changed the materials specification.
- **Services** – Had our project been in non-SBC buildings, we would have had to consider availability and cost of services such as electricity and water.

Part D – Planning Projects

Introduction

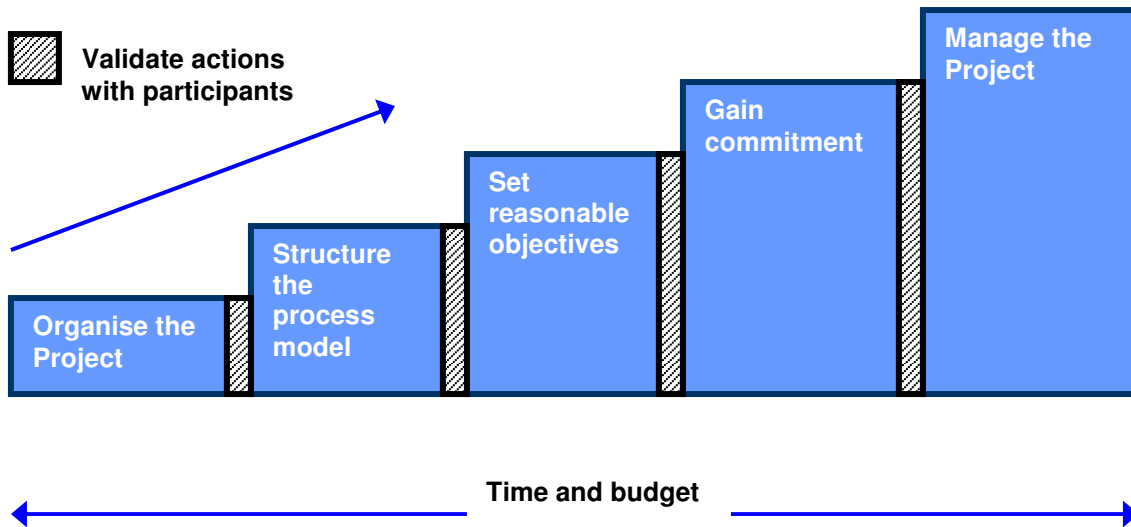
Earlier in this report (Part A) I considered the reasons why some projects fail. Better planning would have helped my project. In order to plan better I could have used tried and tested project methodologies.

Project Methodologies

Project methodology is defined by www.nao.org.uk as ‘A methodology represents a package of practical ideas and proven practices for a given area of activity, such as the planning, design development or management of IT based systems’.

The self-study guide suggests Prince and Prince 2 as examples of tried and tested project methodologies. The guide also suggests 5 steps to project success.

5 steps to success



For this project we chose to use the above simple stepped methodology. This was because it is easy for everyone at all levels of experience to understand and it used simple common language, which is helpful when working in a multi agency environment. Had the project been more complex it would have been better to use Prince 2, as this breaks the project into more manageable chunks or stages allowing for easier planning of resource needs- as and when they are needed. I was also aware that there was not anyone in the team available who was trained on Prince 2.

Planning Tools

It is good to be familiar with a few different planning tools. The self-study guide suggests the most commonly used.

- **Work breakdown structure** – This method breaks the project down into distinct chunks. Applying this to my project, it would be broken down as follows.

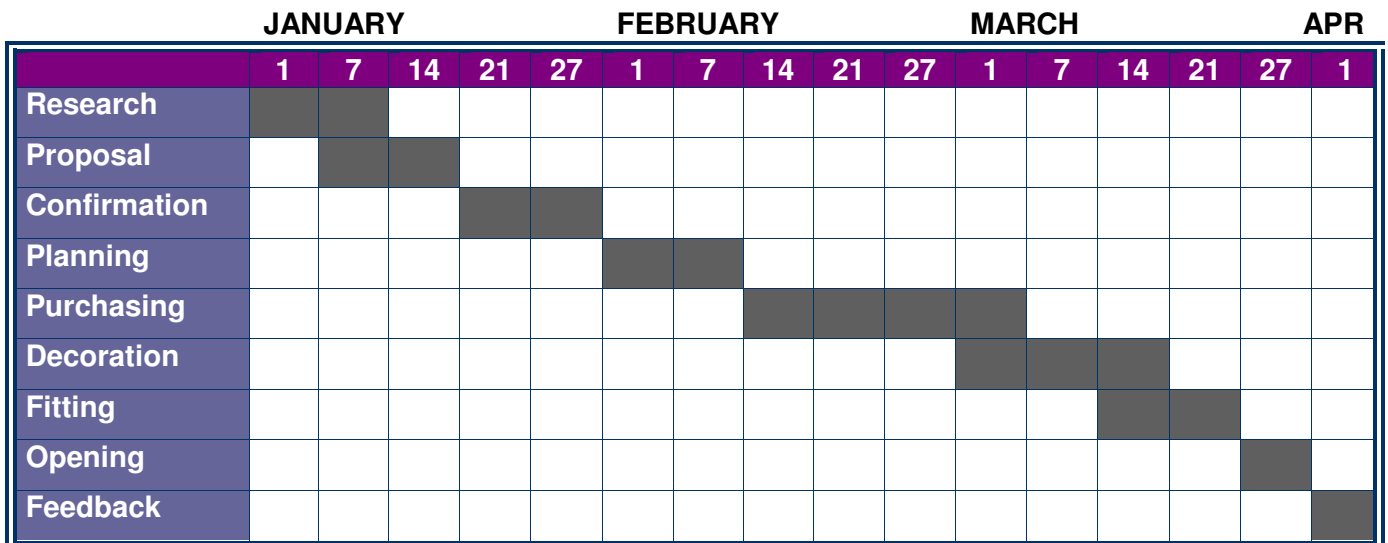
LEVEL 1	Decide what is needed for the refurbishment of the meeting area – Coffee bar.
LEVEL 2	Put together a purchase list.
LEVEL 3	Purchase equipment and services.
LEVEL 4	Install and test equipment.
LEVEL 5	Invite all participants, stakeholders and meet some users in new Coffee bar.

Using the WBS helps with delegation and accountability. Once the tasks are clear then each level can have further WBS charts giving more detail.

Gantt Charts

This is the commonly used chart in the Yot, it I very easy to make, and easy to understand. Its main purpose is in scheduling as it allows you to see where resources need to be allocated by a specific date. Applying this to my project it would be as follows.

Capital Bid Gantt Chart



Critical Path Analysis (CPA)

This method is also good as a scheduling tool as the list of activities for the project can be related to their dependence on each other for completion e.g. some activities may be run in parallel or may be sequential. I would consider using this on a future project.

Flow Charts

As a visual learner, I like to make and use flowcharts for understanding pathways and procedures, but they are not as useful when trying to determine timelines.

Part E – Monitoring, Controlling and Evaluation

Introduction

As the manager with overall responsibility for the project I will measure the progress against the original agreed plan. If it drifts off course, then I will pull people together to find solutions to bring it back on track. I will have in mind the key elements which are:

TIME: Are we working to schedule (Gantt Chart).
What are the pressure points and risks.

COST: Have we purchased at the best price.
How are we paying for equipment.
Any penalties if we are off course or late.

QUALITY: We have a reputation for high standards.
Have we maintained this standard?

Why Monitor?

It is important that there is a provision for monitoring written into the project plan in the first place. On this project this was not done. As manager I need to be kept aware of progress without interfering and allowing the project manager the trust and space to do the job that they are responsible for.

On completion there should be a report that reviews the project for what went well, what went wrong and what have we learnt, so that we do things differently next time. I have questioned the project team and have their comments attached as **Appendix A**.

As the project is not yet completed the project evaluation has not been completed. When it is, it will compare the outcome with the original plan, look at cost effectiveness and value for money and produce a cost analysis for the whole project.

Stakeholders

The above analysis and monitoring will provide mainly quantitative data. It is important in this project to also look at the outcome from a qualitative view. This is because the project brief was to improve access by young people. The stakeholders in this project have their own expectations which were raised when the project was presented to them.

STAKEHOLDER	OUTCOME
Yot Managers	Increase in performance. Reduction in failed appointments leading to fewer breaches and reduction in offending.
Yot Staff	Higher engagement rate with young people, less time wasted on failed appointments.
Service Users	Better access. Nicer buildings. Treated with more respect. Higher inclination to attend appointments due to improved facilities.
Partners	Able to make use of new facilities for their meetings and activities.

Feedback from the stakeholders is important to ensure we have achieved what we set out to do. This can be verified by analysing compliance rates. (See **Appendix A** - Capital Bid Team Feedback).

Conclusion

- The project specifications were prescribed by the YJB. Whilst offering the temptation of new funding, it was so fixed on its criteria for the bid to be successful that the project had to be written to fit their demands rather than our identified needs. This put the integrity of the project at risk with the stakeholders and contributed to difficulties later in the project when things needed to be changed, but still needed to fit the original bid criteria. [[Selection criteria](#)]
- The project plan was thought through in sufficient detail for it to be approved. This was because it was written onto a SMART template, which was provided. The amount of detail required was enough to win the bid, but not detailed enough to use for managing the project. [[Completeness of business case](#)]
- The project was working to plan until it was announced that the building the project was refurbishing may not be available in the long term. This was unforeseen at the bid stage and led to compromises and last minute changes in the project. [[Allocation of roles & responsibilities, pitfalls](#)]
- The team did well to change the purchasing from fixed equipment to moveable for the Coffee bar. The project team acted quickly to agree a new specification and commence purchasing before the spending deadline. This meant that refurbishment would still go ahead. [[Communication and risk management](#)]
- The project purchasing was on track until one of the partners changed their mind on the use of the Coffee bar. This caused a last minute panic on ordering equipment by the deadline. This resulted in less efficient spending on equipment that was not fully researched for its suitability. [[Completeness of business case](#)]
- It is yet to be seen if the investment will yield the desired outcome. The project is not complete and the possible move to new premises has not been confirmed. Monitoring and review of the success criteria is yet to take place. [[Success criteria and the needs of the stakeholders met](#)]
- The project has completed its first 2 phases and has almost completed Phase 3 execution. So it looks like we are on track for a successful completion and closure. However, this was not as simple and smooth as we had thought, involving partners (Stakeholder) had complicated the project in unexpected ways. Subsequently the project has not kept to time and there is still work to do beyond the planned end date.

Recommendations

- Consideration is given to every proposed project to determine its ultimate worth for my organisation. Is the time, cost and effort invested in this project worth the expected or predicted outcome?
- More detail needs to go into the project plan at an earlier stage. This is not always easy as on this project there were very short deadlines for submitting bids that precluded thorough planning and stakeholder consultation.
- Staff and Stakeholders are consulted early in the planning of the project.
- Build into the plan detailed timelines using tools such as a Gantt Chart. Include formal review and monitoring (also into the Gantt Chart) and resources for evaluation, final report and stakeholder feedback.
- Consult staff and stakeholders regularly to ensure that everyone is aware of the project specifications and plans to avoid last minute changes or misunderstandings.
- Use a checklist early on in forming the project to ensure easily forgotten but important elements are planned, such as communication and contingency planning.
- Review staff training on project management. The Local Authority recommends the use of PRINCE 2 in project management and will sponsor staff training.

CAPITAL BID TEAM FEEDBACK

I asked members of the Project team to complete a simple feedback questionnaire on how the project had gone - so far. These are their views.

Good Bits

- Meeting regularly (Once a week).
- Young people gaining accreditation for participation in the project.
- Young people having input. Young people having a voice.
- Improving facilities for young people.
- Developing a level of ownership.
- Joint working. Learning about other agencies.
- Personal development in communication skills for staff and young people, also thinking, problem solving and teamwork.

Not so Good Bits

- Being left to do everything because I did not allocate jobs. (Stressed out!)
- Bad planning, ran out of time in the end.
- Getting young people involved. Hard work and long commitment.
- Partners changing plans at the last minute.
- Partners not replacing people off sick.
- Unable to give more time, as still had my day job.



Recommendation for Next Time

- Put more staff in and give dedicated time to the project.
- Get more young people involved, canvas their views earlier.
- Meet more regularly at the planning stage.
- Use timelines in the plan.

CAPITAL BID OVERVIEW

Youth Offending teams have been in existence since 1999-2000. Some are in very old and poorly maintained buildings. This is because Local authorities had to find funding and accommodation for these new teams from existing stock. Subsequently, the Youth Justice Board recognised a need for a cash injection to improve accommodation, but there was not enough to 'share out' and have enough to do anything significant with. The solution was to focus the available funding on improving access by service users (Young people, parents and carers etc).

Youth Offending teams were invited to complete an 'Expression of interest' template to regional managers, within a very short timeframe. These were quickly assessed and full project proposals were requested from those that were successful. (Again within a very short timeframe).

Swindon Yot quickly collaborated with partner organisations to use the money to improve a centrally located building that could be used by all to meet up with young people. It was decided to make a modern Coffee bar with Internet access for young people.

The money received was only about £10,000, but with partnership support for the project, more money was promised to the project by partners.

The project aim was to improve accessibility by service users as this would lead to more attending appointments, less being taken back to Court, more completed community orders and ultimately – less offending or re-offending.

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