

RAIL DELIVER PROGRAMME - LESSONS

Vision

- Vital to invest time in agreeing the vision from the start
- Focus should be on delivery of outcomes ie reducing risk not on process. (Process is or can be the means of delivery but is not an end in itself.)

Governance and leadership

- Role of SRO and Programme Manager vital ie commitment, accessibility
- Dedicated PM helps to ensure 'big picture' view is taken
- SRO and PM are enabled to make decisions as needed
- Board commitment to the overall aims and objectives of the Programme
- Setting example to staff of corporate cross operational/policy working
- Try to ensure that the Programme doesn't get too big and remains focussed on what is critical. Projects need to be kept under review and the Board should not be afraid to close down projects if necessary.

Day to day handling

- Need to keep to programme disciplines ie PIDs, highlight reports, closure reports, implementation plans (as approp.)
- Spend time getting projects properly scoped
- Project managers should be trained but not overwhelmed with project management requirements that are not absolutely necessary*
- Programme Office needed to maintain oversight of progress, monitor spend, and give vital support to PMs who need it
- Monthly PM workshops useful to reinforce messages, build team spirit, identify problems and trouble shoot
- Dedicated drive holding all Programme documentation including PIDs was found to be useful
- Links between projects must be identified early and revisited/reinforced periodically
- Ensure clear reporting lines
- PMs learning 'on the job' is not ideal but may be unavoidable so you need to ensure that there are support systems in place
- MS Project of limited usefulness. We made it available to all PMs and the Programme Office but only some found it a useful tool

Communications

- You can never put enough effort into this
- Getting the messages right will pay dividends
- Do not rely on only one methodology – think innovatively
- You cannot rely on those engaged in projects as a conduit for passing information
- Identify and engage opinion formers (negative and positive)
- Role of senior managers as supporters and enablers vital
- Expose and deal with problems – don't let them fester: celebrate good news and fresh ideas
- Check understanding and don't make assumptions (relevant in both the general and the financial context)

Consultants

- Using the same consultants (Logica CMG) to provide ongoing support for the Programme through to implementation ensured that the same approach was marbled through the Programme, gave structure and focus
- Setting up panel arrangements took time but was time well spent
- Need to overcome reluctance of some staff to make use of consultants
- Need for absolute clarity about what is wanted and why to avoid confusion, ensure that you get the right end result
- Very much horses for courses. Some outputs were excellent, others less so....
- Agree closure date for the work well in advance of year end to minimise difficulties over end of year accounting
- Ensure that communications between the Programme Office, PEFD and BSD on accounting for consultancy spend are open and explicit so that there are no misunderstandings eg at year end.

Programme closure and evaluation

- Start work on thinking through how you are going to evaluate early on (we missed a trick here and have had to work hard to recover the position)
- Ensure that there is clarity about how and who will be responsible for overseeing delivery of the benefits
- Make sure closure reports include implementation plans and recommendations for ownership of any further work
- Plan your exit strategy – loss of key staff at critical moments is difficult to recover from and can place undue pressure on those remaining
- Ensure that there is recognition that further work will be needed, that

the work is adequately resourced and taken into account in future plans

- Don't forget that programme closure is only the end of the beginning!!