Lessons Learned Report

Description and Issue	Commentary	Future Action
Business Case *Was a Business Case formulated at the start of the project?*	The group were unable to find a Business Case (by the current definition) prepared at the start of the project, however financial information is referred to in the documents the group reviewed.	• Formulate a Business Case at the start of the project, informed by public consultation • Identify stakeholders • Set outcomes clearly • Change control application should be rigorously applied • Regular detailed review by appropriate body within the project governance structure
Consultation *Was a full consultation undertaken at the start of the project?*	Stockland undertook various consultations in 2006/7 with Brentwood Borough Council input. It is not clear what the role of the council was in those consultations. There was no independent Brentwood Borough Council public consultation.	• Brentwood Borough Council should consult the public at the start of the project • Inform the Business Case with the outcome of the public consultation • Include a consultation and communication plan within the Business Case
Communication and Engagement *Were regular updates given to stakeholders?*	The timeline showed substantial gaps between decision points and it was not clear which of those were planned and which unforeseen. The economic downturn contributed to gaps in the timeline by bringing development to a halt as with many other development projects across the UK.	• Provide regular updates to all stakeholders • Application of consistent messages • Regular engagement with all sectors of the community • Update key stakeholders of approaches made that have the potential to change the business case (subject to confidentiality)
Financial Modelling *Was a single consistent financial model prepared at the start of the project?*	RPI emerged as a decisive factor leading to the close of the project.	• Single consistent model to be applied for the lifespan of the project • Adaptability and change mechanism should be clear • All changes should be documented
Procurement Process *Was the procurement process clearly identified at the start of the project?*	The initial procurement process was compliant with standing orders. Local authority procurement processes have changed over time.	• The procurement process should be agreed at the very start of the project • Raise awareness of procurement process • Deploy appropriate skill sets
Project Governance *Was project governance adequate?*	Initial project governance was not described. The working group benefitted from cross party membership. Future project governance was described by report to Council in April 2014.	• Establish rules that the project should follow and apply consistently • The Delivery Group should be cross party and ward members should have the opportunity to be involved • Manage the expectations of Councillors through the governance structure
Risk Management *Was the project included on the strategic risk register?*	The project was included on the strategic risk register (RSK/2). Three risks were identified.	• The strategic risk register should include the risk of the failure of the William Hunter Way project

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Consistency *Were there identified lead officers and members throughout the project?*	Senior staff had moved on from Brentwood during the lifespan of the project. The current project manager (from 2013) would have benefitted from complete documentation and an appropriate handover.	• There should be a lead officer and a lead member • There should be a formal documented handover when either the lead officer or lead member changes
Design *Were alternative designs considered at an early stage in the process and was there potential for the design to become outdated?*	The group did not find evidence of alternative design proposals being considered simultaneously. The elongated timescale raised the potential for the design to become outdated.	• Consultation on a range of designs should be considered • Develop awareness of timescales • Manage expectations with regard to the timescale
Negotiation and transparency *Were sensitive negotiations conducted in private?*	Sensitive negotiations must be undertaken in private to protect the negotiating position of the Council	• Consider carefully whether the meetings of the Delivery Group should be webcast on a case by case basis • Public meetings should be welcomed, but it is the responsibility of Councillors to work constructively in public meetings and protect the reputation of the Council
Timescale *Was the timescale realistic?*	Expectations of the timescale may not have been realistic. Gaps in the timeline may not have been understood. The next steps in the project were not clearly identified so it was unclear whether a gap in the timeline was planned or was delayed for reasons outside the Council's control.	• Set a realistic timeline in the Business Case, taking account of the need for governance and planning decisions and contingency for unforeseen circumstances, such as the economy, impacting upon the timeline. • A major planning application would be likely to exceed 13 weeks to approval • Add the project to the corporate programme monitoring report so that expectations can be managed • Ensure decisions are informed by adequate information • Members should be aware that statements about the future remain inherently unreliable however apparently expert their source
Legal Advice *Was adequate legal advice taken?*	The Council benefitted latterly from focused, consistent, specialized, external legal advice as part of the project team.	• The project team should make provision for specialized legal advice as required
Programme Management *Was the project part of an integrated programme of projects?*	The project was not seen as part of a wider programme of projects.	• A programme management approach would permit the shifting of resources to priority areas within the programme • Resources should be prioritized to the delivery of the project
Synchronization with the Local Development Plan *Did the project accord with the Local Development Plan?*	The group noted a planning document which stated that the planning brief accorded with the Replacement Local Plan (Ref 12.32 and TC10 of the Replacement Local Plan, (August 2005). However, the	• The development of the William Hunter Way project should inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan • The preparation of the Local Development Plan should inform the William Hunter Way project

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	group did not come to an agreement that this was necessarily an accurate statement.	
Planning *Was the Planning department engaged as the relevant junctures of the project?*	The progress of the project was dependent on planning considerations. A 2007 planning application was withdrawn. A second planning application was made and approved, two years later in 2009.	• Acknowledge the importance of planning considerations within the Business Case • Ensure the timeline for the project allows sufficient time for planning considerations