

Capital Projects Governance Place Select Committee

Monitoring Officer Evidence

Evidence Summary

Governance Overview

Consideration of the governance principles guiding capital project oversight within the Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

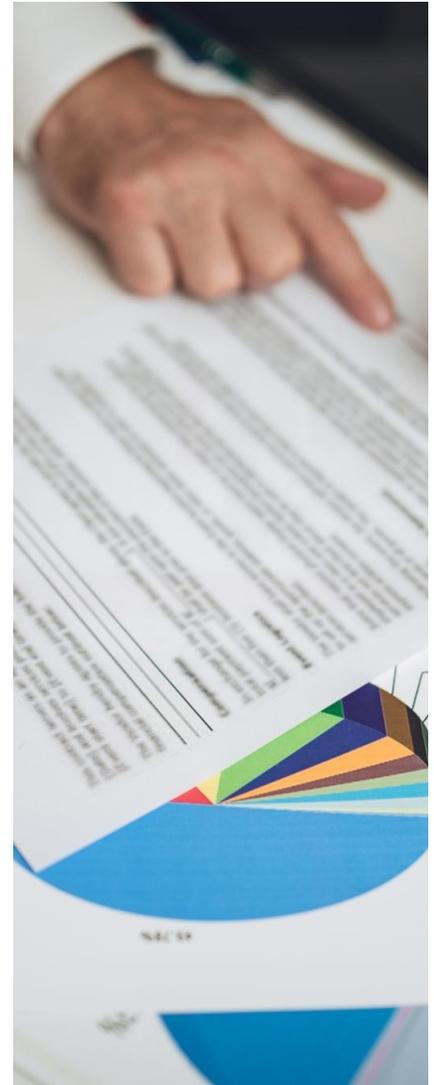
Clarifying legal responsibilities and roles of officers and elected Members in capital project governance.

Transparency and Risk Management

Promoting transparency and clear communication of risks and uncertainties in capital projects.

Continuous Improvement

Supporting democratic oversight and improving governance practices through consistency and strong reporting.



Core Governance

Governance Focus

Good governance prioritises clarity, transparency, and accountability over eliminating all project risks.

Risk and Uncertainty Management

Strong governance identifies, assesses, records, and escalates uncertainties early in projects.

Member Decision Implications

Good governance ensures members understand costs, risks, and impacts on scope and timelines.

Governance Principles

The Council's capital project governance should include structured decisions, early risk visibility, and member-led risk balance.





Why Capital Projects Carry Risk

Inherent Project Risks

Capital projects often involve sites with hidden issues like utilities or structural weaknesses, causing unavoidable risks.

Regulatory and Financial Constraints

Tight funding and changing requirements increase financial and compliance risks for council-led capital projects.

Governance for Risk Management

Robust governance frameworks should anticipate and manage risks through logs, reviews, and transparent change management.

Governance Improvements Implemented

Structured Lifecycle Stages

Formal lifecycle stages include Foundation, Discovery, Design, Delivery, and Review with gateway reviews assessing risks and resources.

Project Initiation Documents

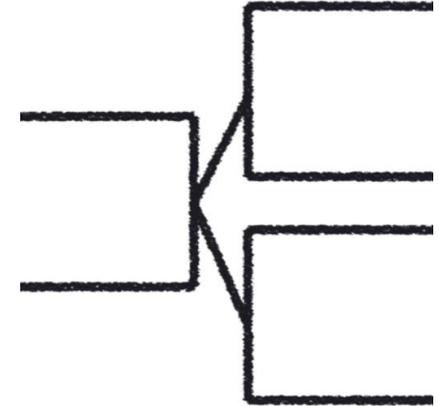
Mandatory PIDs define project scope, objectives, governance roles, constraints, and dependencies at project start.

RAIDL

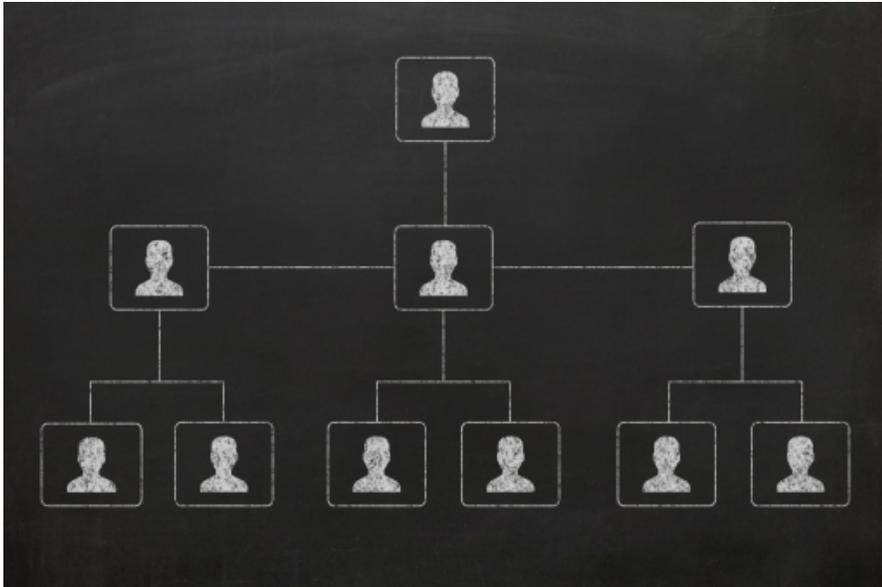
RAIDL logs capture risks, actions, issues, decisions, and lessons consistently across the programme for auditability.

Highlight Dashboards

Dashboards provide a comprehensive view of status, RAG ratings, milestones, and emerging issues for proactive management.



Capital Decision-Making Structure



Project-Level Governance

Projects overseen by a project groups with key functional leads ensuring daily governance and documentation preparation.

Working Groups

Working Groups at directorate level challenge assumptions, review controls, and ensure projects align with strategic priorities.

Placemaking Board Oversight

The PMB oversees programme-level prioritisation and assurance, deciding which projects advance to senior approval boards.

Structured Escalation and Accountability

Governance ensures projects escalate through decision-makers as risks grow, maintaining clear accountability and documented advice.

Member Information and Oversight

Structured Project Information

Members receive formal project details via Cabinet reports covering scope, funding, risks, and decisions. (Full Council for borrowing)

Programme wide Financial Updates

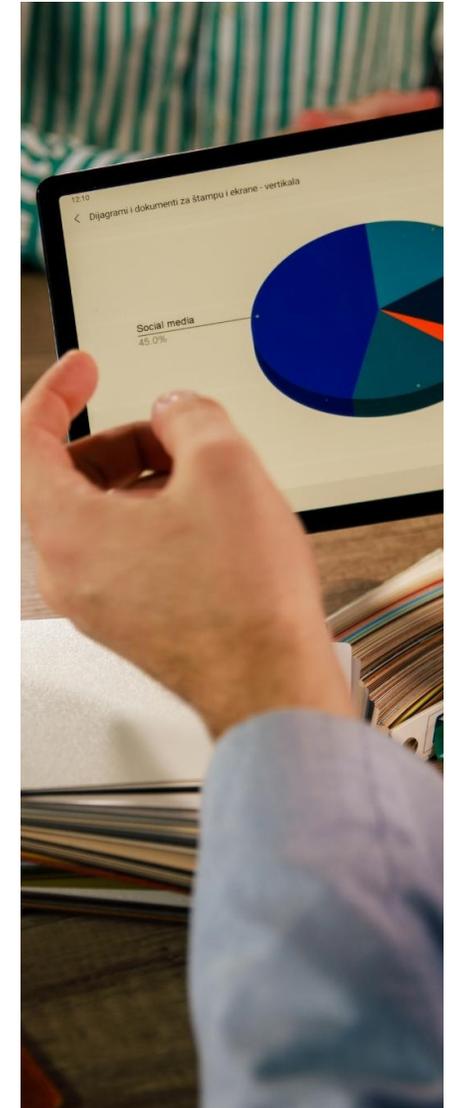
The Medium Term Financial Plan process provides updates linking projects to corporate finances and priorities.

Member Engagement and Visibility

Dashboards, member briefings, cabinet, council and scrutiny plus direct ward member involvement should enhance transparency and local engagement.

Information Access and Development

Members can request more details as needed; ongoing efforts focus on consistent, predictable reporting. Scrutiny members additional rights of access.



Risk Communication and Transparency

Clear Risk Communication

Effective risk communication ensures stakeholders understand evolving project uncertainties and their impact on decision-making.

Importance of Transparency

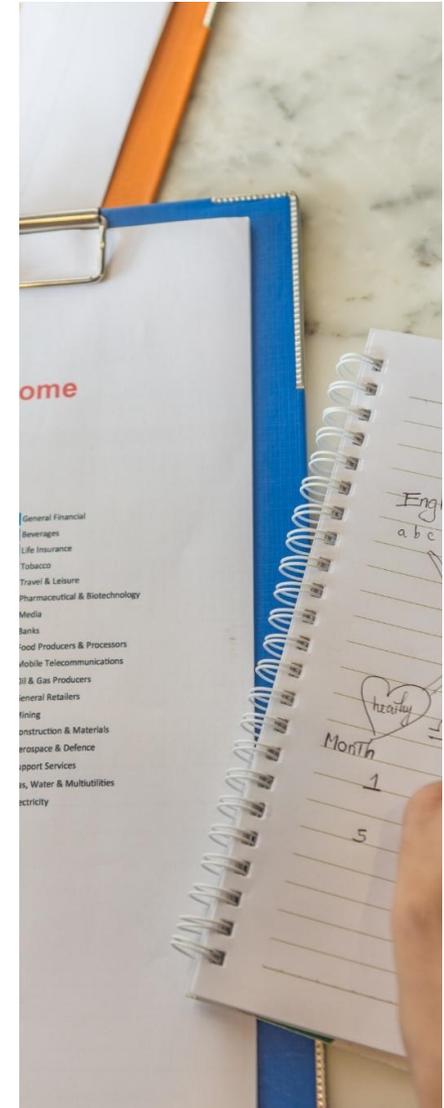
Transparency prevents misconceptions by explaining gradual risk developments and design changes openly to members.

Governance and Reporting Tools

Utilising RAIDL reports, clear risk statements, and gateways helps reassess risks and supports informed governance decisions.

Managing Uncertainty

Governance focuses on honest communication and proportionate escalation rather than perfect prediction amid construction uncertainties.





Commercial Sensitivity and Member Access

Commercial Sensitivity Defined

Commercial sensitivity limits public disclosure to protect negotiating positions and confidential relationships.

Member Access Rights

Elected Members have rights to access necessary sensitive information through secure, confidential channels.

Balancing Transparency and Confidentiality

Transparency ensures accurate decision-making information while respecting legal and commercial confidentiality.

Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement

Capturing Lessons Learned

The Council documents successes, challenges, and risks through closure reports, RAIDL logs, and gateway reviews.

Sharing Organisational Learning

Lessons are shared across directorates via the Placemaking Mission Board to prevent knowledge loss.

Continuous Governance Improvement

Institutionalising lessons learned enhances governance resilience, design management, and stakeholder engagement.

Role of Scrutiny

Effective scrutiny and member oversight drives the improvement cycle in capital projects.



Areas for Ongoing Governance Improvement

Risk Communication Enhancement

Improve clarity and accessibility of risk communication to effectively convey uncertainty to Members.

Consistent Information Flow

Ensure predictable and consistent information sharing across all directorates to support informed decision-making.

Organisational Capacity Building

Invest in specialist project management and commercial expertise to deepen organisational capabilities.

Governance Culture Maturation

Improve governance culture through regular training, reviews, process improvements, and disciplined scope management.



Summing Up

Principles of Good Governance

Good governance ensures transparency, proportionality, and accountability in uncertain environments.

Managing Uncertainty

Uncertainty is normal, but unmanaged uncertainty must be communicated and addressed effectively.

Strong Governance Structures

Robust governance structures, clear audit trails, and member engagement support successful outcomes.

Commitment to Improvement

Ongoing improvement and confidence in governance frameworks promote public value and democracy.

