Coventry City Council

Public report

Report to   **27 April 2005**
SCRUCO

Report of
Director of City Development

Title
MBRT: What Do We Now Do Differently?

1. **Context and Background.**

   Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee over several months has been investigating the circumstances surrounding the asbestos problems encountered at the MBRT necessitating significant extra expenditure by the Council and the lessons that might be learnt in terms of how we manage such work.

   In addition, SCRUCO was concerned about the impact upon the Council of disparate external funding regimes, where often a "cocktail" of funding has to be drawn together to finance the project, and within which the requirement/outputs of the funders of the scheme are different.

   Members have looked at the issues of what do we know about the asbestos in the building, what have we done in past years, what records do we hold, etc (a recent SB review of the whole issue of asbestos management led by Councillor Arrowsmith has directed a change in how officers manage the whole asbestos situation).

   Members were also concerned to ensure that whatever lessons could be learnt from the problems at the MBRT should be so identified. As a consequence SCRUCO has asked that officers identify what changes have been made in overall project management arrangements as a result of the MBRT experience and what we have learnt on other projects.

2. **How we have changed how we operate in management of major projects.**

   Listed below (in summary) are six key changes that we have adopted as a consequence of the learning experience of the MBRT and other major projects: -

   1. Clarity about project lead, project manager, project management processes, etc. In the original MBRT project we had different projects happening at the same time in the building led by different people using different contractors. For the MBRT work now, we have one client and one project manager who oversees the whole project with a project team involving all relevant people that meets on a regular basis.

      On a wider basis the Council has now adopted a more robust project management process under the "project toolkit". This process involves early clarification, business

planning, sign-up, leadership and responsibility, etc, for projects, as well as a more formalised project management process.

The ownership of the Corporate Programme and Project Management Toolkit now sits with the recently established Programme Office. The Programme Office aims to improve project management skills and capabilities, ensure best practice programme and project governance arrangements, support the alignment of initiatives with corporate objectives and support corporate decision making.

It is important to emphasise to Members that notwithstanding how well a project is managed, and regardless of the level of contingency provided, there invariably will always be issues arise where the client, project manager and contractor have to change what they were originally intending to do, and/or the extent, standards or costs of projects vary for bona fide reasons.

2. Ensuring all key funders meet together and endorse the totality of the project (where they are providing individual funding streams) and just as importantly, all meet together when key issues have to be resolved to ensure that there is unanimity of purpose.

   In recent months this is evident in the approach we have taken in managing the Belgrade and Herbert Art Gallery schemes. We have sought continued "sign up" of the major funders to the issues we have to respond to and any changes we have to make, and in addition have sought to use the key funders meeting to ensure that collectively we were meeting the outputs required by the individual grant streams.

3. Risk Awareness and Risk Management. The new project management process gives greater focus upon proactive and productive risk management (examples are monthly reports from all project managers on risks within the Arena scheme and how they are being addressed, and specific focus upon identifying and addressing risk in areas that we have had problems in the past) A recent example was the risk assessment session facilitated by members of the Risk Management & Insurance team & lead by an external risk consultant affiliated to the Council's liability insurers on the recommissioning of the Memorial Park Water Feature). Major projects whose failure might have corporate repercussions are also included on the Corporate Risk Register which is monitored quarterly by the Risk Management Group & twice a year by Management Board & Cabinet.

4. Asbestos survey, assessment and management. We are working on an overall asbestos register for all our buildings and management plans for individual buildings (arising from the proposals of the recent review led by Councillor Arrowsmith). We also have a more regular engagement with the Health & Safety Executive to ensure they know how we are dealing with such issues. Members will be aware there is still a situation where a "non-destructive" level 2 survey seeks to identify asbestos and whether it needs to be dealt with or not, but the "destructive" level 3 survey invariably requires action to be taken on whatever is found. As a result of the SB review of asbestos management, clearer ground rules now exist in terms of what we have to do on Council buildings in terms of the whole identification, risk appraisal and then management of asbestos.

5. Project Champions. We now have 2 Project Champions to manage and direct the complex high profile projects (eg, Swanswell, Canley Regeneration, etc). This new senior level resource to lead such projects didn't exist in the past.

6. Member Advisory Panels for key projects (eg, Arena, Swanswell, and other big projects as necessary). We have introduced Member Advisory Panels to keep Members updated on important and complex projects, and seek any guidance/direction as required.

List of background papers

Proper officer:

Author: Telephone 024 7683 1200
John McGuigan, Director of City Development, City Development
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:

Papers open to Public Inspection
Description of paper   **Location**
None