Leeds City Council Policy on the Governance of its Business Change Programmes and Projects

Aim of the Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out clear and consistent governance arrangements for the management of the Council's programmes and projects in order to ensure its business change - and related investment - is fully aligned with strategic priorities and has an increased likelihood of success.

Scope

2. The Council believes that recognised project management techniques should be applied to all Council projects, proportionate to their impact and risk. However, the primary focus of this policy is on those 'major projects', which for reasons of criticality to Council priorities or the risk posed to the achievement of its objectives, require the application of robust governance arrangements, formal project management techniques and independent assurance to mitigate project risks.

3. The following concepts are the key building blocks upon which this policy is based:

   ❑ The *Business Change Portfolio* represents the totality of the Council's programmes and major projects and provides the complete picture of resources committed to deliver strategic objectives.

   ❑ A *Programme* is a group of individual but related projects which are selected, planned and managed together in order to achieve a defined and common strategic objective or outcome.

   ❑ A *Project* is a unique process, consisting of a set of co-ordinated and controlled activities with start and finish dates, undertaken to meet an objective conforming to specific requirements, including constraints of time, cost and resources.

Description of the Policy

4. The Council operates a *portfolio management* approach to its corporate business change agenda in which all *projects* contributing to the achievement of Corporate Plan priorities are organised into individual, discrete *programmes* of work and these collectively constitute the portfolio.

5. To optimise the successful delivery of the Council's overall corporate priorities, the *Business Change Portfolio* is co-ordinated as a corporate, strategic level process to allow:

   ❑ consistent standards for programme and project management to be set across the authority and the Council to comply with national good practice;

   ❑ rigorous and proportionate governance arrangements to be developed so that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood;

   ❑ adequate management information to be created in order for priorities for investment to be identified, optimal combination of programmes and projects within the portfolio to be determined, and resources to be more clearly directed or re-allocated towards priorities;

❑ review overall progress of programmes and projects against anticipated targets, outcomes and benefits and receive due warning of underperforming projects;

6. To underpin this corporate approach, the Council will:

❑ maintain a single, *mandatory* corporate approach to the management of its portfolio, programmes and projects. Individual services may supplement the corporate approach to take account of their specific needs, but the corporate approach retains primacy over these in order to ensure overall conformity;

❑ maintain clear, comprehensive, and rigorous governance arrangements - linked to decision-making powers laid down in the Constitution – which set-out:

- the key stages for evaluating, reviewing and approving projects and programmes from inception to closure;

- the responsibility for making relevant decisions;

- the considerations which should be taken account of at key stages;

- the standard documentation to be used;

- how to assess the significance of a project and the rigour which needs to be applied in terms of governance arrangements;

❑ agree an organising principle for the grouping of related projects into defined outcome-based programmes to allow the approach to be adaptable and responsive to evolving needs;

❑ provide training, awareness-raising and professional development necessary to provide management, programme/project boards and project staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and qualifications to undertake the roles assigned to them;

❑ maintain systems to provide management information on the overall Business Change Portfolio together with details on the performance and status of the constituent programmes and projects;

❑ ensure that there is adequate independent *assurance* for all major business change projects, where the potential risk and impact of an unsuccessful delivery has been deemed to be significant.

Roles and Responsibilities under the Policy

Executive Board

7. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Council has effective business change arrangements lies with the Executive Board which approves the Policy.

8. Executive Board should provide appropriate challenge to ensure that all major business change proposals coming before it comply with the requirements of this Policy.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

9. The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing the adequacy of the Council's governance arrangements and robust programme and project management arrangements are an important component in ensuring the Council complies with its statutory and regulatory obligations. Corporate Governance and Audit Committee receives an annual assurance report from officers maintaining the corporate approach.

Corporate Leadership Team

10. Members of the Corporate Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place at a corporate level for reviewing the overall composition and performance of the Council's Business Change Portfolio and providing advice to the relevant decision-makers on how resources should be (re-)allocated and prioritised.

11. CMT should provide appropriate challenge to ensure that all major business change proposals coming before it comply with the requirements of this Policy.

Directors / Chief Officers

12. Directors, Chief Officers and other authorised officers take decisions relating to specific programmes and projects in accordance with the Officer Delegation Scheme.

13. Directors and Chief Officers should ensure that programmes and projects being undertaken within their departments adopt the processes and governance arrangements laid down in the Corporate Project Management Framework.

14. Relevant authorised officers should provide appropriate challenge to ensure that all major business change proposals coming before them comply with the requirements of this Policy.