

Learning outcomes from the Shrewsbury Project.

Programme Management

1. Senior management commitment and support - The Sponsoring Group ensured that the appropriate level of advice, guidance and support was given to the programme.
2. The use of programme management enabled a clear definition from the outset as to the scope of activities to be delivered. It ensured the co-ordination of projects and activities, their inter-dependencies, early visibility of potential issues and their potential impact across all areas of the programme.
3. The Programme Manager role ensured that a strategic overview of all projects, reviews and activities was maintained throughout the life cycle of the programme.
4. A view at the outset that all activities could be managed under a construction project meant a delay in the commencement of the programme. Earlier use of Programme Management would have ensured more credence being paid to the feasibility study.
5. The involvement of the right people, with the right level of skills, acting as a central support team, was a key factor in the successful delivery of the programme. The tracking of risks and issues, providing project support, HR advice and guidance, change control and tracking documentation ensured adequate control throughout the programme lifecycle. The central team provided the support infrastructure that a programme of this scale requires in order to effectively deliver all programme activities.

General IT Project/C&C Lift and Shift

1. Flexibility of key suppliers to address issues at short notice and a clear understanding of the Service's needs e.g. Integral/Stoneleigh. Good relationships with both suppliers enabled the Service to call on them at short notice to undertake key pieces of work that kept the programme on track.
2. Uncertainty surrounding the future of Fire Control meant that less time was given to the Control Room design and layout e.g. Use of raised floors for Cable management, lighting needs, etc.
3. Conversely, the design of the data store has ensured a better utilisation of the available space. Good cable management through raised flooring has ensured more effective day to day operation.
4. Lack of inter-departmental dialogue regarding IT/Communication responsibilities at original specification stage caused confusion during implementation.
5. The new building fabric doesn't work well with communications coverage.
6. Lack of clear definition at the outset as to where technical responsibilities sat regarding C&C lift and shift.
7. Opportunity for a clean slate regarding the rebuild of a new IT network infrastructure. This has allowed for build against industry standards and consolidation of servers from 30 down to 3.

Temporary Working Arrangements/HQ Project

1. Open and Transparent Communication - A great deal of effort has gone into ensuring that communication has been consistent, regular, detailed, open to challenge and transparent. All tiers of the organisation have been allowed their 'voice' and the feedback received has been predominantly constructive.
2. Communicating Responsibilities - The Temporary Working Arrangements Project threw up a number of issues relating to de-clutter and areas of responsibility for such tasks. The Project team made a conscious effort to repeatedly target this work with each department to avoid such shortfalls during the HQ Move Project. Teams were advised how, why, where, when and with what support they could deliver this aspect of the transition phase. This, combined with continued reminders to teams regarding personal and team responsibilities, resulted in a hugely improved process second time around.
3. Poor Communication – Conversely, on the occasions when things didn't quite go according to plan, it was predominately due to a communications break down from other projects and stakeholders within the programme.
4. Managing Staff Expectations - Managing staff expectations has been a challenging feature of this whole process. Understanding that individuals may have differences of opinion, perceptions and sensitivities has meant that the project team have learned to deal with teams and individuals in a balanced and structured manner.
5. Project Management Structure - The project approach has been consistent, but on occasions it has been necessary to work outside laid down roles and responsibilities. The flexibility and attitude of staff has meant that unplanned issues/events have also been dealt with.

Design and Construction Projects

Design and Procurement Project

1. Insufficient control over the consultation process/challenging of departmental requests - Consequently this resulted in a building that was much larger than the feasibility study had originally indicated. The extension was twice the size than originally planned. The feasibility study was comprehensive, however standards on space allocation were ignored.
2. Insufficient contingency time in the Project - Levels of surveys on the existing Fire Station building were not sufficient to advise the Service of the true extent of the work needed. This resulted in the complete redesign of the ventilation and structure once strip out had been completed. Conversely, it would have been impossible to have carried out the level of survey needed whilst the building was still occupied, and to delay the survey until the building was empty would have lengthened the project time. As the Service had chosen not to carry out the full depth of surveys, additional time should have been built into the project for unforeseen problems once the strip out had been completed.
3. The use of the Telford and Wrekin framework for the contractors worked well.
4. Paul North (Telford and Wrekin Council), acting as the Client's Agent, provided technical support, management, help with contractual and legal matters. This allowed the Service to concentrate on its needs as a client.

Construction Project

1. Both the flexibility of the builders and the Service, helped with the smooth running of the project - Paveaways were allowed to start the extension early which meant less periods of inactivity for them and ultimately saved the Service money.

2. Good onsite relationship between builder and the Service - Paveaways had a good appreciation of the Service's business through frequent discussions. This had been a learning point on previous build projects at smaller stations and incorporated into the Shrewsbury build as a result.
3. Weekly updates from the builder passed on to the staff - This helped with the staff's understanding of the disruption.
4. Joint communication with the neighbours – This gave the opportunity for them to express their opinion and be made aware of what was happening.
5. Better documentation of IT structures in the future would ensure resilience - The decision to go ahead with the piling was based upon a lack of information or wrong information. This led to the Service having to invoke the disaster recovery and contingency planning process
6. Consult directly with the Conservation Officer - At a pre-meeting with the planning dept, the Service and Architects we were told that conservation would not be an issue. Unfortunately, this was not the case and direct consultation with the Conservation Officer would have alerted the Service to any issues at an earlier date.
7. A greater awareness or appreciation of the turmoil at Shropshire County at the time of applying for planning may have led to a different approach.