

# Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Corporate Management Issues

30 July 2004



## Training and Development: Project Planning

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### Report of Head of Overview and Scrutiny

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Sub-Committee about a training course provided for Scrutiny Members in relation to project planning.

#### Background

2. As part of the development of the Scrutiny role, a training course was organised on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2004 to seek to improve project management skills. Project management had been identified as a significant issue by more than ten members as part of their own personal development plans. In line with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Training Assessment Group, to seek to provide the most cost-effective training for Members a specific course for Durham County Council Members was arranged.
3. Elliott Patterson had provided project management courses for County Council officers and he was asked to design and deliver a course for County Council Members. This was the first course of its type that he had delivered in relation to Scrutiny. To an extent, it was a learning experience for him just as much as for the Members attending.
4. Thirteen Councillors attended a full morning training course. The course was divided into two parts. Firstly, a practical exercise and some theoretical advice about project planning. The second part provided the opportunity to put this theory into practice by looking at a future Scrutiny project.
5. The practical exercise, which was approached in teams, was a device to seek to demonstrate the pitfalls of lack of clear planning for a project.
6. Elliott Patterson explained the four main stages of project planning – feasibility, planning, implementation and maintenance and evaluation. These stages were relevant for a Scrutiny investigation.
7. He also explained the decision triangle which demonstrated the balance between results, resources and costs. Some information was also provided about Critical Path Analysis and network diagrams.
8. The second part of the session involved considering the Fear of Crime project to be undertaken by the Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

9. This will be quite a complex project and it did provide a challenge for the three working groups who were asked to explain how they would tackle the project management of such a topic.
10. Whilst each of the groups approached the project in a slightly different way, there were a number of common themes. The ideas from the working groups are set out on the attached appendix. This will provide assistance to the working group which will be looking at this issue.

### **Evaluation of the Session**

11. The aim was to deliver the training in one morning session. Elliott Patterson did indicate that this was ambitious. He would have preferred a much longer course. Indeed, the course for officers is two days. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the pressure on Members' time, it was considered to be more appropriate to deliver the course on an intensive basis.
12. The main purpose of the course was to seek to heighten awareness about the importance of project planning in Scrutiny investigations. Good project planning can make the best use of the limited resources available to investigate topics. The course was a good start and did raise a number of important issues for consideration.
13. Bearing in mind the time constraint and the number of Members who received training, there were benefits derived from this course. Some of the benefits will need to be assessed in considering the way in which future projects are tackled. It is hoped that the planning exercise in relation to the Fear of Crime project will also provide a clearer route for this complex topic.
14. On the deficit side, perhaps the Fear of Crime project was an ambitious one to treat as a case study. Also in the time available, only broad issues could be considered. These issues need to be considered carefully if any further training were to be provided about project planning and management,
15. Any views from Members who attended this course would be welcome

### **Recommendations**

16. You are recommended to note this information.

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FEAR OF CRIME – SUGGESTIONS FROM THE TRAINING SESSION – 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2004

| FEASIBILITY   | PLANNING  | IMPLEMENTATION  | EVALUATION   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Where should we start?<br/>                     Is there a problem?<br/>                     Why do we need to do this?<br/>                     Vision required</p> | <p>Planning process<br/>                     Why is there a fear of crime?<br/>                     Definition<br/>                     Countywide?<br/>                     Sub-Groups?<br/>                     Communication?<br/>                     Perceptions to be addressed<br/>                     Good news stories<br/>                     Society issues – small estates, isolation</p> | <p>Evidence<br/>                     Check data<br/>                     Best Practice<br/>                     Noise, violence, nuisance, burglary<br/>                     Different areas, different fear<br/>                     Multi agency<br/>                     Tackle specific issues<br/>                     Random sample<br/>                     Co-ordinate, liaison and leadership<br/>                     Use community safety report<br/>                     Complaints to be researched<br/>                     Hotspots considered<br/>                     Practical solutions required<br/>                     Different solutions in different areas<br/>                     Older people’s views<br/>                     Younger people’s views<br/>                     Site visits<br/>                     Consult the public, schools, police<br/>                     Seek best practice<br/>                     Further surveys?<br/>                     Value of anecdotes</p> | <p>Interpret results<br/>                     Positive action, responsibility,<br/>                     Measure success<br/>                     Quality of life issues<br/>                     Smart recommendations</p> |

TIME ESTIMATES,

RESOURCES,

COST,

OUTCOME,

PROFESSIONAL HELP

