

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Achieve Effective Project Governance with pmPoint and SharePoint

The Challenge:

The NCC Programme Management functions oversee a number of programmes and projects across the Council. It is important for effective governance that senior management and key stakeholders have access to programme and project information via a single source.

There is a fundamental requirement to improve the effectiveness of programme and project performance reporting whilst down-scaling the level of overhead required to manually collate and produce reports for management information.

The 'Project/Portfolio Management Solution' project was a discrete project designed to commence the process of building and cementing commonality across NCC Programme management functions without impacting any strategic vision. By implementing a shared project management solution grounded in the PRINCE2 project management approach, all programme/project management functions would work off a common MS platform and benefit from a comprehensive management and performance reporting solution.

NCC IT and change projects are managed and delivered within programmes rather than as disparate projects throughout the organization. In aggregate the change programme will transform how the Council's services are delivered, reducing unit costs and so continually delivering increased value for money. This requires significant changes to business processes, systems, organization, premises, etc. - not just making a series of incremental adjustments to the existing organizational model. The magnitude of the change demands a rigorous approach to programme management, helping to mitigate risks and add pace to the delivery.

Following an internal review it was proposed that SharePoint solutions should be assessed against the requirements for a project portfolio management solution, the Project team would develop business and technical requirements and design and implement a central portal for all NCC programmes and projects.

The Solution:

BrightWork pmPoint has been deployed gradually within NCC for use by existing PMOs and Project Managers. An initial license purchase of 100 user licenses was made with an intention to expand this to an organizational license once fully rolled out to the Council. The main use is currently with the Project Managers and Management Team within IT and is being used in 3 distinctive ways:

1. The most basic form of use is as a central location for sharing relevant project documentation; this is recommended for existing projects whilst Project Managers are familiarizing themselves with the functionality available within the solution.

2. Through the use of tailored reporting functions to offer summary views and reports to the Management team and publicise progress on specified tasks/work lists.
3. The most comprehensive use is when Projects are managed entirely within the solution through the use of customized lists. Main lists in use include those for monitoring and managing risks and issues, changes and scheduling etc, along with tracking of IT work package progress with all IT teams and all documentation is shared using versioning and check out tracking. this is recommended for all new NCC IT projects

Additional instances of the solution have been made available to the Change Programme team and to the ERP team who are currently in the process of learning the new system.

The use of BrightWork pmPoint on SharePoint 2007 has been declared the corporate standard toolkit for managing NCC projects from April 2009.

Benefits and Supporting Metrics

A library of standardized project reporting templates that enables data to be extracted and populated within in one common format, which fits with the data structure of the proposed project management system.

All Council (IT & Business change) programmes and projects to be consolidated into a central portal, accessible by project members and stakeholders.

An integrated project management system enabling the Council's change functions to effectively consolidate project performance reporting and aggregate Programme level reports and plans.

About Northamptonshire County Council:

Northamptonshire is a large rural county in the United Kingdom with a population of 630,000. Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is a traditional 2 tier shire authority, which means that it is responsible for Education, Social Services, Highways and the like but does not have responsibility for Bins, Housing, Revenue and Benefits which are covered by the district and borough councils. The Authority employs 18,000 staff. For more information visit: <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk>