

Uttlesford District Council

Local Plan

Project Initiation Document

Approved by Cabinet 20th October 2020



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1. Purpose of the Document

- 1.1 This Project Initiation Document (PID) defines the Local Plan project. It sets out the aims of the project, why it should go ahead, who is involved and their responsibilities. This PID provides the basis for the management of the project and, ultimately, a base to assess its success.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that local planning authorities produce a local development plan for their area. The National Planning Policy Framework states:

“The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings”
(paragraph 15)

- 2.2 The Uttlesford Local Plan is the statutory means to fulfil these requirements. The Local Plan will also help deliver the priorities set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan and will, as part of the ‘Development Plan’ be the basis of determining future planning applications and appeals.
- 2.3 The current local plan dates from 2005. A replacement plan was submitted for examination but subsequently withdrawn in May 2020 in the light of the examining Inspectors’ comments on the soundness of the plan. At the same time the Council resolved to commence a new local plan the subject of this PID (Appendix A attached).

Business Case

- 2.4 The Council is required to produce a Local Plan by statute. Failure to do so would result in the Council not meeting its statutory obligations. Such failure would expose the District to risks of speculative planning applications and costs through defending planning appeals. This is already a potential risk. Further, in the absence of a Local Plan, the Council will perform poorly against national performance indicators and be at risk from Government intervention.

Government Proposals

- 2.5 In August 2020 the Government published a White Paper ‘Planning for the Future’ for consultation, which would, if enacted next year, as the Government intends, have a very significant effect on the process, content and timetable of local plans. The Council will also make representations on the consultation White Paper proposals to Government in the interests of the District as a whole. As far as possible the Council will approach this project in a manner which is flexible to allow for potential changes to legislation and guidance and avoid wasted resources. Changes to the PID will be brought forward as appropriate.

3. Project Definition

3.1 The Local Plan relates to the whole of the district and will cover the period up to 2040 and beyond.

Project Objectives

3.2 The objectives of the project are to deliver an up to date Local Plan which:

- Meets the Council's corporate vision and objectives for the Plan;
- Meets the district's identified needs in terms of new housing, employment and commerce;
- Delivers the associated infrastructure as and when required;
- Is evidence based; and
- Is sound.

Project Scope

3.3 The local plan will include:

- Strategic policies setting out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, with a view to securing a net zero carbon future, addressing climate resilience, promoting healthy places and lives principles, and the wider environmental objectives of the Council;
- make sufficient provision for a number of key land uses housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure, community facilities and other commercial development,
- infrastructure for transport and other key utilities,
- policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure, and
- a comprehensive and up to date evidence base to support the local plan provisions.

3.4 Securing formal agreements and successful funding bids to:

- Ensure that developers and site promoters provide the required infrastructure and community provision in a timely manner and to specifications required to meet the Council's objectives; and
- Support the provisions of the local plan.

3.5 A comprehensive strategy and programme of engagement with residents and stakeholders in line with an updated Statement of Community Involvement.

Out of Scope

3.6 The project will not include:

- Detailed explanation of how policies will be implemented. If further guidance is necessary then this will be provided in supplementary planning guidance;
- Good practice guides. If necessary, these will be prepared separately.

Project Deliverables

3.7 The Team Manager will be responsible for each deliverable with the Assistant Director for Planning. The Project comprises the following deliverables:

Deliverable 1	
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Programme	
Design and plan engagement activity	
Procure any additional advice systems and train staff	
Implement plan	
Validate work before finalising each deliverable	

Deliverable 2	
Effective Issues and Options Stage	
Design and plan engagement activity over the whole period	
Engage, and continuously review inputs	
Finalise findings at conclusion of stage and take through Governance Process and publish report	

Deliverable 3	
Evidence based for positive planning and place making and spatial strategy	
Design and plan requirements to update and add to evidence	
Undertake and procure update and add evidence	
Review evidence and undertake assessment	
Finalise document and take through Governance process	

Deliverable 4	
Formal Discussions with Promoters prior to any commitments in the Plan	
Design and plan discussions and negotiations in line with 'Rules of Engagement'	
Procure any additional evidence and commence engagement	
Complete engagement, review evidence and undertake assessment	
Finalise Conditional Document and take through Governance Process	

Deliverable 5	
Formal Discussions with Duty to Co-operate Partners and other strategic stakeholders	
Design and plan discussions to include all neighbouring LAs plus statutory consultees	

Procure any additional evidence and commence engagement
Complete engagement, review evidence and undertake assessment
Finalise Discussions and take through Governance Process

Deliverable 6
Publication of Draft Regulation 18 Local Plan
Design and plan engagement activity and preparation of document
Procure any additional evidence including potential call for sites
Complete engagement, review evidence and undertake assessment
Finalise Document and take through Governance Process

Deliverable 7
Publication of Submission Draft Regulation 19 Local Plan
Design and plan engagement activity and preparation of document
Procure any additional evidence and commission any additional staffing
Complete engagement, review evidence and undertake assessment
Finalise Document and take through Governance Process

Deliverable 8
Completion of Public Examination of Submission Local Plan
Design and plan activity and preparation of examination documents
Procure any additional evidence and commission any additional staffing
Complete preparation
Attend Examination and present the Local Plan Case

Deliverable 9
Publication of Final Version of Local Plan for Adoption
Design and plan activity and preparation of document
Procure any additional evidence and complete statutory modification processes
Review evidence and any further submissions then undertake assessment
Finalise Document and take through Governance Process

Constraints

3.8 The project must be undertaken within the constraints of

- Town and Country Planning legislation and National Government policy (especially the National Planning Policy Framework), subject to changes in planning legislation raised in paragraph 2.4 above;
- Sustainability appraisals will inform the process at key stages;
- Resources - time allocation and the availability of the project term members with the appropriate range of skills supplemented by specialist consultants and appropriate budget will be critical;

- any restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic may influence the methodology of community and stakeholder engagement.

Related Projects

3.9 The project has a close association with the following projects and workstreams of the Council:

- Climate Change Strategy
- 2021 Housing Strategy Review
- Future Economic Development Strategy Review

Assumptions

3.10 At the time of Project Initiation the following assumptions have been made (but it is recognised the Government may subsequently alter some of these assumptions):

- Full Community Engagement throughout the lifetime of the project;
- Government commitment to a net zero carbon future requires all new development to be meet high energy standards and existing development to be retrofitted to achieve higher energy standards; and
- Minimum housing numbers to be identified by the Local Housing Needs Assessment conducted using the Standard methodology (subject to recent Government proposals referred to in paragraph 2.4 above).

Project Costs

3.11 The Project costs straddle four financial years and total:

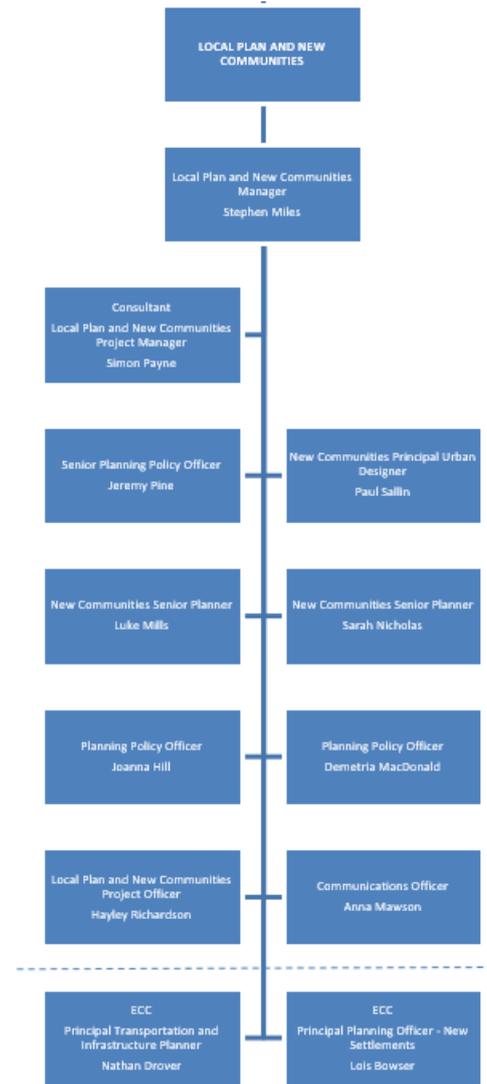
All Planning Policy Staff	£2.98m
Evidence & Consultation	£3.4m
Legal and Examination	£0.45m
Total	£6.83m

3.12 These costs are incorporated into the latest version of the Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council (this includes the receipt of a grant for £750k in 2019/20 from MHCLG for capacity funding). The Project costs above do not make provision for any explicit changes that may arise from changes in the national planning system as it is not possible to anticipate what the specific consequences of those changes may be at this time. It is also important to note that there is the potential to make further bids for external funding to support

the work (for instance a bid has recently been made to Homes England for £240k capacity funding during the current financial year).

Project Organisation Structure

3.13 The local plan will be prepared by the Local Plan and New Communities Team. The Team reports to the Assistant Director Planning and comprises the following posts (it should be noted that not all of these posts are full time working on the local plan and two of these posts are employed by Essex County Council):



3.14 The Team comprises the following posts and main roles:

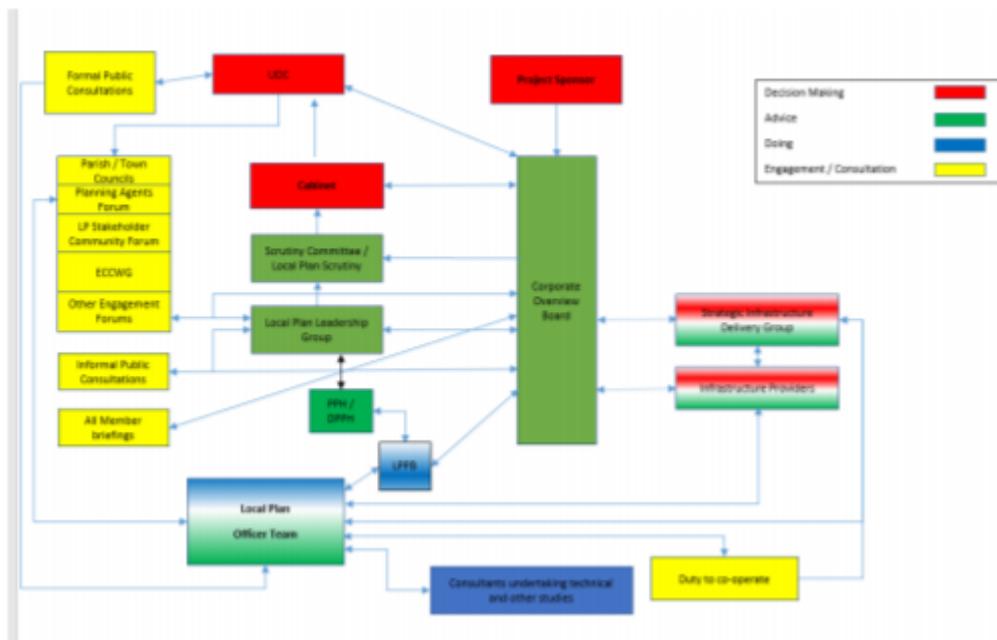
- Team Leader: Leading and managing the team and liaising with elected members
- Project Manager: Project management and funding Bids
- Senior Planning Policy Officer: Policy preparation and aviation related matters
- Principal Urban Designer: Design analysis and visioning and policy preparation

Two Senior Planning Officers: Evidence and policy preparation.
Two Planning Policy Officers: Evidence and policy preparation.
Project Officer: Administration and business management of team
Communications Officer: External and internal communications including social media
Principal Transport and Infrastructure Planner: Transport evidence and policy preparation
Principal Planner Community Infrastructure: Evidence and policy preparation including liaison with key County departments

3.15 A definition of the key individual roles are set out in Appendix D

Project Governance

3.16 The project governance is as follows:



3.17 In summary the roles of these forums and individuals are as follows:

UDC Council: Full Council meetings to approve the submission of the local plan to PINS and to adopt the subsequent local plan following Examination and an Inspector’s findings.

UDC Cabinet: Preparation of the local plan is an executive function and key decisions are made by Cabinet.

Scrutiny Committee: Scrutiny of the plan making process and its delivery.

Local Plan Leadership Group: Cabinet working group to advise on the shape and preparation of the local plan

Corporate Overview Board: Officer Board chaired by the Chief Executive to ensure plan is sound, produced in timely manner and delivers the corporate priorities. In line with good practice reports will normally be considered by the Board prior to consideration by the Local Plan Leadership Group. The Board will support the Project Sponsors; take major officer decisions; keep the project on track; manage risks, ensure accountability; deliver corporate priorities; embed corporate stakeholders and seek external assurance.

Officer Project Sponsor: Chief Executive

Member Project Sponsor: Leader of the Council

Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group: Member Reference group for Cabinet including members from adjacent authorities to consider infrastructure and funding bids.

Community Stakeholder Forum: Independently chaired group to advise on themes and topics including the voluntary and health sectors as well as Youth Council.

PPH and DPPH: This is a forum for informal discussions between officers and the Planning Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder. The purpose of this discussion is ensure co-ordination in the organisation of member and officer meetings and the subject matter of those meetings.

Local Plan Project Board: Officer group, chaired by the Assistant Director, will routinely preparing reports and advise the Corporate Overview Board and may include officers that are not in the Local Plan Officer Team as necessary. The Board will support the Corporate Overview Board; deliver required outputs; advise on all aspects of project processes and deliverables; allocate resources and tasks and monitor the project plan and risk register

- 3.18 In addition to this provision there will be a range of other forums to ensure full and comprehensive engagement with local communities and key stakeholders. Full lists of Duty to Co-operate and Statutory Consultees are set out in Appendices B and C to this document. It is important to note that Essex County Council are a primary stakeholder and partner organisation in preparing the local plan. County Council officers will be part of the Local Plan Officer Team, will routinely attend the Corporate Overview Board, and will take part in all forum meetings as required. In addition a senior county councillor will be a member on the Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group.

Summary Timetable for Key Stages

- 3.19 The proposed timetable overall is:

<p>Preparation of the Local Plan (Regulation 18)</p>	<p>Formally consult on the preferred option draft plan published for a six week period to allow representations to be made.</p>	
<p>Publication (Regulation 19)</p>	<p>After taking into account the representations received on the (Regulation 18) preferred options draft plan, the plan is formally published for a six-week period to allow representations to be made (to be considered during the Independent Examination).</p> <p>Any Addendum to the Regulation 19 plan shall be published for a six week period to allow representations to be made.</p>	
<p>Submission (Regulation 22)</p>	<p>The local plan document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination along with other key supporting documents.</p>	
<p>Examination (Regulation 24)</p>	<p>An examination is held by an independent Inspector. The Inspector will assess the soundness of the Local Plan. Those people who submitted representations at the (Regulation 19) stage are entitled to be heard at the examination.</p> <p>Any main modifications the Inspector considers necessary to make the plan sound would be subject to sustainability appraisal and consultation.</p>	
<p>Publication of Inspector's Recommendations (Regulation 25)</p>	<p>The Local Authority publish the Inspector's recommendations and give notice to all persons who requested to be notified that the recommendations are available.</p>	
<p>Adoption (Regulation 26)</p>	<p>If the Inspector finds the Local Plan sound, the Council will proceed to adopt the Local Plan. This may</p>	

	include modifications recommended by the Inspector.	
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4. Risk Register

- 4.1 A comprehensive risk register has been developed and will be maintained in real time to support Project Management and the Project Plan. It is expected that scores will fluctuate during the project as issues arise and as mitigation measures are applied. The scores for likelihood and impact are each marked out of 5 and then multiplied together for the total score (25 being the maximum score) and then colour coded (above 10 red; 5-10 amber; less than 5 green). A summary of the strategic risks and the mitigation proposed at project initiation is included in Appendix E.

APPENDIX A

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN RESOLUTION

On 30 April 2020 the Full Council made the following resolution that:

- a) Having due regard to the terms of and recommendations contained in the Inspectors' letter dated 10 January 2020, subsequent to the draft Local Plan Post Stage 1 Hearings letter, and having taken and considered independent professional advice thereon, Council confirms its intention to withdraw the draft Local Plan (being that submitted to PINS on 18 January 2019).
- b) Council confirms its commitment positively to prepare and submit a Local Plan that will, for the benefit of the District and its residents and businesses:
 - i. Deliver the corporate plan vision and themes for the District;
 - ii. Provide for sustainable growth to meet its objectively assessed housing and employment needs, utilising and promoting sustainable transport wherever possible, which will combine to contribute towards achieving the Government's net zero carbon emissions 2050 target;
 - iii. Protect and enhance the District's heritage, character and natural capital (including air quality, water resource management and biodiversity); and
 - iv. Ensure the timely delivery of all necessary infrastructure.
- c) Council commits to review, develop and update the evidence base for the Plan to inform its proposals and policies.
- d) The Statement of Community Involvement be reviewed and approved to facilitate and ensure effective public engagement of residents, businesses and town and parish councils.
- e) Council seeks to develop robust and effective strategic partnerships to support plan making through the duty to cooperate and access funding to manage the infrastructure provision required for a viable, deliverable and sound plan
- f) Council is committed to holistically planned new developments which enhance the natural environment, provide timely and necessary physical and social infrastructure, and offer high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities. This will involve implementing the TCPA's Garden City Principles on all applicable developments, regardless of scale.
- g) The Cabinet Member for Planning and the Local Plan shall propose a new governance structure for plan making, to be approved by Full Council.
- h) The Local Development Scheme shall be reviewed and approved, which will demonstrate a commitment to produce a sound Local Plan in a timely manner, having regard also to the Government's 'Planning for the Future' ministerial statement which proposes a deadline of December 2023 for all local authorities to have in place an up-to-date Local Plan

i) Council commits to updating, on a quarterly basis, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government on the progress being made regarding the Local Plan, including slippage in the programme that may be encountered accompanied by full explanations. Before being sent, these updates will be referred to a member group.

Appendix B: Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and other Prescribed Bodies

Prescribed bodies for the purposes of section 33A(1)(c) and 33A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- a. The Environment Agency
- b. Historic England
- c. Natural England
- d. Mayor of London
- e. Civil Aviation Authority
- f. Homes England
- g. Clinical Commissioning Group
- h. Office of Rail Regulation
- i. Transport for London
- j. Each Integrated Transport Authority (not relevant to Uttlesford)
- k. Each highway authority (for Uttlesford namely Highways England, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk County Councils, Manchester Airport Group and Transport for London)
- l. The Marine Management Organisation (not relevant to Uttlesford)
- m. Each local enterprise partnership

Local Planning Authorities relevant to Uttlesford

Braintree District Council
Chelmsford City Council
Epping Forest District Council
Harlow Council
East Herts District Council
North Herts District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
West Suffolk Council

County Councils relevant to Uttlesford

Essex
Hertfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Suffolk

Appendix C: Specific, General and Other Consultees

Specific Consultees	General Consultees
Affinity Water	Cambridgeshire Race Equality & Diversity Service
Anglian Water Services Ltd	Chelmsford Diocese Board of Finance
Braintree District Council	London Gypsies and Travellers Unit
Cadent Gas	National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
Cambridgeshire County Council	National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
Chelmsford City Council	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Colchester Borough Council	Uttlesford Area Access Group
County Broadband Ltd	Dunmow and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce
East Hertfordshire District Council	Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Partnership
Environment Agency	Essex Chambers of Commerce
Epping Forest District Council	LARA (Land Access & Recreation Association)
Essex County Council	Gypsy Council
Gigaclear plc	Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition
Greater London Authority	Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford
Harlow Council	Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership
Hertfordshire County Council	Federation of Small Businesses
Highways England	East Anglian Gypsy Council
Mobile Operators Association	Cambridgeshire Traveller Initiative, Ormiston Children and Family Trust
National Grid	England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance in appropriate list
Natural England	
North Hertfordshire District Council	
Oil Pipeline Agency Ltd	
South Cambridgeshire District Council	
Suffolk County Council	
Thames Water	
Transport East	
West Suffolk Council	
Town and Parish Council in Uttlesford Adjoining Town and Parish Councils in Braintree District Chelmsford City Epping Forest District East Hertfordshire	Government Departments Department for Transport Ministry of Defence Public Health England (East of England)

North Hertfordshire South Cambridgeshire	
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Other Consultees
Active Essex / Active Uttlesford
Age UK Essex
Arriva (Essex and North Kent)
BAA Aerodrome Safeguarding
Basildon Borough Council
British Horse Society
Broxted & District Community Association
Buzzcom
Cambridge Airport International Airport
CAMRA
Chelmer Housing Partnership
Church Commissioners
Circle Anglia
Civil Aviation Authority
Clarion Housing
Clavering Countryside Group
Clavering Landscape History Group
Corona Energy
County Broadband
CPREssex
Dunmow Historical Society
English Rural Housing Association
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Essex Ambulance Service
Essex Bridleways Association
Essex County Councillor Dunmow Division
Essex County Councillor Stansted Division
Essex County Councillor Saffron Walden Division
Essex County Councillor Thaxted Division
Essex County Fire & Rescue Services
Essex Fire and Rescue Service
Essex Gardens Trust
Essex Police
Essex Police Architectural Liaison
Essex Wildlife Trust
Essex Wildlife Trust (Uttlesford Branch)
Federation of Small Businesses
Fibre WiFi Ltd t/a FibreWiFi
Fields in Trust

First Essex Buses Ltd
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Earth - Saffron Walden & District
Garden History Society
GeoEssex
Greenfields Community Housing
Hadstock Society
Hastoe Housing Association
Hatfield Broad Oak Conservation Group
Health and Safety Executive
Home Builders Federation
Homes England
Logistics UK
London Stansted Cambridge Consortium
Manchester Airports Groups (MAG)
Member of Parliament
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
National Grid plc
National Trust
Network Rail
NHS England Midlands and East
NHS North Essex
NHS Property Services Ltd
NHS Strategic Planning Team
North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Assoc
Office of Rail regulation
Open Space Society
Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Ramblers Association
Renewable UK
Road Haulage Association
Royal Mail Group Ltd
RSPB
Rural Community Council of Essex
Saffron Walden and Little Walden Neighbourhood Plan
Sport England
Stage Coach
Stansted Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Stansted Surgery
Stebbing Society
Stop Stansted Expansion

Sustainable Uttlesford
Tenant Forum
Thaxted Traders Guild
Theatres Trust
Transport for London
Uttlesford Badger Group
Uttlesford Futures (Employment, Economy, Skills, Environment and Transport)
West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
Youth Council

APPENDIX D

DEFINITION OF KEY INDIVIDUAL ROLES

1. Project Sponsor (Chief Executive)

- Ultimately accountable for the delivery of the project to Council.
- Key liaison with Leader, Portfolio Holder and Chair Scrutiny
- Agrees budget and resources including corporate input
- Champions project
- Chairs Corporate Overview Board (meeting as required probably monthly)

2 Assistant Director of Planning (Senior Officer on Corporate Management Team)

- Responsible for the delivery of the project objectives and outcomes to CMT
- Provides direction to the Project and develops priority areas and oversees project plan and risk register.
- Co-ordinates corporate and partnership inputs
- Leads engagement with key stakeholders and partners
- Motivates project team to provide timely outputs to quality expectations.

2. Planning Policy Manager

- Day to day management of project team and resources
- Briefs and liaises with key suppliers
- Ensures project plan and risk register are complied with

4. Project Plan Manager

- Maintains project plan and risk register
- Prepares bids for external funding

5. Project assurance via external legal, organisational and planning advice