6CsDG

Business Plan 2013/14

Background

Following extensive discussion at the meeting of the Board on the 2 November it was agreed that there was a need to establish a business plan. Point 5b of the Minutes to the meeting outlines the Board's request – 'A Business Plan for Board will be developed by CW and presented to Board for comment. This Plan will include tasks, projects and timeframes.'

Issues to be dealt with

In its discussions at that meeting a number of concerns and requirements in relation to the Business Plan were discussed by the Board which were broadly: -

- A lack of progress on the development and completion of projects related to planning matters including a technical review and SUDs
- The 'Groundhog Day' effect whereby the Board discussed the same matters at meeting after meeting without real progress being made and no means for the Chair to direct the efforts of the Board
- Concerns that for a number of reasons Board members did not have the time to progress matters and as well as concerns that the development of the Guide was being left to one authority's resources
- Concerns that the Guide did not meet the requirements of all of its users
- A desire to align the HTD Guide with the MHA and use this as a means of promotion as well as possible web administrative advantages for the hosting of the document
- Issues in relation to the procurement of services

Concept for dealing with the issues

It is clear that there is a great deal of work to do in developing the Guide in the way that the Board would wish. However in pursuing this it is also evident that it is beyond the resources of the Board itself to carry out the work and that there is a need to have a viable and realistic plan to enable matters to be moved on rather than for ever circling the same matters.

In developing a strategy the various issues identifies above have been taken into account and measures developed to deal with them.

Vision and Business Plan

The attached documentation sets out the overall vision and aims of the Board, the Business Plan to support the pursuance of these and an outline of the necessary structures, actions and timelines.

The vision is '*To develop and promote a Highway Technical Design guide that meets the needs of all of its users enabling developments to be built in line with current national, regional and local standards, advice and guidance*.'

The Vision is developed into a Strategy that is made up of three areas – Development, Promotion and Needs of Users which then leads into the Business Plan outlining the actions required to deal with these.

Sub-Groups

In delivering the aspirations of the Board and in developing the Guide it is necessary to accept that the work required is beyond the resources available within the Board itself and there needs to be an acknowledgement that there is a need for additional resources in order for progress to be made and the timelines established in the Business Plan to be met.

There are two possible options in dealing with this. One requires the procurement of external expertise and there are some advantages in this approach such as the expertise available and the resource hired should not have the issues of dealing with the 'day job' in their work on progressing projects. However the downsides relate to the various issues of procurement that appear to be difficult to resolve for the Board and the fact that the resource is not from within the member authorities leading to a possibility that completed projects do not meet the requirements of the Board. In the longer term there is also the need to consider value for money and the finite budget that is available.

The second option involves recognising that within the member authorities there is already a vast resource of experience and talent that understands the issues related to the Guide and the member authorities. In harnessing this resource by the use of sub-groups there are several distinct advantages including: -

- The work load is spread over a much larger resource base
- Those involved have a much greater sense of ownership of the Guide and a better understanding of the concepts behind it and its aims
- The Board uses its expertise to commission, monitor and review the work of the sub-groups making more effective use of the Board's time and expertise
- By having a greater level of involvement from member authorities there are advantages in succession planning for the Board
- The various procurement issues and financial concerns are minimised although it is possible to bring in external resources and expertise when necessary

At present (March 2013) it is recognised that following the various reduction in staff levels within authorities as a result of budget cuts it is unlikely that the Board members have the available resources to form sub-groups as envisaged from within their own authorities. Whilst the Board has an aspiration that if staffing levels improve in the future then sub-groups could be formed as outlined, at present the only feasible manner in which progress on required projects to improve the HTD can be made is by the use of external resources. This however does not preclude Board members or resources from within their organisations being involved with the external resource and it will be a decision of the Board if such arrangements are made.

It has to be recognised that as with commissioning any project the Board will need to clearly set out the terms of projects to sub-groups or the external resource that is being used with clearly defined parameters and time-lines as well as to undertake the monitoring of the progress being made.

It is envisaged that if Sub-Groups were used they would be permanent in nature unless the project was a specific one off when a temporary Sub-Group would be formed. Membership would be of 6 (one from each member authority) with one acting as the Chair with responsibilities related to the work and progress of the Sub-Group as well as attending and reporting to the main Board meetings as and when necessary. As highlighted earlier if external resources are used then Board members have the option to be part of the project or with the approval of the Board to allocate resources from their own organisations to participate in the work being carried out and it is recognised that it would be prudent to have some Board involvement with external resources.

Projects to be developed

There are a number of projects that require urgent progression: -

- Review of the overall Guide itself in relation to its content, layout and relevance to the target audience
- Review of the technical specifications
- Development of SUDs guidance
- Development of links with the MHA and web-site hosting

Time scales

The key timescales that need to be met are: -

8 March 2013	Acceptance and sign-off by Board of Business Plan
1 May 2013	Initial prioritised list of Projects produced with detailed requirements and time-scales
1 July 2013	External resources/Sub-Groups to be appointed and commissioned – This will lead to additional timelines being developed for specific projects and Sub-Groups
1 October 2013	Initial overall review of Guide complete and reported to Board
1 October 2013	Board carries out first review of work of external resources/Sub-Groups
1 April 2014	Review and rewrite/reformat complete
1 April 2014	Board reviews first year progress on Business Plan

Conclusion

The work of the Board and the development and very future of the Guide is dependent upon the recognition that there is a need to take a more formal, controlled and planned approach. The Business Plan and accompanying documents outline this approach.

Clive Wood

Nottinghamshire County Council

1 March 2013

6CsDG – Vision, Strategy and Business Plan 2013/14

Vision

To develop and promote a Highway Technical Design guide that meets the needs of all of its users enabling developments to be built in line with current national, regional and local standards, advice and guidance.

Strategy

Development

To maintain and develop a system of governance (via the Board) to ensure all legal requirements and responsibilities are adhered to as well as providing the lead in the development and promotion of the Guide.

To ensure that the views and requirements of all members are taken into account in any decision making process.

To make effective and efficient use of the expertise, experience and resources available to the Board from both within its membership and where appropriate from external sources.

To develop opportunities for the involvement of and contribution from within member authorities with a view to developing skills and expertise.

To provide and share accurate, up to date and relevant information and maintain this within the Guide.

To do this using a simple, concise and understandable format.

Promotion

To make it available to local authorities, developers and other interested parties and where appropriate recover any fees that can be charged.

To develop opportunities to promote the use of the Guide within all local authorities.

To use electronic means of distribution where possible.

Needs of users

To actively seek the views and comments of users on the Guide and where appropriate and necessary act upon these.

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Development To maintain and develop a system of governance (via the Board) to ensure all legal requirements and responsibilities are adhered to as well as providing the lead in the development and promotion of the Guide. To ensure that the views and requirements of all members are taken into account in any decision making process.					
Key Action(s)	**How will it be achieved?**	**Expected Outcome**	**Completion Date**	**Delivery Lead**	**Completed**
Ensure that representation on Board is maintained by members.	All members to ensure that they have suitable representation on the Board and attend all meetings as required.	Board is representative of its members.	On going	Chair plus members	
Ensure that the Board operates professionally and acts within its Terms of Reference ensuring that all legal requirements and responsibilities are adhered to.	All members are to act with professionalism and in the interests both of the authorities they represent as well as the Board itself. Where necessary legal advice will be sought and acted upon to ensure any actions or decisions taken by the Board are legal.	Board operates within TOR and ensures that there are no aspects of its actions that are illegal.	On going	Chair plus members	
Ensure that Board provides a lead in determining the development of the Guide	There are a number of outstanding issues in relation to development guidance and specifications that need to be dealt with as well as other areas that will need to be addressed in the future. The role of the Board will be to agree the priorities of these, where resources may be drawn from to complete the necessary work, commission the resources and have overall responsibility for ensuring the accountability of those commissioned and the review of their progress as well as final acceptance of recommendations made.	Work on development guidance and specifications will be completed as prioritised by the Board	On going	Chair plus members	

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Development To make effective and efficient use of the expertise, experience and resources available to the Board from both within its membership and where appropriate from external sources. To develop opportunities for the involvement of and contribution from within member authorities with a view to developing skills and expertise.					
Key Action(s)	**How will it be achieved?**	**Expected Outcome**	**Completion Date**	**Delivery Lead**	**Completed**
In commissioning work the Board will make the best use of internal and external resources available to it.	The Board will determine the projects that it wishes to develop and prioritise and review these on a periodic basis. The Board will be responsible for determining the scope of the project, the timescale for delivery and the final acceptance or otherwise of the completed project. The Board will initially look to deliver the projects by the use of resources available to it from its members although where these are not available the use of external resources may be authorised and paid for by the Board in accordance with any procurement procedures. If internal resources are available these will form sub-groups who will be commissioned to carry out agreed projects and report back to the Board on progress and final recommendations on a regular basis. Where external resources are used Board members or (with Board approval) resources from within their authorities may work with the external resources in delivering projects.	Board is able to develop a prioritised plan for the delivery of agreed projects and use external resources/Sub-Groups to deliver these.	Initial prioritised project list to be completed by 1 May 2013 List to be reviewed on a quarterly basis.	Chair plus members	

The use of Sub-Groups will give colleagues within member authorities the opportunity to be involved in these and gain useful experience as well providing expertise to the Board. In the longer-term the widening of involvement by colleagues within member authorities will assist in the succession planning of the Board and its members. Although this aim is a desire of the Board where external reasons have to be used then opportunities for Board members or (with Board approval) internal resources from within their authorities to participate with the projects should be utilised.	In determining available resources Board members will be responsible for identifying and offering colleagues from within their authorities who will have suitable experience and expertise to carry out work and make final recommendations.	The use of external resources/Sub-Groups will spread the burden of work enabling a greater level of achievement in the conclusion of projects. Membership of any Sub-Groups will offer opportunities for colleagues from member authorities when applicable enabling them to contribute and benefit from their work.	Initial external resources/Sub-Groups to be appointed and commissioned by 1 July 2013 Review of external resources/Sub-Groups to be on going but first review to be complete by 1 October 2013	Board members	

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Development To provide and share accurate, up to date and relevant information and maintain this within the Guide. To do this using a simple, concise and understandable format.					
Key Action(s)	**How will it be achieved?**	**Expected Outcome**	**Completion Date**	**Delivery Lead**	**Completed**
The Board and its members will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide contains accurate, up to date and relevant information.	The Board will review any new or changed information and make the necessary arrangements to ensure that it is incorporated into the Guide as quickly as possible where appropriate. In doing this it may be necessary to appoint external resources or form a Sub-Group(s).	Guide will contain accurate, up to date and relevant information.	On going	Chair plus members	
The Guide should be simple to use, concise in nature and in an understandable format. The target audience needs to be identified and catered for.	There is an appreciation that the current guide is 'busy' in nature and requires a review and possible rewrite. There is a need to clarify the target audience(s) and ensure that the Guide meets with their requirements as directly as possible by ensuring it is concise and simple to use. There are two aspects of the Guide that need to be considered :– the use by developers to theoretically design their projects and the use by authorities to check these the use by construction companies to build	Guide re-formatted in a user friendly format aimed at its target audience. Use, popularity and understanding of the Guide increases due to it being aimed at target audiences therefore leading to easier promotion within other authorities, developers and interested organisations.	Initial review to be completed and reported to the Board by 1 October 2013. Any necessary rewrite/re-format to be completed by 1 April 2014.	Chair plus members	

	projects and the use by authorities to check the construction The use of external resources/Sub-Group tasked to initially re-format the Guide and then review and revise its content needs to be considered by the Board.				

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Promotion

To make it available to local authorities, developers and other interested parties and where appropriate recover any fees that can be charged.

To develop opportunities to promote the use of the Guide within all local authorities.

To use electronic means of distribution where possible.

Key Action(s)	How will it be achieved?	Expected Outcome	Completion Date	Delivery Lead	Completed
The Board will ensure that the Guide is available to member authorities and developers who are operating in their area. The Guide will also be made available to other local authorities, developers and interested parties and where appropriate any fees will be recovered.	The Board will make the necessary arrangements for the Guide to be available as required using the most appropriate means. Fees will be charged and recovered as appropriate. Fees will be used for the operation, administration and support of the Board and its Sub-Groups and may also be used to procure any appropriate external services required and approved by the Board in line with procurement procedures.	Guide is available and fees recovered as appropriate.	On going	Chair plus members	
The Board will seek opportunities within its member authorities, other local authorities, developers, other interested parties, trade organisations and local/regional/national bodies to promote the benefits of the Guide and its adoption.	The Board will develop appropriate contacts and networks to promote the benefits of the Guide. The Board will seek the adoption/recommendation of the Guide by the MHA.	The Guide will become adopted and used by a wide range of authorities, developers and other interested bodies. The Guide will be adopted/recommended by the MHA.	Promotion work to be on-going. MHA adoption/recommendation by 1 April 2014.	Chair plus members	

The Board will seek to use electronic means to make the Guide available	The Board will work with the MHA to enable the Guide to be hosted within that organisations web hosting facilities.	Guide hosted on the MHA website.	1 April 2014	Chair plus members	

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Structure –

NB where no internal resource available then external resources may be appointed. Board members or internal resources from within their authorities (with Board approval) may work with appointed external resources.

