

**DIRECTORATE OF ESTATES****PROCEDURE AND INFORMATION MANUAL****EPM PM16****University Project Sponsor for Capital Projects****Definition and Guidance Note**

<b>Document Originated:</b>	Nov. 2008	<b>By:</b>	T. Humphreys
<b>Issue Nr.</b>	3	<b>Number of pages:</b>	7
		<b>Status:</b>	Final Draft
<b>Last revised:</b>	Oct 2013	<b>By:</b>	Steve Jordan
<b>Next revision:</b>		<b>By:</b>	

**PURPOSE**

This document provides a description of the role of the University Project Sponsor for capital projects. It is intended as an outline of the role only, as it is accepted that each project may have slightly differing requirements.

Revised June 2013 to include sections on Summary Role, Key Relationships & Interaction, Selection of Project Sponsor and Training

## **OVERVIEW**

One key factor in the success of any project is the leadership and motivation given by Project Sponsors. The Project Sponsor 'owns' the strategic brief on behalf of the project occupiers and stakeholders (the Users) and will ensure strategic alignment between the User's aspirations and long term vision, and the detailed requirements of the project. Experience has shown that where the interface between ownership and delivery is poorly managed, it is difficult to manage the project's critical success criteria.

The Project Sponsor is therefore a key role in the successful delivery of a project, ensuring that the User's strategic project objectives are identified, maintained and achieved in successfully completing the project.

Working in partnership with the Clients Representative (Internal Project Manager), the Project Sponsor will represent the Users and act as the interface between project ownership and project delivery. They will form a single focal point responsible to the Project Committee for day-to-day management of the Users interests in the project.

## **SUMMARY ROLE, KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTION**

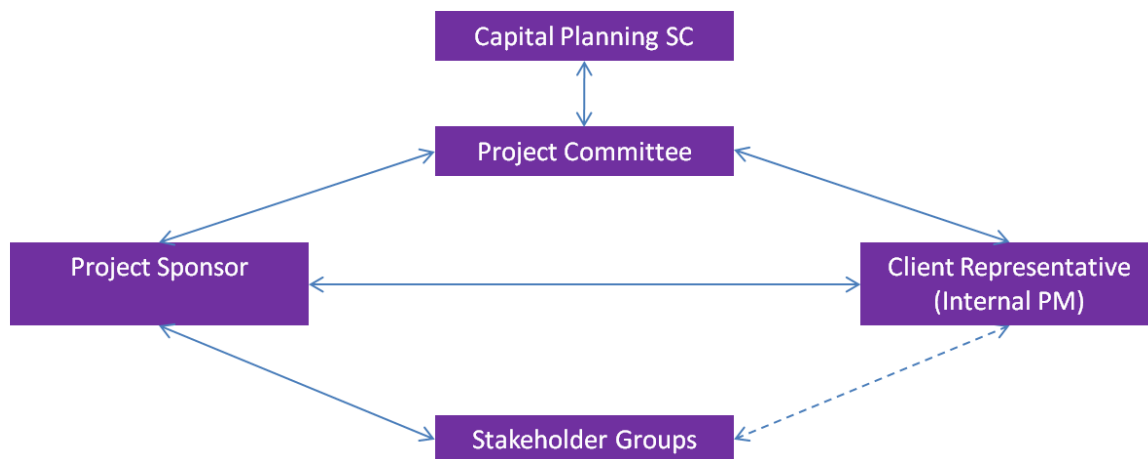
It is a role that will be time consuming and a specific project related assessment of the resources needed to perform this role will need to be undertaken on a case by case basis. This assessment will need to relate to the nature and complexity of the project and the lifecycle window that the project will operate in. It is more than simply being a "figurehead" as much work will need to be undertaken by the project sponsor to ensure that an appropriate vision and associated goals are set for the project. Subsequently, it will be a key responsibility of the Sponsor to ensure that the project strives to meet the vision and goals. Therefore, communication and effective relationships will need to be forged by the Sponsor so that Users are "bought in" to the benefits that the project's vision will deliver.

It is a role that is pivotal in terms of forging a successful partnership with the Directorate of Estates' designated Client Representative and the Users driving the project. Frequent one to one sessions will no doubt contribute to the successful evolution of this relationship and there should be no project related topics that could not be discussed. This approach can be expanded whereby the Sponsor and the Client Representative host "drop in sessions" for Users to jointly discuss issues and concerns on a regular basis. As a result, formal Project Committee meetings can be a focused forum whereby "no surprises" becomes the norm with regard to progress, financial health and the risks that the project faces.

The Sponsor will have a major role to play in setting expectations with Users. It is

therefore important that the Sponsor will have a good understanding of project timescales, budgets and expenditure forecasting. Much of this information, as a designated project, will be made available through the Client Representative; however, the Sponsor will need to use it to inform choices and key decisions that relate to sensible expectations. This will be an iterative process but the earliest input by the Sponsor will undoubtedly forge trust and common understanding in shaping what can effectively be delivered and by when.

The Sponsor's position in a typical project structure is depicted below whereby the role is situated at the heart of the project with three key interface points.



Please also refer to the “Capital Project Reporting and lines of communication” diagram in Appendix 1.

## SELECTION OF THE PROJECT SPONSOR

It is important to recognise that the Project Sponsor will be a focal point to three specific stakeholding groups i.e.

- Project Committee
- Project occupiers and stakeholders (Users)
- Directorate of Estates

With the above in mind candidates should be chosen to ensure that they have appropriate general skills and time allocated to take on the role e.g.

- Effective communication skills
- Ability to lead the collation of a credible business case
- Ability to create and articulate key mission statements, vision and associated goals
- Decision making skills and ability to shape strategic direction of the project
- Confidence to interact with the senior most staff in the University
- Ability to enthuse all stakeholders and ensure that a collaborative attitude is instilled at all levels

- Workload which includes time assigned to undertake the Sponsor role

Careful selection of the individual who will act as the Project Sponsor is therefore vital and final approval of the choice of project sponsor rests jointly with the Director of Estates and Facilities and the Dean of the relevant Faculty (for an Academic Project or the Chief Operating Officer (for non Academic projects).

It should be noted that on some projects involving more than one School or with several large user groups that there may be a need to appoint more than one sponsor. If this is necessary then a Lead Sponsor should be identified.

## **TRAINING**

It is important that all designated Sponsors are provided with supporting material and guidance to undertake the role. Therefore, Sponsors can expect the following assistance led by Estates through a Project Sponsors Group:

- Project Sponsor Handbook – a “go to” point of reference for the core aspects of project sponsorship and summary checklists appropriate to key phases of the project lifecycle
- Training – the Directorate will provide project sponsors with initial training outlining how capital projects are managed and their role and responsibilities on the project
- Mentoring – whereby personnel who have previously and/or currently hold a sponsorship can be assigned to work with others to share experience and knowledge
- Best practice workshops – arranged to allow specific aspects of sponsorship to be enhanced by up to date, effective and valuable initiatives forthcoming across the sector

## **COMMITMENT**

To be effective, the Project Sponsor must have:

- A deep personal commitment to the success of the project
- A clear understanding of the business drivers for the project
- Authority, responsibility and understanding
- Ability to lead and motivate all those involved
- Continuing responsibility for the project through to completion
- Access to the President and Vice Chancellor and/or Dean of Faculty

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROJECT SPONSOR**

The Project Sponsor is responsible for:

- Ensuring the project objectives are identified, maintained and achieved in successfully completing the project.
- Ensuring the project is well defined and then to monitor its delivery.
- Co-ordinating and understanding the requirements of the various end users of the project, in order to develop an acceptable strategic project brief.
- Acting as the Users senior point of contact for the project, managing the Users input, resolving any conflicting requirements that the Users may have.
- Working with the nominated User Co-ordinator(s) to ensure alignment of the Strategic Brief with the operational and functional requirements of the users
- Producing a Business Case/Investment Appraisal, including revenue implications, for presentation to the Capital Planning Sub-Committee for approval of the capital budget allocation
- On completion of the project, ensuring effective feedback as to how far the project met the client's requirements and objectives and identifying the lessons of good and bad practice that need to be learned for the future.

## **Appendix 1 – Capital Project Reporting and lines of communication**

