

**OFFICE ACCOMMODATION PROJECT**

**REFURBISHMENT OF DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES**

**LESSONS LEARNED**

<u>Lesson Learned</u>	<u>Comments</u>
The decision on the final design should have been made more quickly	The decision to refurbish the DCO was made in July 2013 and by February 2016, still no decision had been made on the final design. This appears to be due to the reluctance to commit to a final design. Clear targets should have been set by which time a final decision should have been made.
The open tender documentation was far too complex	Leading on from the lesson learned above, by February 2016, the number of options under consideration had risen to a base scheme and five additional options. When the decision was finally made to go out to open tender, the tender documentation was so complex that no bids were received.
The project benefitted from pre-construction meetings with the contractor	Two meetings were held between Council Officers and advisers and the whole Willmott Dixon team, both pre-construction and construction. The meetings identified the Council's objectives and constraints and meant that any matters that arose during the design and construction phases were addressed with the Council's objectives clearly in mind.
The project benefitted from regular communications with staff and Members	A series of Office Accommodation Updates were issued throughout the project. These were designed to keep everyone advised on progress and also on any challenges that arose and solutions found. Insight was also used as a communication tool and the Project Manager gave updates at most Senior Managers Group sessions. An email account was set up for anyone to report any concerns or ask any questions and the Project Manager made it clear that he was available at any time to discuss any concerns. This was key in

## APPENDIX B

	ensuring the on-going cooperation of staff and Members.
The project benefitted from the Project Manager having immediate access to senior managers and being authorised to make decisions	A Prince2 principle is that Project Managers should be properly authorised to make decisions within certain tolerances but this is not always applied. This project was run to tight deadlines and certain decisions had to be made very quickly. This required the Project Manager to have immediate access to consult necessary colleagues and to make decisions as appropriate so that there was no detriment to the project timescales.
The project benefitted from appointing good advisers	The Project Manager was supported by external advisers. NEC3 contracts require the appointment of a Project Supervisor and Principal Designer by the client. The Council appointed Peter Woods from Stevenage Borough Council as Project Supervisor, whose responsibilities included advising the Project Manager and ensuring the quality of the product. Martin McGoldrick from AA Projects was appointed Principal Designer and when he left the company John Nicholson was appointed from the same company. The role of Principal Designer is to monitor the health & safety elements of the construction. The Council also appointed Robert Noble as its Construction Design & Management adviser. This role ensured that the building complied with the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations. All advisers proved to be helpful & knowledgeable.
The project benefitted from some staff working long hours	This was important during the decant and return stages when Property Services and IT staff were asked to work long hours, mainly at weekends to ensure that everything was in place following each planned move. It was important to make those concerned feel valued and to that end, the Project Manager was also present and provided adequate refreshments.
The renovation work on the lifts was not finished on schedule	The lift contractors were the only part of the supply chain over which Willmott Dixon had no control. This was because as a refurbishment of existing lifts, this could only be commissioned by the lift suppliers, i.e. Otis Lifts. It needs to be acknowledged that in these circumstances, this delay was outside both the Council's and Willmott Dixon's control.