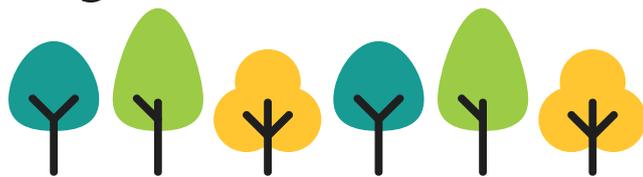


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Foundation Improvement Projects in DM



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What is a foundation phase project?

Mondrem CIC support planning services to meet the challenge of increased demand and high expectations of customer service. One way we do this is through foundation projects. They help to speed up the planning process, reduce backlogs, create a better experience for customers and colleagues and increase discretionary fee income.

We begin with a short discovery project to create the shared understanding needed for change to be successful, rather than just another idea or suggestion. Because unless we build shared understanding and connect with people on a human level, we know that change won't be sustainable.

Objectives, outcomes and outputs

Together, we'll agree project objectives along the following lines:

- To create a shared understanding of the issues facing planning services
- To understand the root causes of these issues
- To understand and effectively manage the balance of workload and capacity
- To test the planning service's ambition and the things that will enable and frustrate that ambition
- To build a shared understanding of the purpose of the planning service
- To outline a vision for the future of the planning service

These objectives will then help to deliver desired outcomes and outputs, such as:

- A planning service and stakeholders who have a shared understanding of:
 - The vision and purpose of planning
 - Why change is needed
 - The issues the planning service faces and their root causes
 - The planning service's workload and the capacity that is needed to manage it in the short-term and in the longer term
 - What the planning service needs to do to improve
- A recorded statement of vision and purpose
- A model of workload and capacity, including a forecast of work in progress (caseload), showing:
 - A 'no change' forecast
 - A forecast based on the outline improvement plan
 - An outline improvement plan

We usually expect to complete the work in 4-6 weeks.

How can a foundation project help you?

Our methodology

The model below shows Mondrem CIC's change project model and where the discovery or 'foundation' phase fits. Foundation projects are based on the foundation and opportunity stages of our FOREST approach.



How we will support you

Foundation projects deliver benefits that you can use straight away. We'll create an outline plan for an improvement project to deliver the benefits, and support you through the opportunity, reimagine, effect and sustain phases of our FOREST model, creating an enthusiastic team who want to change. The test phase will make sure that the changes you make are being sustained, and is often formed as a team wellbeing project to help build commitment and desire for change.

A project like this will:

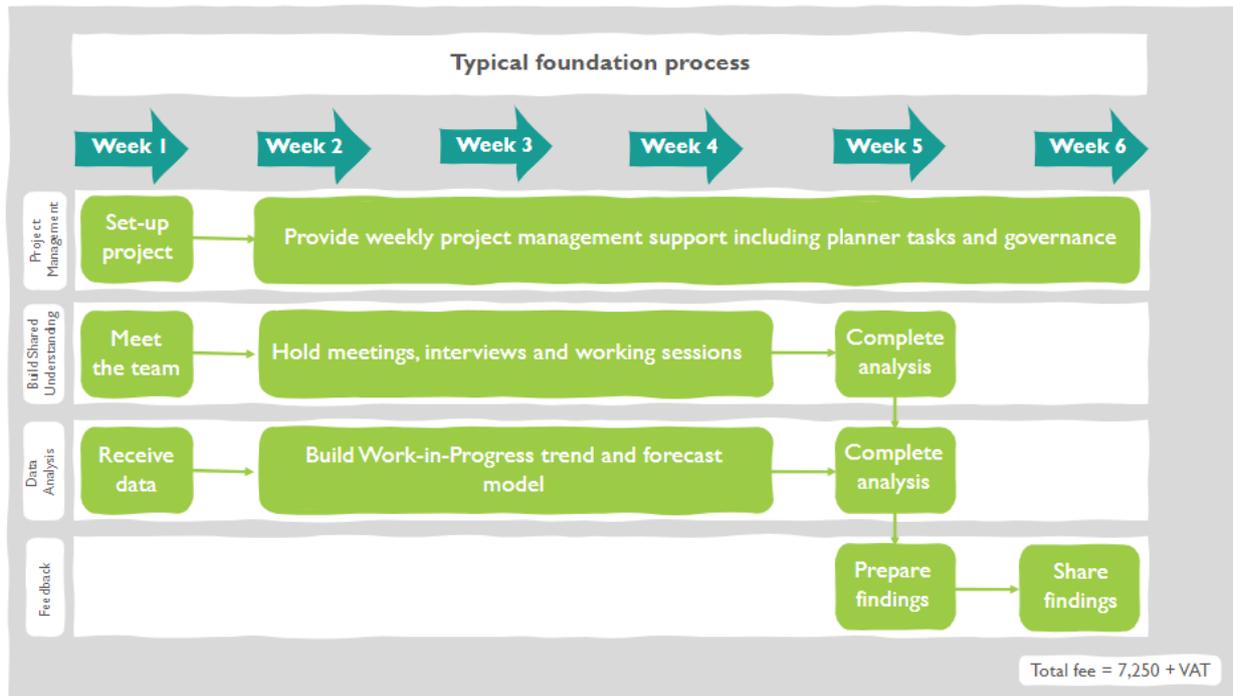
- Reduce stress and improve the working experience of the team
- Provide better opportunities for those who want to innovate and improve
- Remove the obstacles behind which some people hide so that there are no barriers to their making a full contribution in line with reasonable expectation
- Deliver a faster and better experience and better outcomes for the planning service's customers and stakeholders
- Deliver efficiency and improved income from premium services for the Council

It might include actions like:

- Listening to, and acting on the thoughts of everyone who has a stake in the service
- Regular, frequent 1-2-1 and group 'support and challenge' for team leaders and principal officers
- Co-designing and implementing a simple service plan
- Introducing and maintaining a disciplined and organised approach to operational performance management based on performance measures that matter to the team, particularly the things that influence wellbeing, customer experience and the income that helps fund the capacity the team needs to respond to variations in demand
- Co-designing and implementing a faster and more reliable process for determining the simplest applications - a so-called 'fast-track' approach
- Co-designing and implementing a disciplined and organised approach to managing project activity, including applying this approach to the foundation project and to managing applications for major schemes
- Co-designing and implementing improved processes for:
 - Validation
 - Smaller schemes and requests for pre-applications advice that fall outside the fast-track process
 - Major schemes and PPAs – linked to the project management approach
 - Applying lessons from this work to help improve the process for other application types
 - Building-in daily routines and behaviours of DM teams and leaders that will help to sustain improvements after this project has ended

How much will it cost?

Subject to the detail we agree, our fee for a foundation project is a little more or a little less than £7,250 +VAT, payable on 2 parts at the start and end of the project. The model below shows how that cost helps you:



Who do I talk to?

To get in touch and find out more, email bob.melling@mondrem.co.uk to arrange a short, informal discussion.

Keep up to date with our latest news, projects and success stories on social media:

Mondrem CIC  

@mondrem_uk 

@mondremcic 

Or visit our website to learn more about Mondrem CIC
www.mondrem.co.uk



Planting belief: Redbridge Council planning team's transformation



Redbridge's planning service was carrying a backlog and caseload so high that the people working there could not imagine being able to provide a service their customers would see as satisfactory, let alone capitalise on the investment and development opportunities that Redbridge has.

How did this struggling team transform into team of the year? It began with a belief that things could improve and a sustained effort to turn that belief into an outstanding service for the community.

The result? The beginnings of a service that is efficient and enjoyable for customers, pushes for higher-quality applications and engages the community and internal employees in its future.

Redbridge council's planning service felt overwhelmed. A London borough experiencing unprecedented growth, Redbridge has a planning application volume 160% more than the London average. As government targets increase to building 300,000 new homes every year by 2025, councils are continuously encouraging developments in locations like Redbridge.

This growth would not be possible without Redbridge's development management and technical team. Put simply, the team felt demoralised by the challenge of producing faster and better results with fewer resources and increasing demand.

Redbridge DM Team Leader, Liz Sullivan, felt as though her team were sinking beneath a wave of "customer queries, backlogs and some complaints." This caused them to lose belief.

To turn this around, the team started with a shared understanding. They built a clear set of expectations for themselves and their customers. But what did this mean for development in Redbridge?

With high-quality and well-intended applications being prioritised and processed faster, the speed of positive development and physical improvement to the area is increasing. In turn, agents who routinely submit poor quality applications are encouraged to 'up-their-game'. The reduction in backlogs and time spent on incomplete applications has also increased capacity in the team. This allows more time for engaging with local developers and the community - pushing for better quality developments that contribute to the physical and environmental benefit of Redbridge.

The team developed new tools to measure productivity, and they helped the team to realise that they can control their caseload. Using these new tools and methods of reporting progress, the team has taken ownership of their caseload, and they work together to achieve high quality planning solutions.

But these new tools did not just focus on efficiency. They focussed on staff wellbeing too.

So much so, that even when offered more money to work elsewhere, team members have decided to stay with Redbridge.

Instead of seeing individual caseloads, the team see a collective responsibility to deliver outstanding service to their community.

"I was really pleased with my Director's response to the change. For the first time in his career, he walked into the office and the planners were sitting around a table and they were owning their own performance and finding solutions together. He was incredibly proud."

Brett Leahy, Head of Planning and Building Control, London Borough of Redbridge.

"With support from not-for-profit public service improvement company, Mondrem, we planted the belief that things could get much better, and we organised our efforts to make that belief a reality. Work on capacity, performance, tech, coaching support and processes all played a part in our journey, but starting to believe that things could get better was that first step."

Liz Sullivan, Development Management Team Leader, London Borough of Redbridge.

The team-led transformation of the planning service has produced outstanding results.

Research and experience tell us that, above all else, customers want to see pace and predictability from the planning service. If pace and predictability are absent, then developers might choose to develop elsewhere. This would cause the planning service to miss opportunities and additional revenue.

The validation backlog has reduced from 350 to 15, caseload from 1,000 to 400, and validation processing from 5 weeks to 48 hours.

The enhanced speed and openness of the system allows applications to be processed faster, reducing delays and associated costs for developers. As Redbridge becomes known as an enabler of development, this will translate into more investment in the area.

In short, the planning service has become one that pushes for development through positive interactions, fast processing and better placemaking - an outstanding result for the community.

But none of this would have been possible without the teams' hard work, willingness to improve and ambition to change. The involvement of team members was fundamental to success.

Now, the team is recognised for compliments, not complaints.

Redbridge has a planning service that:

- Is performing at improved levels of timeliness and quality with a reduced backlog
- Reduced applications-in-progress from 1000 to 400
- Validation process time has reduced from 5 weeks to 48 hours
- Is delivering higher levels of fee income
- Is delivering a better experience and outcomes for its customers
- Is providing a better and more rewarding experience for its employees
- Has a clearer sense of purpose and a clearer vision of its future
- Believes that it can be successful and stay successful