

mondrem

'OREST' Improvement Projects in DM



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What is an 'OREST' project?

We believe strongly in creating trusting human relationships within teams and between those teams, their external partners, their key stakeholders and their customers. By creating these relationships during our Foundation projects, we build the shared understanding needed for change to be successful, rather than just an idea or suggestion.

OREST contains the parts of our change project model that happen after the Foundation project. It stands for Opportunity, Reimagine, Effect, Sustain and Test. Guided by the vision crafted during the Foundation project and motivated by your commitment to change, we will agree ideas for change, plan that change, make that change happen, make sure it keeps happening and test that the right outcomes are being delivered.

Objectives, outcomes and outputs

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

- To share and develop the vision for the Service outlined during the earlier work
- To improve employee wellbeing and the experience of working in DM
- To enable you and the team to manage the Service in a disciplined and organised way – underpinned by measures and management information that matter to the Service and its key stakeholders, not just those that you are required to report to central government
- To understand the people skills and capacity needed to deliver the local plan
- To assess the extent to which those skills and capacity can be provided by the current team
- To make a business case for extra skills and capacity if they are needed
- To build resilience in the team – so that it can cope with variations in demand
- To create a shared way of working
- To build trust and shared understanding within the Service and between the Service and its delivery partners and customers
- To build shared understanding between the Service and its 'line of business' systems supplier – improving the user experience and ensuring the software is used to its full potential
- To improve speed, quality and efficiency in the validation and determination process for small schemes and for major developments – connecting the planning and economic growth elements of major developments
- To improve customer experience
- To help create a commercially focussed, business-minded DM team
- To reduce costs and/or to increase fee income

These objectives will then help to deliver a DM Service that:

- Is providing a better and more rewarding experience for its employees
- Is managed in a disciplined and organised way
- Has the leadership, management and delivery capacity and capability it needs to deliver the Local Plan and its other ambitions
- Is more resilient
- Has a shared way of working and understanding of good practice
- Is engaged with the Service plan
- Is focussed on the measures that matter, such as wellbeing and customer experience
- In which there is improved shared understanding up and down the management line and across the Service's external relationships
- Is using their 'line of business' systems more effectively
- Is performing at improved levels of timeliness and quality
- Is delivering higher levels of fee income
- Is delivering a better experience and outcomes for its customers
- Is helping to build confidence in their region as a place to invest and develop
- Has a clearer sense of purpose and a clearer vision of its future – and shares the same understanding of its purpose and vision as the Council's leadership
- Believes that it can be successful and stay successful

We usually expect to complete the work in 17-20 weeks.

How can an 'OREST' project help you?

Our methodology

The model below shows Mondrem CIC's change project model and how the 'OREST' parts of our method follow the Foundation project.



How we will support you

'OREST' projects build on our shared understanding of your situation, your commitment to change and the vision agreed by you and the team in the Foundation project. Using the opportunities identified in the first 2-4 weeks, we will agree a detailed project plan with you before leading a mixed team of Mondrem people and DM team members that provides an opportunity for all team members to get involved and to co-design a solution and so, to develop co-ownership and commitment to the work. This will ensure that the project delivers what the team need to be successful.

A project like this will:

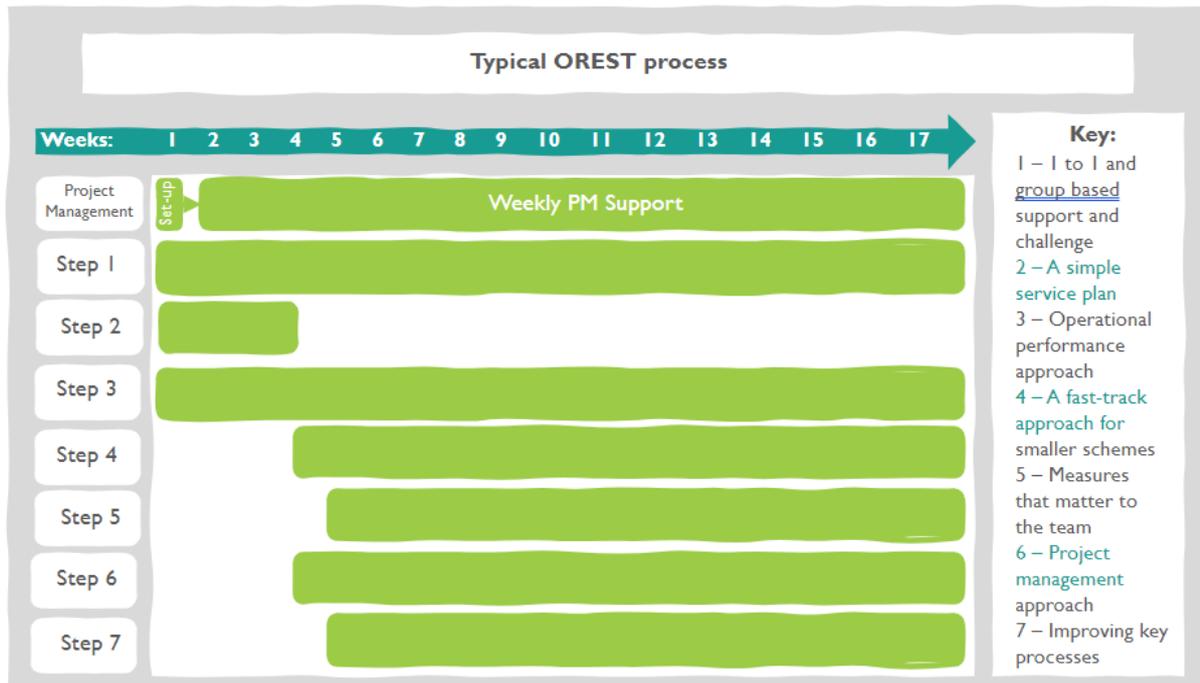
- Reduce stress and improve the working experience of the team
- Provide better opportunities for those who want to innovate and improve
- Remove the obstacles behind which some people hide so that there are no barriers to their making a full contribution in line with reasonable expectation
- Deliver 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
- Using Mondrem's WiP Trend and Forecast and Short Interval Management model to
 - Improve professional satisfaction by giving responsibility not tasks
 - Monitor and manage performance proactively
 - Measure capacity
- Assessing the skills of the current team
- Making and presenting a business case to fill any gaps in skills and capacity
- Based on the agreed version of this business case - drafting an action plan to fill any gaps in skills and capacity
- Co-designing and implementing a simple service plan
- Using our connections with many of the suppliers of 'line of business' systems for Development Management (DM) and Building Control (BC) to help you get the most from your software
- 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 workloads
- 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 an 'OREST' project is a little more or a little less than £25,000 +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