

## Building Handover

Case Study: The Old War Office

March 2022

### Summary

Built in 1906 on the site of the Palace of Westminster the Grade II listed Old War Office (“OWO”) Building witnessed a wide range of events whilst political and military leaders including Winston Churchill, David Lloyd George, and Lord Kitchener held office.

The building was part of the PFI project to renovate, modernise and then operate the Ministry of Defence Main Building.



When the PFI Project Company handed back the OWO to the Ministry of Defence (the Authority), there was a significant amount of activity that had to be undertaken.

Achieving the effective handover of the building from the PFI parties to public sector control required the deployment of skilled resource focussed on this activity by all the project stakeholders.

### Vercity's Involvement

Vercity was (and remains) the provider of management services to the PFI Project Company and was a key part of the handover process, from commencement in 2013 until the actual handover in 2016.

Over that period key workstreams were identified to ensure that the building could be effectively handed back to Authority control.

#### Key Workstreams

-  **Process Management**  
*Programme, Control & Review*
-  **Document Handover**  
*What, When and How*
-  **Asset Handover**  
*In advance and Final Day*



These workstreams had to be delivered alongside the business as usual of continuing the PFI Project operations.

Achieving that meant dedicating resource to these activities and ensuring oversight from the right people in the right organisations.

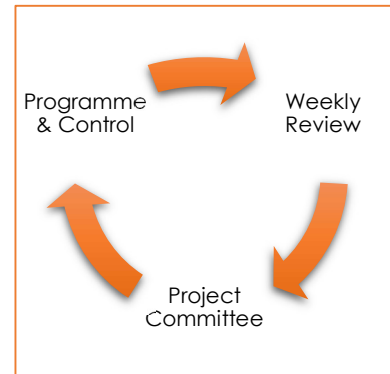
## Process Management

Documentation was produced detailing the programme of work involved together with the process on the actual physical handover of the asset and required supporting documentation. This covered the transfer from the Services Providers to PFI Project Company and in turn to the Authority.

A key element of the management process was establishing 'Issues Clarification Control Logs' to manage and record the contractual and practical issues raised as part of the process for ceasing services and delivering the handover, alongside the agreed outcomes.

Progress against programme was reviewed at a monthly Project Committee chaired by the Authority, supported by a weekly review meeting chaired by the PFI Project Company. Having regular meetings provided a rhythm to the process and ensured oversight. These were supported by other workstreams with meetings as required.

Time and resource were dedicated to the process management by all parties, but this was a worthwhile investment to ensure a smooth transition.



## Document Handover



To facilitate the handover of the building, documents were provided ahead of the completion date, mainly relating to statutory compliance responsibilities that would be taken on by the Authority after the transfer (such as the Asbestos Register). Providing these in advance allowed the Authority to develop their understanding of the responsibilities associated with the building.

Two weeks before the handover a joint inspection of the information/documents to be handed over was undertaken by the PFI parties. Following this a formal hand over from was achieved and evidenced by completing the required Handover forms for each of the contract document requirements. Attached to each Handover form was a schedule of all information/documents being handed over, both hard copy and digital.

Documenting the documents gave all parties certainty and a clear audit trail of what had been provided, and certainty around the completion of the exercise.

## Asset Handover



On the final day before handover there was a two-stage process. A joint visual inspection of the building and assets was followed by the formal hand over. This was documented with 'Transfer of Assets' forms and attached to each form was a schedule of all information/assets being handed over.

As this took place before the contractual handover date (midnight) keys remained in their existing locations with the PFI parties permitted continued access until that time.

## Summary

Handing over a building with complex support needs from the PFI consortium to the management of the public sector was a substantial exercise that needed the deployment of cross-discipline teams by all parties. A key part of the successful transition was that those teams worked collaboratively to overcome the challenges they faced.

## Key Learnings

- 1 Put process management in place early to steer the process
- 2 Support that with the resource needed to deliver the process
- 3 Document the documents
- 4 Agree a protocol for the final day
- 5 Work together

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