allows you to work backwards in time to the present moment, making the work feel more spread out rather than like a wall in front of you.

For example:

What does the project need?

What are the core aims, or key performance indicators (KPIs) of the project?

Who is it for?

What is the overall budget?

modifying the project plan as needed

Monitoring happens at the same time as execution. Project performance and progression needs to be measured in accordance with the project plan. It's easy for projects to get bigger over time in a process known as mission creep or scope creep. Scope verification and control can check for scope creep and help keep the project on track. Project performance and monitoring is not something to think about at the beginning and end of the project, but must be embedded throughout the process.

Project management

Project management is the area where we see theories and methodologies emerge: standardised, general ways of doing things that are roughly the same across sectors, or have been taken from one sector and applied to another. Project management is a work package all by itself and many larger projects will employ people whose job it is to monitor and manage project progress and delivery full-time.

Some methodologies are best used in small doses while others are suitable to follow from the very beginning of a project to the very end.

Here are some of the best-known project management techniques and methodologies.

PRINCE2

Waterfall

Agile

Kanban boards

Scrum

Gantt charts

PRINCE2

PRINCE2 is a process-driven and highly controlled methodology that is mostly used by the government and public sector bodies. It is best used when as much is known about the project as possible, to allow high control over outcomes. It comes from IT system development and has a strict hierarchy of tasks and responsibilities. PRINCE2 values continuous justification of the work, and requires frequent monitoring checks and updates from stage to stage.
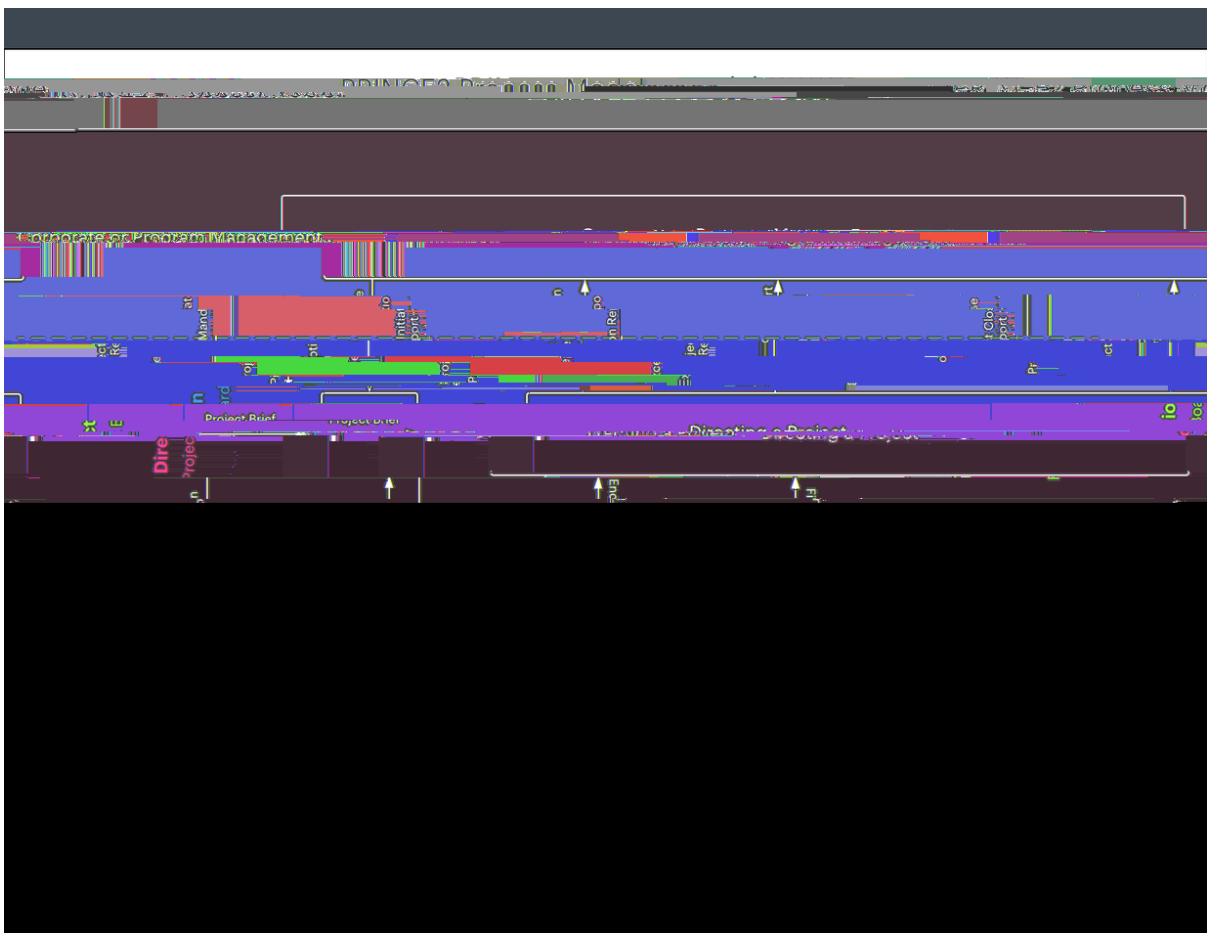
WATERFALL

A Waterfall model is a sequential plan where stages are mapped on a graph. One stage leads on to the other and there is limited scope for change or revisions.

Waterfall works best when a great deal of planning is done at the "top", i.e. the start, to have

AGILE

Agile methodology uses short cycles to develop, test and improve products and services. A computer program is a good example. Software development doesn't finish when the product is released – developers become aware of, and fix, bugs and issues as well as add extra functionality over time. Agile is iterative, running over and over to adapt and grow to new need. Development only "ends" when resources are directed elsewhere permanently.

While agile is primarily used on "products", it can be used in the provision of public services, and in the delivery of community-focused projects. Any project that hopes to meet need in the community will aim to notice and respond to that need, and respond to new needs over time. Some of the needs you are trying to meet with your work will disappear and reappear over time, while others are more entrenched. Feedback is essential to agile delivery. The number of beneficiaries doesn't have to be massive to be vocal.

Shorter-term projects that have scope to be renewed for another term or become permanent are good ways to gain feedback for the future.
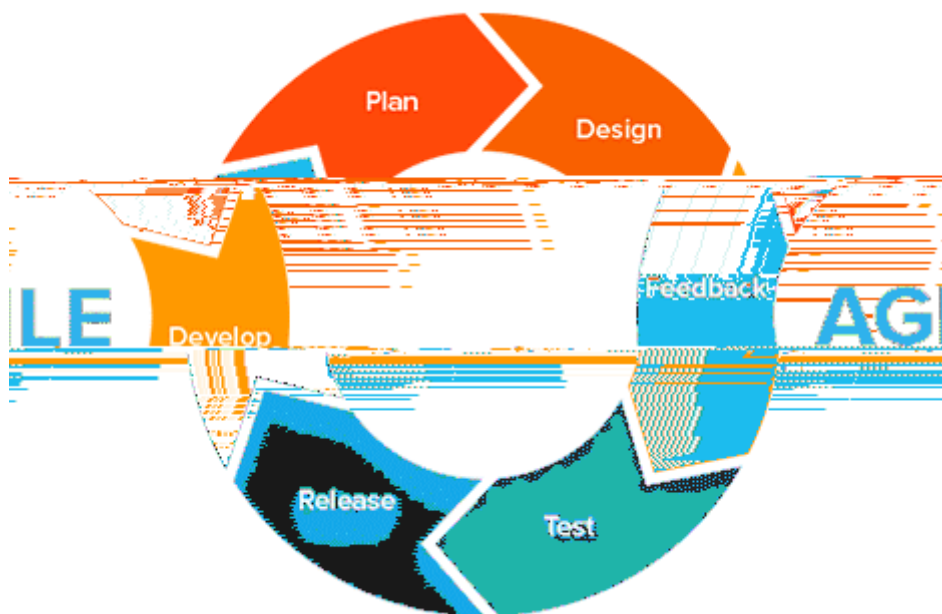
Partnerships

Partnerships are a good way of filling gaps in skills and abilities. Many organisations recognise need in the community but can't necessarily meet it as effectively as a different organisation can. There's not just one kind of partnership or support – it will depend on what everyone needs. When approaching potential partners, be as clear as possible about what you want the relationship to look like. Partnerships should enhance the project, for example by pooling resources and skills. Projects that end up trying to please the partners, or create the impression that something is happening, will not help the beneficiaries most effectively.

We hope this toolkit is useful to you in your practice and research. If you are interested in engaging with and/or working in the cultural and heritage sectors in Luton and Bedfordshire, for example if you would like to run a community heritage project, please take a look at what we have going on through our funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund – our events through the Heritage Enterprise Hub, and the Heritage Impact Accelerator programme for cultural, community and heritage practitioners – to get involved.

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