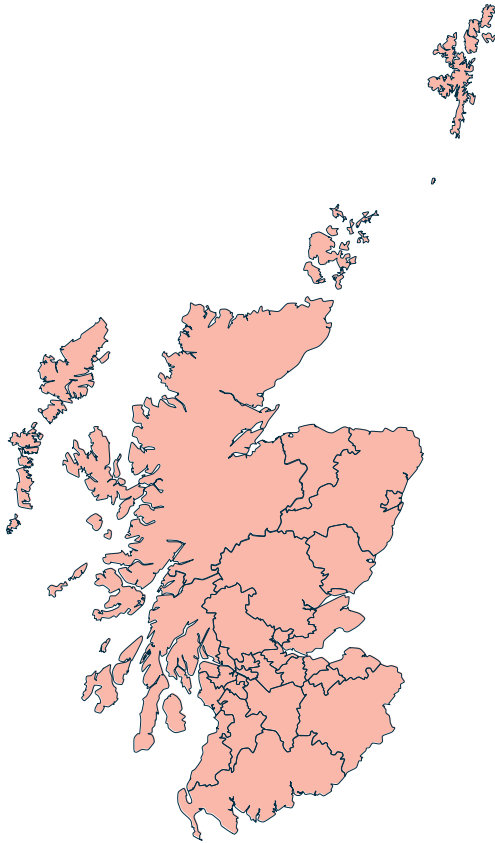


Helping the public sector achieve better outcomes



LOCATION: Scotland-wide

DATE: ongoing

OUTCOME:  Delivery

The challenge

For public sector organisations investing in infrastructure, decisions made during the early stages of a project can have a lasting impact on its success.

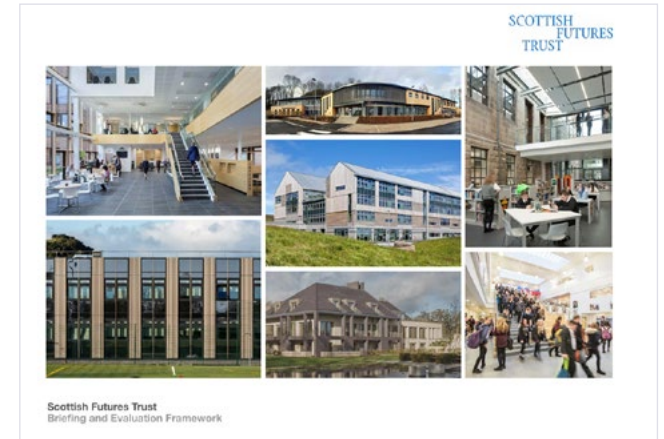
Yet it can be difficult to bring together different stakeholder priorities, define what success really looks like and translate a shared vision into measurable objectives. Without a clear framework, projects can become focused on delivering an asset rather than the outcomes and benefits it is intended to achieve.

Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) recognised the opportunity to improve this process by helping clients get the fundamentals right before significant time and money are committed to design and delivery.

The approach and benefits

SFT's [Briefing and Evaluation Framework](#) helps project teams establish their vision, define objectives and agree how success will be measured from the outset.

First shared through [A framework for getting it right from the start](#) in 2022, the Framework has since been used across public sector programmes and projects, including the Learning Estate Investment Programme, strategic NHS projects and other national programmes.



The approach starts by asking a simple but important question: why are we doing this and what are the benefits?

Visioning workshops bring together the people who can contribute to defining the project's purpose and desired outcomes. This helps teams distinguish between what is desirable and what is essential, creating a clearer client brief and a shared understanding of priorities.

Objectives are then developed to be measurable, with benefits, targets and baselines identified wherever possible. These objectives can be embedded into project governance, including risk registers, quality plans and design reviews.



Using consistent gateway stages, such as the RIBA Plan of Work, provides opportunities to test whether the developing design remains aligned with the agreed objectives, budget and intended outcomes.

The impact

Experience from teams using the Framework shows that it can provide significant benefits throughout project development and delivery.

One team used an early Stage 2 workshop to review the design against its objectives and budget. This helped provide the confidence to fix the design at Stage 4, reducing the potential for later changes.

Other teams have incorporated objectives directly into their risk and quality management processes, creating a clear link between goals, objectives, measures, targets and baselines.

Connecting objectives with benefits realisation and post-occupancy evaluation also provides a stronger basis for assessing whether the intended outcomes have been achieved.

Perhaps most importantly, users report that the Framework creates greater clarity and alignment across project teams – **“It helped demystify the vision – and the team were much happier as a result.”**

Lessons learned

Experience to date has highlighted several important lessons:

- **Start early** – the Framework is most effective when embedded at the beginning of a project and supported with a suitably qualified facilitator
- **Focus on the ‘why’** – establish the vision and desired outcomes before getting into detailed requirements
- **Bring people together** – early stakeholder engagement helps create shared ownership and resolve competing priorities
- **Make objectives measurable** – agree targets, measures and baselines from the outset
- **Keep objectives visible** – integrate them into risk, quality, design and governance processes
- **Review throughout delivery** – use project gateways to test whether decisions remain aligned with the original objectives
- **Learn as you go** – capture lessons alongside objectives and evaluation to improve future projects

The experience so far demonstrates that better outcomes start with better briefing. By defining the destination before setting off – and continually checking that the project remains on course – public sector clients can make better decisions, manage change with greater confidence and increase the likelihood that their investment delivers what matters most.

I am a strong advocate of the Briefing and Evaluation Framework Tool. It provides the most effective approach to benefits realisation that I have encountered on any project.

ANDREW BAILLIE, NHS GREATER GLASGOW, PARKHEAD CAMPUS

Having co-produced the Framework with SFT, I have had the pleasure of implementing it with many clients since its inception. At Ryder we consider meaningful engagement and rigorous validation to be essential to the success of a project, adding enormous value by setting it up for success from the outset. We look forward to continuing to embed the Framework's values in our projects going forward.

SOO DARCY, RYDER ARCHITECTURE

The Briefing and Evaluation Framework proved invaluable throughout the project. The outputs gave us a clear line of sight back to our original purpose, helping the team stay aligned and ensuring the intended outcomes remained front of mind from start to finish.

BRYONY HEWETSON WARD,
HEAD OF PLANT AND SEED SUPPLY AT FORESTRY LAND SCOTLAND