

Tottenham's Northumberland Development Project sets the standard for responsible project management

2020 marks the five-year anniversary of the creation of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), a set of targets to shift how future projects are conceptualised and implemented⁸. To ensure these goals are prevalent in development projects, a 15-year timeframe has been agreed upon by the nations involved. The first five years has already seen a considerable shift in attitude towards sustainability as a whole. Project managers across the globe are now often treating sustainability as a key performance indicator, alongside traditional measures such as economic revenue and growth. This progress suggests that several industries are moving in the right direction, with project managers acting as the catalyst in many instances. The same can be said for society for the most part, with 'green' initiatives now becoming part of daily life. However, the road to true sustainability is arduous and not without its speedbumps, calling for collective perseverance and determination to reach the desired destination, as set out by UN's 2030 goals.



As such, responsible project management (RPM) has risen to be among the pioneers of this journey. Notably, Dr Karen Thompson and Dr Nigel Williams have designed a 10-principal manifesto to cover RPM, with an intention to advocate change through project managers and their values⁷.

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) and Haringey Council completed the Northumberland Development project in 2019, marking the end of a project which displayed impressive implementation of sustainable practises throughout the entirety of its life cycle, so too reflected in the project's final deliverables. London's borough of Haringey saw around 20 acres of its land developed under this project's scope, with the major additions being THFC's new stadium, alongside 585 new homes, a hotel, health centre and education establishments². This project was considered to be part of a bigger regeneration project for the Tottenham area, with council-set targets of creating new homes and jobs by 2025. Poverty gaps in the area are a real issue, with some areas among the most socially and economically deprived in the country², highlighting the desperate need for intervention.

Upon completion, the Northumberland Development project has created 1,700 new jobs, while injecting an estimated £293 million into the local economy each year⁵.



Therefore, the project has exhibited responsibility through balance, an essential approach to becoming sustainable, as listed in the 10th principle of RPM. This states that equal consideration be given towards the needs of people, planet and profit, in all timeframes. By ensuring the project provides benefits to hundreds of stakeholders, the project has catered for differing social, economic and environmental motivations. Thus, also enabling the project managers to distance themselves from traditional project management approaches that have long plagued sustainability concerns.

THFC continued to go above and beyond the perceived sustainability threshold, employing energy saving practises across their stadium. Working in conjunction with Brook Green Supply, 'REGO-backed electricity and carbon neutral gas' is supplied to the stadium. As a result, carbon dioxide output has been reduced by approximately 22% in comparison to the current building regulations, making it one of the most environmentally friendly stadiums in the UK. Management considers this innovation an essential part of construction design and implementation, solidified by their founding participant status in the '10:10' environmental campaign, pioneering practical action against climate change⁶.

To summarise, the project managers' extensive efforts in the Northumberland Development project to implement RPM have truly set the standard for future responsible projects across the globe.

References

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