

Title of Report:	New Regional Planning IT System Update.
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	22 June 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Improvement and Innovation
Outcome	Council maintains its performance as the most efficient of NI's local authorities
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Remain within budget at Year End
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	34001
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

FOR INFORMATION

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This Report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of implementation of the new regional Planning IT System to be shared by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and 9 other councils and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Mid Ulster Council is the only council not involved in the project.

2.0 Details

- 2.1 The existing Northern Ireland Planning Portal (NIPP) contract is coming to an end on 31 December 2022. The new regional Planning IT System contract is with Terra Quest Solutions (TQ) and is for an initial 10 years until 2030 with 5 and +5 year options to extend according to performance.
- 2.2 Staff are regularly involved in regional design and configuration testing of the new system. The Head of Planning sits on the regional Planning Portal Governance Board which has oversight of the project. The regional project is led by DfI with the Department's Deputy Permanent Secretary as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the project and chairs the regional Planning Portal Governance Board meetings.
- 2.3 The new Planning IT System is scheduled for 'go-live' as a single 'Big Bang' implementation on 17 October 2022. Work is ongoing in relation to Change Implementation Plans and Transition Plans in preparation for the implementation of the new system. It is anticipated that the current NIPP will be switched off at the end of September and data migrated in preparation for implementation of the new system. This will impact on the ability of Planning staff to issue decisions and other work on planning applications and enforcement cases during this time.
- 2.4 DfI have issued a Planning Portal newsletter (attached at Appendix 1) to update customers on the implementation of the new regional Planning IT System.
- 2.5 The projected costs for the new regional Planning IT System remains within that set out in the Full Business Case.

3.0 Recommendation:

- 3.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Committee notes the update provided on the new regional Planning IT System.

newsletter

NEW NI PLANNING PORTAL IN 2022

A new Regional Planning IT System, for Northern Ireland will be launched later this year for 10 of the 11 Councils and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The 10 councils and DfI have been working collaboratively to develop and configure the new IT system with TerraQuest, the company contracted to deliver and support the system going forward. This work continues to involve engagement with key stakeholders including Staff, Consultees, Agents and other organisations in order to ensure that the IT system provides the essential functionality needed to support the wider planning system.

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KEY BENEFITS

This is the largest joint IT project between central and local government to date in Northern Ireland and will see benefits for all users as we seek to drive planning online in this digital age.

Key benefits include:

- Submission of applications online
- Linked front and back-office allowing for improved efficiency by streamlining administrative processes
- Improved validation and workflows to better manage workloads
- Improved Consultee interface
- Better user experience from an intuitive modern interface, making it easier for users to engage with the planning process

 *Continued overleaf...*

PREPARING FOR CHANGE



In preparation for the launch, each council and the Department have appointed Local Change Leads who are currently assessing the impact the new system will have on their business processes and resources and are putting in place plans for any changes needed.

Transition plans are being developed that will outline the key steps during the changeover phase from the current system to the new portal. This will include what downtime is required to facilitate the migration of data and the process for handling in-flight applications at the time of transfer.

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TESTING

Nominees to assist with the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) have been identified within the Councils and DfI and have been helping to carry out system checks during the development and configuration phase. The final UAT phase will start in the summer and the invites for this will be issued soon.



planning portal newsletter

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TRAINING

Training will be delivered via a 'Train the Trainer' approach and nominees have been identified across the Planning Authorities to take on the Local Trainer roles.

They will receive the necessary training, guidance and support in advance which will enable them to deliver the user training to their colleagues locally. A six week window has been scheduled for the user training starting at the end of summer and will include practical tasks for users to trial on the system as well as additional materials such as user guides and demo videos. Pilot training sessions with the Local Trainers are currently being trialled.




LOOKING FORWARD

As part of the roll-out we hope to release demos of the new portal to the wider planning community before it is launched. Further Newsletters will also be published to advise of progress and provide more information to users about the plans for transitioning to the new portal.

In the meantime, please feel free to provide feedback on this newsletter and any issues or topics you would like to see featured.

Contact Info

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