

Report on	Planning System Replacement
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan
Contact Officer	Barry O'Hagan

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Council on the progress to date regarding the replacement of the Planning Portal system.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Need for a new planning IT system</p> <p>The NI Planning Portal (NIPP) system is used by the 11 councils, the Department and the Regional Property Certificate Unit to process planning applications and consents, enforcement cases, property certificates, tree preservation orders etc. The system is used by the public, council staff, the Departmental, planning agents, solicitors and consultees.</p> <p>During 2015/16 the NIPP handled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Over 12,000 planning applications including 145 major development and 6 regionally significant development applications; · Over 11,000 planning applications decisions; · Almost 3,000 enforcement cases (opened); and · Issued over 42,000 consultations including statutory, non statutory and advice & guidance. <p>There are almost 9,500 registered users in Public Access.</p> <p>The NIPP was developed over ten years ago when the Department was the single planning authority. While the system is still operational it is reaching the end of its operational life and no longer meets all of the needs of users. The contract for the maintenance and support of the system ends in March 2019.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Plan and progress for identifying a new planning IT system.</p> <p>The Department and local government colleagues have been working together to identify the way forward for any new planning IT system. This work is being taken forward in stages: initially with a Discovery exercise, to identify the key requirements of any new planning IT system, followed by the development of a business case to identify the preferred option for a new planning IT system.</p> <p>The Discovery exercise was taken forward by consultants Deloitte over the summer. This has involved engagement with a wide range of stakeholders with over 30 workshops attended by over 170 people from the local government, central</p>

government and other organizations. This work has been very positive and there was widespread agreement on the key functions of any new planning IT system. The proposed main functions of a new planning IT system could be used by the Department and local government are.

- Ability to accept on-line applications in order to move towards a paperless process
- Ability to accept on-line payments
- Ability to manage and monitor large volume of planning applications
- Notifications and alerts for application updates for all users of the system
- A consistent mapping service with easy to select mapping layers with each Authority having the ability to manage their own default filters
- A search function that will allow users' to search the system across several different search criteria, and enable each Authority to create and save their own standard searches.
- Ability for each Authority to manage, customize and maintain their own templates, and library of conditions and refusal reasons.
- Ability for each Authority to produce their own core reports including Key Performance Indicator reports

The Discovery phase also identified four business solutions

- One shared IT system that is collectively managed / controlled
- One shared IT system that is collectively managed / controlled but with local control for specific functions
- One shared public facing IT system with back-office IT system for each Department and local council
- Twelve standalone IT systems — one for each Department and local council

While there are advantages and disadvantages for each business solution, the outcome from Discovery is that option two best meets the functional and accessibility needs of key stakeholders.

These outcomes from Discovery will be used to inform the development of a Business Case. The Department and local government have recently appointed PA Consulting to undertake this work and a draft business case will be ready later in the autumn. This will provide an impartial view of the available options, taking into consideration costs, timeframes, governance & funding arrangements, and will identify the preferred option going forward for a new planning IT system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government and the Department will consider the draft business case in approximately November 2017. Develop final business case (to reflect feedback from Local Government and the Department).
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: Each Council and the Department have contributed to the Discovery and formulation of the business case. The council will contribute £12,000 towards a detailed discovery and the formulation into the business case as Mid Ulster's contribution for the work undertaken by Deloitte and PA Consulting.</p> <p>Human: Discovery has required subject matter expertise across Planning resources to contribute to the discovery works shops and formulating the requirements of the new system. Mid Ulster had fulfilled its obligation to the contribution with the grateful commitment from the Planning Manager.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No applicable</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>The planning portal Governance Board continues to have representation from the Planning manager and Head of IT system. The project and its risk to normal planning operations will continue to be monitored closely for its progress and implementation of a new system. It is likely that any significant new system that requires substantial software development and testing will require the extension of the existing contracts to maintain the current planning portal contract that expires in March 2017.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee notes the update on the replacement of the Planning Portal System as required.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	None