



Subject:	Belfast Planning Service – Update on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal
Date:	17 October 2017
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams (Director)
Contact Officer:	Ciara Reville (Senior Planning Officer)

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Planning Committee on the ongoing process being under taken by DFI in association with all 11 Councils on the replacement of the Northern Ireland Planning Portal.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Committee is asked to note this emerging work and agree Officers continue to engage with DFI and the 10 other planning authorities over the coming months.
3.0	Main Report - Key Issues
3.1	Need for a new planning IT system The NI Planning Portal (NIPP) system is used by the Department, the 11 councils 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, Departmental and council staff, planning agents, solicitors and consultees.
3.1.2	During 2015/16 the NIPP handled: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over 12,000 planning applications (Belfast City Council accounts for 16%) including 145 major development and 6 regionally significant development applications;• Over 11,000 planning applications decisions (BCC 14%);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>
3.3	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.
3.4	Plan for identifying a new planning IT system
3.4.1	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 the following 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
3.4.2	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 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.
3.4.3	<p>The proposed main functions of a new planning IT system could be used by the Department and local government are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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,

	<p>and library of conditions and refusal reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability for each Authority to produce their own core reports including Key Performance Indicator reports. <p>At this stage the new system will also include property certificates this will need to be confirmed following a review of the Property Certificates Service.</p>
3.4.4	<p>The Discovery phase also identified four business solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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, and governance & funding arrangements, and will identify the preferred option going forward for a new planning IT system.</p>
3.6	<p>The key stages in the identification of a new planning IT system are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Discovery – September • Procure consultants for business case – September • Develop draft business case – October • Department and Local Government to consider draft business case – November • Develop final business case (to reflect feedback from Department and Local Government)
4.0	<p>Belfast City Council’s Role and Involvement</p> <p>Officers from both Planning and Digital Services within BCC have been involved in the Discovery Exercise which has just been completed. No costings have been provided on any of the Business Solutions identified at Paragraph 3.4.4 above.</p>
4.1	<p>The principle of identifying options is accepted by Officers as the right way forward however we are not in receipt of all the information, including costings, that would allow us to assess the appropriateness of each business solution as this stage.</p>
5.0	<p>Financial & Resource Implications - Yes</p> <p>In the longer term there will be financial implications for Council for a replacement portal.</p>
6.0	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications</p>

	N/A
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