

Northern Ireland Planning Portal Replacement IT System	19 March 2019
Planning Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	The Council will embrace new technologies and processes where they can bring about better experiences for citizens and visitors.
Lead Officer	Head of Planning
Cost: (If applicable)	Estimated £1.34m over 11years (£121.7k per annum on average)

For Information

Purpose

To update Members on this Councils contribution towards the new IT system to replace the Northern Ireland Planning Portal.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Planning Portal (NIPP) is used by the Department for Infrastructure, 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. There are approximately 9,500 registered users in Public Access.
- 1.2 The NIPP was developed over 10 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 but negotiation on a modification to the new contract has been developed to ensure that the NIPP is supported beyond March 2019 (and potentially to December 2020) but procurement of a new IT system is urgently required.
- 1.3 There is a risk that any new IT system will not be fully operational by December 2020 and the Department is currently exploring potential mitigation measures to ensure there is no break in service. These mitigation measures are dependent on securing agreement on the way forward for a new IT system so that the procurement can be progressed as soon as possible.

2.0 **DETAIL**

2.1 The Department and local government colleagues have been working together to identify a way forward for the new planning IT system. The scope and functionality of a new IT system has been agreed through a Discovery exercise and PA Consulting has independently developed the business case. The Outline Business Case (OBC) identified the preferred solution as a single Regional IT system shared between 11 Councils and the Department for Infrastructure.

Funding

2.2 The estimated cost of the preferred option is £26.728m over the 11 years of the project commencing from 2019/20. The cost consists of £15.06m capital and £11.67m resource. It is important to note that these costs and timescales remain estimates at this stage and the actual costs and timescales will be determined through a competitive procurement process. This will enable the business case to be revised to reflect actual costs and timescales and a Final Business Case produced which will be further considered and signed off by the Department and Local Government prior to the award of a contract.

2.3 Since the NIPP went live, the Department has funded the NIPP at a level of some £1m resource per year to maintain and support the system. In accordance with RPA principles the Department proposes, therefore, to continue to contribute £1m per year for the maintenance and support of the new IT system, once it becomes operational.

2.4 It is recognised that the Department has incurred capital expenditure to upgrade the NIPP at different stages. This expenditure was linked to the specific challenges of delivering the NIPP system together with the changes required for the transfer of planning to councils. Again, in accordance with RPA Principles, it is proposed that the Department will contribute £2m to the capital costs of the new IT system over the period, based on historic costs.

2.5 In addition, the Department will contribute £1m over the period covering the cost of the Department's project team. In summary this represents a contribution of £12m.

- £1m (resource) per year for 8 years (system operational from 2022 to 2030)
- £3m over the period representing a contribution to the capital cost of the system.
- £1m over the period to cover the cost of the Department's project team.

2.6 Table 1 below details the total costs split between DfI and the 11 Councils with DfI contributing toward 44.9% of the cost compared to 55.1% between the 11 Councils. The cost to local government therefore would be £14.728m.

Table 1: Distribution of Costs

	Development Costs	Operating Costs	Total costs	Percentage
Dfl Contribution	£4m	£8m	£12m	44.9%
Council Contribution	£11.057m	£3.671m	£14.728m	55.1%
Total	£15.057m	£11.671m	£26.728m	

2.7 The Department proposes that this is split on an equal basis equating to £1.34m per Council over the 11 years (or £121.7k per annum on average). The costs will commence in the next business year 2019/20 and are estimated as detailed in Table 2:

Table 2: Estimated breakdown of Costs per Council over the 11 year period

	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
Develop Costs	£170k	£320k	£341k	£175k	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Operate Costs	£2k	£2k	£6k	£29k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k
Total Costs	£172k	£322k	£347k	£204k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k	£42k

2.8 As is detailed in Table 2, the greatest percentage of the costs relate to the development costs over the first 4 years of the project. The remaining years the costs are solely operating costs at £42k annually. Full details are provided at Appendix 1.

Memorandum of Understanding

2.9 In order to bring the project forward a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 2) has been developed for each Council to sign up to agreeing the principles for the joint working. These principles are:

- To promote and support the preferred option and agree the outline business case
- To support the agreed governance arrangements for the delivery of the project
- To provide staff, finance and other resources to the project on an equitable basis
- To share the benefits from the project on an equitable basis
- To co-operate with others in the progression of the project.

Planning IT System

Memorandum of Understanding between Planning Authorities

Status	For distribution
Version:	V2.0
Date:	11 February 2019

Contents

1. Purpose
2. Introduction
3. Scope
4. Collaboration Principles
5. Roles and Responsibilities
 - a. Development and Implementation of new Planning IT System
 - b. Operation and Management of new Planning IT System
6. Duration of agreement
7. Review
8. Dispute Resolution
9. Termination

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to provide a framework for joint working between Councils and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

2. Introduction

The DfI and the 11 local Councils have been working collaboratively together, as the 12 Planning Authorities, to identify the way forward for a new Planning IT System.

The Outline Business Case (OBC) Version 8 dated 9th January) sets out the preferred option, the whole life costs, the procurement route and the timescale for implementation of a new Planning IT System.

The business case will be updated after the procurement process and a Final Business Case will be developed.

3. Scope

This MoU sets out the roles and responsibilities of the 12 Planning Authorities for the development and implementation of a new Planning IT system; as well as the operation and management of the IT system until the end of the contract with the new supplier (estimated to be 2030).

It also sets out how the costs for the new Planning IT system will be shared between the 12 Planning Authorities.

4. Collaboration Principles

The Department and the 11 local Councils have been working collaboratively together to identify a way forward for a new planning IT system.

Going forward the Department and the 11 local Councils will work cooperatively together in accordance with the following overarching principles:

- i. To promote and support the preferred option agreed in the OBC
- ii. To support the agreed governance arrangements for the delivery of the project
- iii. To provide staff, finance and other resources to the project on an equitable basis
- iv. To share the benefits from the project on an equitable basis
- v. To co-operate with others in the progression of the project

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Development and Implementation of new Planning IT System

The high level project governance arrangements are set-out in the OBC.

The development and implementation of a new Planning IT system will be overseen by the Planning Portal Governance Board (PPGB).

5.2 Operation and Management of new Planning IT System

When the new Planning IT System goes live (and the project closes) the responsibility for the day to day management of the system will transfer from the project team to a new group representing all 12 Planning Authorities. The precise timing of this will be determined by the PPGB.

This new group will consist of four staff (in total) from the 12 Planning authorities. The group will be responsible for.

- Managing the contract.
- Managing the supplier including performance management.
- Managing any proposed changes to the system including upgrades and change requests.

The contract documents will specify the performance management and change control arrangements for the contract. The associated costs for the operation and management of the new IT system will be shared equitably amongst the 12 Planning Authorities.

The Terms of Reference for the group will be agreed with the PPGB prior to the system going live. This will include details on the financial delegation limits for the group and how work to the IT system will be agreed and prioritised.

5.3 Financial Management

The underlying principle is that the costs for the development, implementation, operation and management of a new Planning IT system will be shared equitably amongst the 12 Planning authorities. The costs for maintaining the existing NIPP are outside of this agreement and will be covered by the Department.

The estimated costs for the new Planning IT system are based on OBC (Version 8.8 dated 9th January 2019). These (non-discounted) estimated costs will be shared between the Department and local government as shown in Table 1.

Public Sector	Costs £k	Percentage of total costs
Dfi	12.0	44.9%
Local Government	14.7	55.1%
Total	26.7	100%

Table 1

The proportion of the local government costs for each council is shown in Annex A. Therefore the proportion of the total project costs amongst the 12 planning authorities is shown in Table 2.

Planning Authority	Percentage contribution
Department for Infrastructure	44.9%
Antrim and Newtownabbey	5.01%
Ards and North Down	5.01%
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	5.01%
Belfast	5.01%
Causeway Coast and Glens	5.01%
Derry City and Strabane	5.01%
Fermanagh & Omagh	5.01%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	5.01%
Mid Ulster	5.01%
Mid and East Antrim	5.01%
Newry Mourne and Down	5.01%
Total	100%

Table 2

Subject to the outcome of the procurement process the Department will, on behalf of the 12 Planning Authorities, act as the procuring authority for the new IT system. The Department will make payments to the IT supplier in accordance with the contract and then seek reimbursement from each council based on the percentages in Table 2. The Department will issue invoices to Councils each quarter which should be paid within 30 days of the date of the invoice.

The level of staff input for the development and implementation phases of the project is also an element of Local Governments and the Department's contribution to the project costs. The level of staff input will be recorded by the Project Management Office and the associated costs based on the ready reckoner table in Annex [B]. The Project Manager will, during the development and implementation phases of the project, submit quarterly financial reports for the PPGB detailing the costs of the project and the relevant contribution from the Department and Councils.

As previously discussed when the system goes live (and the project closes) the responsibility for the day to day management of the new Planning IT system will transfer from the project team to a new group representing all 12 Planning Authorities. The precise timing of this will be determined by the PPGB. This will also include the transfer of the IT system (as an asset) from the Department to all 12

planning authorities – this would be similar to the transfer of assets under RPA. The practical details on this asset transfer will be agreed prior to contract award.

This funding model will be applied throughout the whole project life cycle. However, it can be reviewed at the following key stages with the agreement of all 12 Planning Authorities.

- i. Prior to award of contract for new Planning IT system (estimated February 2020)
- ii. Prior to completion of the development and implementation phases of the project

6. Duration of MoU

The MoU will come into effect when the OBC is agreed by the Department and Local Government and remain in force until the end of the contract for the new Planning IT system, estimated to be 31st March 2030.

7. Review

The MoU will be reviewed at the following key stages

- i. Prior to award of contract for new Planning IT system (estimated February 2020).
- ii. Prior to completion of the development and implementation phases of the project.

In addition, the MoU may be reviewed and amended at any time with the consent of all 12 parties.

8. Dispute Resolution

The 12 Planning Authorities will seek to resolve any disputes regarding the MoU with the group managing the new IT system on a daily basis. If this is not possible, disputes should be escalated to the Planning Portal Governance Board for consideration.

Finally, if the dispute cannot be resolved then it should be escalated to the Permanent Secretary of the DfI and Local Government Chief Executives.

9. Termination

Prior to the award of the contract for a new Planning IT System each Planning Authority can decide not to continue with the project and leave the MoU. The Planning Authority will be responsible for their proportion of the project costs up to that point. Under this situation then the viability of the MoU will be considered by the remaining Planning Authorities.

In addition the MoU may be terminated with the consent of all 12 parties. Although there may be financial implications of terminating the MoU if this impacts on the contract for the new IT System.

If any Planning Authority terminates the MoU, outside of the above areas, then that Authority will be liable for any and all financial implications relating to the Planning IT System.

Distribution of project costs amongst Councils

Annex A

The local government element of the project costs will be shared by Councils based on the percentages below.

	Percentage contribution
Antrim and Newtownabbey	9.09%
Ards and North Down	9.09%
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	9.09%
Belfast	9.09%
Causeway Coast and Glens	9.09%
Derry City and Strabane	9.09%
Fermanagh & Omagh	9.09%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	9.09%
Mid Ulster	9.09%
Mid and East Antrim	9.09%
Newry Mourne and Down	9.09%

Ready Reckoner for Staff Costs

Annex B



Ready reckoner
updated January 2018