

Thursday, 9 March 2023

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Risk and Customer Services, Portfolio Holder for Voluntary sector, Town Centre, Evening economy & Community Safety / Assistant Director - Growth & Regeneration

Assure Project Update

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To give a progress update to Corporate Scrutiny on the Assure project for Environmental Health

Recommendations

N/A

Executive Summary

Environmental Health currently use the M3 IT system provided by NEC to manage back-office processes. NEC will be issuing a 12-month de-support notice in April whereby they will no longer provide updates, fixes, and support for the M3 Environmental Health product. The successor to M3 is Assure, a web browser-based product reengineered for a modern, feature richer and flexible application more suited to our service area and customer needs.

Options Considered

N/A

Resource Implications

The upgrade to Assure will require significant resource from the Environmental Health team. All modules/processes used by the team are now available for transition to Assure and the project will require resource for the duration of the transition. The project can be approached in stages with Licensing and Document Production being mandatory for an initial go live to Assure. The Head of Environmental Health has prepared a business case for additional staff to cover for officers supporting the transition work to Assure, which is going through the sign off process. The budget is in place to support the additional capacity required.

NEC have also put together a costed package to support our upgrade, reducing impact on our own resources and delivering the project in a reduced time frame. Subject to the level of support required from NEC, several budget options to fund this work are available.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

The main risk associated with this project is full delivery of the upgrade ahead of the de-support notice deadline for M3 of March 2024. There will be significant resource demands on the Environmental Health team to deliver the upgrade within the timescales, the mitigation for which is twofold: establishing a budget to fund an assisted support package from NEC and creating additional capacity within the Environmental Health team for the duration of the project.

Equalities Implications

N/A

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

N/A

Background Information – Progress Update

The project now has formal project management in place to ensure appropriate governance, stakeholder involvement and timely delivery. The project board have completed a project initiation document (PID) setting out at a high level the scope, stakeholders, workstreams and governance structure of the project.

In terms of practical progress, members of the Environmental Health team have attended training on the Assure document production system in preparation for the transition of letter templates and associated documents to Assure. Wider project stakeholders also attended a demonstration from NEC of their public facing Assure module which will be considered as part of the project's scope, for providing self-service to the public for Environmental Health specific processes such as Taxi Licensing. The Assure test system has also been upgraded and is in a position where testing can start when resources are allocated, and the level of any support package has been agreed with NEC.

Additionally, the team have started to look at the existing M3 system to ensure work that needs to migrate to Assure is necessary. To facilitate this the team are looking at all letter templates within the system to assess if 1) they are still required and 2) if templates are used on a frequent basis. Given timescales there is little point spending time on preparing new letter templates for Assure if they are only likely to be used once every five years. This data cleanse therefore will prioritise those most frequently used templates within M3 for migration to Assure.

Next steps are to define in more detail the project workstreams in conjunction with NEC and develop an associated project plan for delivery by the March 2024 deadline. The project board will also agree resources and the level of involvement/support required from NEC. Decisions will also be made on the preferred option for a public facing self-serve function for Environmental Health specific processes.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

N/A

Appendices

N/A