

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Community Partnerships

### Update on Assure Implementation

#### Not Exempt

#### Purpose

To update Corporate Scrutiny on progress made in implementing the Assure corporate project.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that Corporate Scrutiny Committee endorse the report.

#### Executive Summary

The Assure corporate project seeks to migrate Environmental Health and Planning processes from M3, which is a back-office IT system provided by NEC, to its successor Assure. The new upgraded system is a web browser-based product reengineered for a modern, feature rich and flexible application more suited to our service area and customer needs, in line with our ICT Strategy ambitions.

In March 2023 Corporate Scrutiny requested progress updates on the project. Since this date there has been good progress made on migrating data and templates from M3 into Assure.

The Environmental Health Team which has the largest workload to transition is making significant headway on developing templates and configuring the system. The team are aiming to get the licensing workload 'live' on Assure by the end of March, which represents the majority and most complex of the Environmental health workload and meets the desupport deadline.

The Planning team are working on templates and configuring the system. Training has been undertaken and the team are working confidently through the necessary workload to enable a transition to the 'live' Assure system. The team are aiming to undertake the transition in the Spring.

#### Options Considered

The only option is to deliver the upgrade from M3 to Assure. Without the transition to the new software there would be serious implications for service delivery as the M3 Environmental Health module is being de-supported with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 meaning that if there are any system issues they will not be resolved by NEC.

#### Resource Implications

The Environmental Health Team have been able to resource an additional officer to work on M3 on a part time basis, this support has led to fast progress as a result of increased

capacity. The Officer has been able to coordinate activity across the EH team, become an expert in Assure and importantly dedicate time to the project without compromising other important workload necessary for the delivery of the service.

Budget has also been found to enable training by NEC on document templates, configuration, and processing.

### **Legal/Risk Implications**

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, for the Environmental Health Team. For clarity, the de-support notice does not prevent M3 from being used beyond this date, but it does present a problem should an M3 IT issue arise because NEC will not support any resolution of the issue. Given the total reliance on the M3 system for managing casework and workflow, an issue with M3 could be very serious and would very quickly lead to service failure.

To mitigate risk, see resources section.

### **Equalities Implications**

N/A

### **Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)**

N/A

### **Background Information**

*ICT*

In preparation for configuration and testing of Assure, the entire M3 and Assure environment has been upgraded onto the latest server, database, and application versions to ensure continued system stability, futureproofing and the latest functionality is available to users.

The system will also have a further security upgrade in February to ensure access to Assure remains safe and secure.

#### *Environmental Health*

In relation to the Environmental Health Service there are several key tasks that need to be completed, including:

- Configure the system to allow EH to process and manage the team's workflow. This can largely be divided into enquiries, inspections, licences, and registrations.
- Configure the system to run reports allowing the extraction of information that they need from it on the various tasks undertaken by the department.
- Set up all letters and documents within the system so that they can quickly and efficiently be produced and sent out.

In terms of transitioning from M3 to Assure completely these steps need to be completed for Licencing activities within the Environmental Health department and then for wider tasks the team is responsible for. NEC has advised Licencing needs to be completed first and transitioned to the live system, so this is the initial focus.

At present EH are well underway with setting up config for licensing with enquiries, licences and inspections working in the test system. Training from NEC on the reporting side of the system is pending, once this has been completed then EH will be able to set this up in the

test system. At that stage they will be able to set a date for the licencing side of Assure to go live. At this point it is anticipated that the licencing workload will be ready for transitioning to Assure in early March. The logistics of achieving this is underway to ensure that the EH team have minimal disruption to the back office system and equally, customers.

Once licencing is live, they can then replicate what has been completed there on the wider tasking of the department.

In terms of letters and documents being loaded onto the system EH have analysed the usage of the documents that they currently have on the M3 system, removed the documents that are no longer in use and then prioritised the documents that see the most usage, EH are currently on track that all documents for licencing will be available on Assure for any anticipated go live date for licencing and then wider documentation will be available for our main go live date.

In terms of meeting the de-support date the licencing workload represents approximately 75% of all EH workload that needs to transition. The aim is to ensure that the transition is before the de-support deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup>. The team are confident that the remaining 25% can be dealt with swiftly and a phased approach to the workload will flow from the Licencing transition. The risk associated with the remaining 25% is much lower and the team are confident that this will be dealt with quickly.

### *Planning*

Planning have made good progress on the preparation of document templates for Assure. Initial template training has been completed with further training/familiarisation for the wider team to follow. Officers will then be able to configure this element of Assure. To support the process, the team will produce relevant documentation to assist them in completing this activity, we envisage the template creation taking a day to complete.

Following the template work, system configuration training will be arranged enabling the team to progress with transfer of Planning processes onto Assure. Again, relevant guidance to support the training will be documented for the wider team to configure and use the system with proficiency.

Whilst planning is not caught by the de-support notice, there is a need to move to Assure as soon as possible and the transition is timetabled for the Spring.

### **Report Author**

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### **List of Background Papers**

- Report to Corporate Scrutiny March 2023

### **Appendices**

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