Report to:	**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date:	**6ᵗʰ October 2020**
Title:	**Future IT Project Update**
Portfolio Area:	**Resources and Performance – Cllr C Edmonds**
Wards Affected:	**All**

Urgent Decision:	**N**	Approval and clearance obtained:	**Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress of the Future IT project and the evaluation of risks.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The contract for the Councils' current core operating systems for handling customer interactions expires on 31st January 2021.

1.2 The Future IT Project was set up to procure, install and implement replacement software before this date ensuring that the Council was equipped with a modern platform capable of delivering a fast and effective customer experience.

1.3 This report sets out to update Members on the progress made by Officers following the decision to award the contract in February 2020.

2. Background

2.1 The systems currently being used (Civica W2 and APP) have been in operation since 2015, with the contract term expiring at the end of January 2021.

2.2 Civica W2 handles the majority of customer interaction with the Council and stores all electronic records and documents.

2.3 Civica APP provides the principal software for managing all work relating to Development Management and Environmental Health.

2.4 On 28th January 2020 a decision was made by Hub Committee to award the contract for delivering a low-code customer relationship management system to Netcall Ltd.

2.5 In March 2020 a delegated decision was made by the Strategic Director of Customer Service Delivery in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources and Performance and the Leader of the Council to award the contract for the principal systems for Development Management and Environmental Health, as well as a Council wide document management system, to Northgate Public Services.

2.6 A Joint Working Group, consisting of 5 elected members from each Council with officer support from the Head of IT Practice and Head of Strategy & Projects was formed to oversee the project and make recommendations if required. The Joint Working Group have met on 3 occasions since the last committee report.

2.7 The Joint Working Group is chaired for West Devon by Cllr Edmonds with Cllr Cheadle, Cllr Kimber, Cllr Moody and Cllr Southcott .They are joined by five Members from South Hams District Council.

2.8 The Group has met on three occasions to overview the work of the Group and considered:-
   i. Project Risks scoring
   ii. The proposal to award the contract to Northgate prior to contract award
   iii. Early customer access proposals
   iv. Project highlight reports including budget and staff resourcing

3. Outcomes/outputs

3.1 A timeline showing the milestones of the Future IT Project
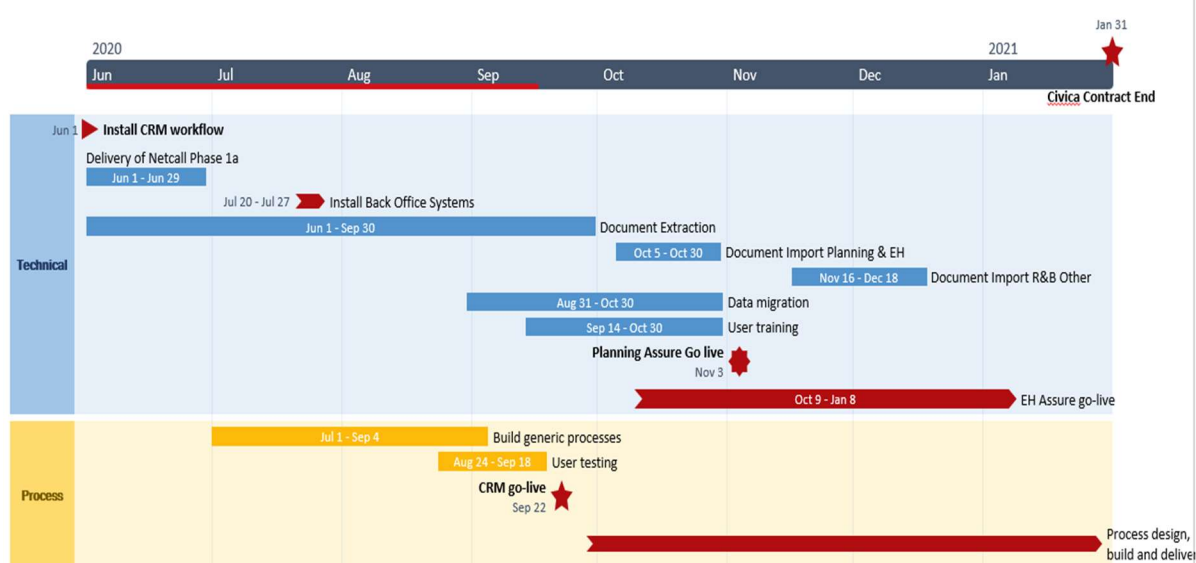
Netcall Low-code Platform

3.2 The Netcall Low-code platform was installed in May 2020.

3.3 The Business Development Team underwent extensive training to enable them to create a system from scratch to our own specification.

3.4 The flexibility of the platform allowed the team to create and deliver a standalone system for successfully managing the Council's Discretionary Business Grant Scheme.

3.5 During the first phase of development Netcall delivered integrations with some of the Council's core systems including Adelante payments, our Gazatteer (LLPG), Gov Notify, Whitespace (Waste) and our telephony system.

3.6 A second phase of development has just commenced which will see further functionality and integrations added.

3.7 A small number of simple, generic processes have been created, tested and rolled out to the Contact Centre and to the website. These processes went live to the public on 24th September 2020.

3.8 Further development cycles will continue over the next 12 months, building processes and releasing to the live environment. The order of these processes will be prioritised on the volume of use and the requirement to replace those processes currently held in Civica systems.

3.9 The delivery of the Council's COVID-19 response, including the time spent developing and administering the Discretionary Business Grant scheme, has had an impact on the delivery of this part of the project. The team are currently working hard to recover time lost to supporting the business through this time. This risk is outlined in more detail in Section 4.4.

Northgate Assure – Development Management and Environmental Health

3.10 The Northgate Assure product is made up of 2 bespoke systems designed to manage Development Management and Environmental Health cases. These systems were installed in July 2020.

3.11 The training of system administrators both in IT and Case Management has taken place to enable the system to be configured to the Council's requirements. This configuration work, which includes the creation of document templates, will continue throughout October.

3.12 Extensive work has been undertaken mapping the data in Civica APP over to data tables in Assure. A first data test load took place on 18th September, the results of which have been analysed to identify any errors prior to the next data test load.

3.13 Both systems now will undergo extensive testing for both internal and customer facing interfaces.

3.14 Assure Environmental Health is scheduled to go-live in several stages beginning on 9th October 2020 with Licensing and continuing through to early 2021. During these stages both Assure and APP will be used in tandem.

3.15 Assure Development Management is scheduled to go-live on 3rd November 2020 in a 'big-bang' approach. From this date all planning applications will be managed within Assure and customers will be able to use the Assure public access search to find planning applications.

3.16 This part of the project remains on track although still carries the highest risks due to the volume of data and documents being migrated and the business requirement to keep system downtime to a minimum.

Northgate Document Management

3.17 The migration to the new document management system requires the extraction of documents from Civica W2 and the import to Northgate Information@work.

3.18 Work on the extraction of the documents began in April 2020. To date all Planning applications, Environmental Health documents and most of the Revenues and Benefits documents have been extracted from Civica W2. This work in on track to be completed as scheduled.

3.19 In the build up to go-live, test imports are run to ensure that the documents are correctly indexed within the new filing systems.

3.20 Planning documents are due to go-live in tandem with the Assure system on 3rd November.

3.21 EH documents will map across in conjunction with the modules as they go-live.

3.22 Revenues and Benefits and all other corporate filing will go-live in December 2020

Impact on the customer

3.23 The delivery of this project will ultimately improve the customer experience, however the transition to the new systems will necessitate some changes for our customers and will require some system downtime.

3.24 When possible weekends will be used for system downtime to minimise the impact on performance and delivery of services.

3.25 Any system downtime which will impact customer facing processes will be communicated in advance on our website and social media.

3.26 Town and Parish Councils / Planning agents will receive advance warning of the move to a new Public Planning search as well as details of the change.

3.27 Other projects have been scoped to ensure that we don't change processes during other major service changes.

3.28 All new processes will be designed with the customer experience in mind, making transactions quick and easy, providing meaningful updates where appropriate.

3.29 New processes will all be tested thoroughly and feedback used to finely tune before they go-live.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 The delivery of this project is time critical in light of the requirement to replace multiple core Council systems before the end of the current Civica contract and hence carries considerable risk.

4.2 Delivery of this large and complex project has continued throughout the nationwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3 Risks have been carefully managed throughout this project and continue to be regularly reviewed and updated. Risks have been shared and discussed with the Member Joint Working Group.

4.4 A summary of the key risks and mitigations are detailed below:

Description of risk	Mitigations
Business as usual performance levels drop due to hours lost to training, testing and system downtime.	- System downtime to be minimised where possible by utilising weekends for final data load prior to go-live. - Ensure work is as up to date as possible prior to any system downtime / end-user training. - Secondment of key officers into the project team to ensure dedicated effort - Identify areas of high risk and create recovery plan, securing additional resource to catch up lost time if required. - Keep the Business Managers regularly updated on resource implications
Document and data migrations into new system take longer than planned	- The large data migrations for Development Management and Environmental Health have been scheduled to be completed several months before the Civica contract ends. - Multiple cuts planned to ensure that issues are identified early
Insufficient resource in business to support project – risk increased due to unpredictability of resourcing COVID-19 response	- The choice of a low-code platform running in parallel allows go-live to be staggered around business demands - Secondment of key team members into the project to maintain a stable core team - Keep the Business Managers regularly updated on resource implications
Coronavirus will impact ability to deliver project – possibility of second wave	- Project is being delivered by staff and suppliers working remotely. - Remote working decreases risk of multiple members of the team being unavailable at the same time. - Key dates have been brought forward as early as possible to avoid overrun due to staff absence - Shared risk register with suppliers

Development cycles take longer than planned and as a result not all processes are transferred from W2 to the new platform before the end of the Civica contract	• Prioritise processes that are high volume and therefore have the most impact • Deliver simple processes that work ahead of complex integrations. Being able to build processes and integrations in house will enable enhancements to carried out at a later date • Much pre-work mapping processes has already been completed allowing the team to focus on building the process

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 For the Joint Working Group to continue to meet throughout the delivery of the systems to provide assurance that the progress is on track and risks continue to be managed.

5.2 For the predicted impact on business performance and steps to recovery to be regularly communicated to Members.

5.3 Where appropriate, service changes and delays to be effectively communicated to customers.

5.4 A further update will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		The Future IT Project is managed using PRINCE2 project methodology and governed by a Project Board who meet once a month. Executive Lead – Steve Mullineaux Project Manager – Kate Hamp Project Assurance – Neil Hawke Technical Lead – Mike Ward Senior User – Sarah Moody Customer Representative – Jim Davis Member engagement is made through the Future IT Joint Working Group. The procurement of IT systems has been undertaken through a government established framework.
Financial implications to include reference		The project remains on track and within the agreed budget

to value for money		
Risk		The key risks are detailed in section 4.4 A detailed risk register containing all risks relating to the project is available on request.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The Future IT project directly supports the Efficient and Effective Council corporate strategy theme. It will deliver an enhanced customer experience and more efficient processing of cases.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		The Council have decided to procure a cloud hosted solution (Netcall). This means that there will not be the requirement to house the system on Council servers (although clearly it will need to be hosted on remote servers) Hosting on cloud servers will mean that upgrades and support to the system will be carried out remotely without the requirement for the supplier to visit the site, reducing unnecessary travel. The system will also ensure that the Council continues to support its staff working from remote locations and not having to travel in to the office to work, contributing to the continuing reduction in carbon from commuting.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		Any system must meet accessibility standards and have been considered through the supplier demonstrations.
Safeguarding		There are no safeguarding issues within this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None
Other implications		Data Governance – full system security and data protection requirements are set out in the contract and will be managed by the councils Data Protection Officer (Director of Governance and Assurance)

Supporting Information
Appendices: None

Background Papers:
28 January 2020 Hub Committee agenda and minutes;
Future IT PID; and
Future IT Business Case.