

[REDACTED]
Deputy Secretary
Planning, Safety & Transport Policy Group
Department for Infrastructure
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8GB

Email: [REDACTED]

12 October 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

REGIONAL PLANNING IT SYSTEM – READINESS FOR GO LIVE

Thank you for your letter dated 7 October 2022 regarding the readiness of the new portal. From our Council's perspective, I can assure you that we are ready to "go live" with the new system.

I understand that there is a meeting scheduled for 14 October, involving the Department, Heads of Planning and the Provider to agree whether the go live date of 7 November is achievable.

Whilst I appreciate that the Department will want input from the Heads of Planning into this decision, I do not feel that these Officers have the authority or responsibility to make such a decision.

As the lead for the delivery of the project, the Council is seeking assurance from the Department that the new portal is ready for implementation and that a 'go live' date of 7 Nov 2022 for implementation is realistic and achievable. From the updates provided by Officers, I understand that any delay beyond this date may mean that further costs (penalties) are incurred to the contract however, I am not aware that the detail of this has been shared with the Councils for consideration.

I would welcome an update as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Chief Executive

Place and Economy Department
Planning and Building Control



Belfast
City Council

Our Ref: 20221017KB/TH

Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
BELFAST
BT2 8BP

Tel: [REDACTED]

Date: 17 October 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Whilst recognising the pressing need to implement a new Planning Portal in Northern Ireland, we are pleased that the Regional Project Board took the decision on Friday not to go live with the new system on 07 November. Whilst the meeting was long, it was undoubtedly critical that we came to the right decision as a Board.

The revised go live date is expected to be 05 December and it is essential that we use this additional time to address not only the outstanding issues relating to UAT but also training and local government readiness.

User Acceptance Testing

In terms of UAT, this must be properly structured and full testing should resume including use of test scripts and full end-to-end testing. We request that regular test updates (and graphs) continue to be provided to councils on at least a weekly basis and that this should also include an update against critical and significant faults including a description of each.

Quality Assurance

We are very concerned about the apparent lack of Quality Assurance by the supplier and that patches and updates are being deployed without them being sufficiently ready as is evidenced by the continued high number of faults which are being identified through UAT. We query whether the supplier is failing to meet its contractual obligations in this regard.

Training

Regarding training, we would like to see an updated training programme put in place that recognises the need to complete the UAT process first (as recommended by Gateway 4 report) and addresses the previous fundamental shortfalls in "training the trainer".



Intelligent Client Function

From an ICF perspective, we need to agree the detail of the additional support that the Department is offering during the implementation phase with a view to mitigating some of the concerns that Belfast City Council has in respect of go live (in its capacity as ICF). In this regard, we look forward to receiving the next draft version of the transition/handover plan and working closely with Peter to finalise this important document. The additional time will also allow us to pursue options for filling the existing vacant fourth post in the ICF.

Contingency

The revised go live date of 05 December would mean that there would be only **26 days** until the end of the current contract for the NIPP. Should the implementation need to be delayed yet again – and that would not be beyond the realms of possibility given the track record of the project – there is currently no contingency in place for continued Planning IT services into next year. We reiterate our view expressed at the Regional Project Board on Friday that a 3 month contract extension for the current NIPP must be put in place immediately. We also ask that this request at Friday's meeting is clearly minuted.

Yours sincerely,



to this alternative solution; in addition officials have not had sight of the new planning Consultee Hub or been provided with any training / training manuals to assist with the operational aspects of the new portal once it goes live.

Red Line Boundary (RLB)

Aligned to this work on the new planning portal DAERA would also request an update with regards to how the RLB will be consumed within this new IT system. Recently a highly welcomed pilot solution was developed by DfI whereby the RLB were delivered via the RLB Service. It is my understanding that with the development of the new planning portal that the current pilot arrangement will cease to function in October once the DfI server becomes obsolete. This is disappointing as it saved resource and all who used it found it to be beneficial. We understand that the RLB may be available on the Consultee Hub as a spatial file in GeoJSON format, however given DAERA has been unsighted on the format of this new hub, it is proving difficult for us to make any assessment of the impact of these impending developments on DAERA working practices and the consequential implications.

As you can appreciate I am keen to ensure that the appropriate mitigations, should any be necessary as a consequence of the launch of the new planning portal, are in place prior to the launch of the new system. I would therefore be grateful if you could bring us up to date on the most recent developments, in particular:

- Confirmation of the timetable up to 'go-live'.
- When will DAERA nominated staff be provided with training in the consultee functionalities of the new Planning Portal and the proposed Consultee Hub?
- Is it envisaged the Consultee Hub will be operational at the same time as the new Planning Portal goes live?
- What format will the RLB take in the functionality of the new portal and will there be an option for consultees to view the RLB of a site and the constraint layers associated with that site?
- If constraints are available how will this data continue to be updated and provide relevant real time information?
- What is the notification process for Statutory Consultees once a consultation has been raised by a Planning Official? (Presently DAERA receive a notification email alerting us to a new consultation).
- What is the proposed functionality for reports that can be generated from the new system?
- Following the implementation of the Planning Portal who will be the nominated contact for any technical issues with the running of the new system?

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Given the imminent launch date of the new portal on 7 November I would welcome an urgent response or meeting to enable DAERA to make the necessary arrangements to try to resolve the issues identified above.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Director

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 April 2023 15:46
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

From: Dfl PG Secretariat
Sent: 17 November 2022 08:48
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The correct Ref No for below should be DFIPG 398/22.

From: Dfl PG Secretariat
Sent: 16 November 2022 09:04
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] DFIPG 345/22: Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DFIPG 345/22 applies

Response due by 5/12, PLEASE COPY PG Sec into response
I will acknowledge

IN1-21-291P010

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 November 2022 18:35
To: Dfl PG Secretariat <PG.Secretariat@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yes, please set up as a Misc case.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]
DfI Planning



Please consider the environment before printing this email - thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: DfI PG Secretariat <PG.Secretariat@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 14 November 2022 10:57

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please see email below re planning portal. If you need it set up as Misc case please let me know

Thanks

[REDACTED]
PG Sec

-----Original Message-----

From: DfI Corporate Policy Unit

Sent: 14 November 2022 10:55

To: DfI PG Secretariat <PG.Secretariat@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: Planning Portal - personal details - [REDACTED]

Please see query below which was received by CPU. CPU has acknowledged receipt of this email to advise the correspondent that it has been passed to your business area for further action. Please arrange to action as appropriate.

CPU uses the Department's Information Asset Register to assist in the identification of the relevant lead business area. Should you, as the allocated lead business area, feel that this correspondence rests more appropriately with another business area then you should agree the transfer with that business area immediately and inform CPU accordingly via the mailbox at info@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

If your business area decides to handle this correspondence as a complaint, please arrange for processing through the Departmental Complaints Handling process (link attached below) and issue a further acknowledgement to the customer within three working days in line with these guidelines.

<http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/infrastructure/documents/dfi-complaints-handling-guide>

Business areas should continue to record details of all complaints locally. Details on the number of complaints handled by each business area will be requested on a quarterly basis.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CPU

Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate
Department for Infrastructure
Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GB
info@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 November 2022 09:37
To: DfI Corporate Policy Unit <Info@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Planning Portal

Caution – This email has been received from outside the NICS network.

Please ensure you can verify the sender's name and email address.

Treat all attachments and links with caution.

FOR INTERNAL NICS STAFF ONLY - If you have any concerns regarding the email please forward to spam@finance-ni.gov.uk <mailto:spam@finance-ni.gov.uk>.

Hi,

I'm really glad to see a centralised Planning Portal, makes things much easier. I'm just contacting you regarding a concern that when you make a comment on an application your full name and address is visible. I'm a little concerned this could be a goldmine for anyone trying to harvest identify information. Perhaps something could be added that redacts addresses?

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 April 2023 15:45
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: New planning portal training links not working - [REDACTED]

From: Dfl PG Secretariat
Sent: 17 November 2022 16:42
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: New planning portal training links not working - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

See below which I have acknowledged. Ref No DFIPG 401/22 – response due 07.12.22 – CM IN1-21-291P010.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 November 2022 16:13
To: Dfl Corporate Policy Unit <Info@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: New planning portal training links not working

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Treat all attachments and links with caution.
FOR INTERNAL NICS STAFF ONLY - If you have any concerns regarding the email please forward to spam@finance-ni.gov.uk.

Hi,

With reference to the information published on this page: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/new-planning-portal>

And specifically this :

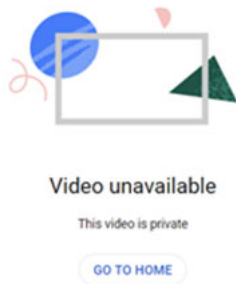
Progress Update

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is almost complete and has involved staff from both the Councils and the Department. It has helped to identify any bugs or issues that need to be addressed before the new system goes live December.

A programme of user training is currently being delivered and will continue up to and beyond the systems launch. Demo videos of the online submission and public register sites as well as the new Consultee Hub are now available on YouTube via the links below.

- [Start a new application online](#)
- [Public Register - application search](#)
- [Consultee Hub](#)

The links don't work and show only this message:



Could you send links to these videos please?

Thanks,



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MEA Business Awards Winner 2021 – 'Best Craft Design Company'
Belfast Telegraph Property Awards Finalist - 2019 'Residential Architectural Practice of the Year'
Belfast Telegraph Property Awards Finalist - 2019 'Commercial Architectural Practice of the Year'
Belfast Telegraph Property Awards Finalist - 2018 'Residential Architectural Practice of the Year'
Build Awards Winners - 2018 'Best Residential Remodel – NI'
Belfast Telegraph Property Awards Finalist - 2017 'Commercial Architectural Practice of the Year'
Belfast Telegraph Property Awards Finalist - 2017 'Residential Architectural Practice of the Year'
Build Awards Winners - 2017 'NI Home Extension Specialists of the Year'



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[REDACTED]