

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

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| From: Assistant Director – Planning for Growth | Report Number: JAC94 |
| To: Joint Audit and Standards Committee | Date of meeting: 23 January 2017 |

JOINT OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS, INTEGRATED AND EXCELLENT (JOSIE)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide further information in relation to the JOSIE Project.
- 1.2 To update Councillors about the actions and activities that have been put in place to respond to the findings in the Internal Audit Report dated 20 September 2016.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the content of the report be noted.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The project itself has a budget and there are financial implications from its implementation at a very broad level related to efficiency and employee productivity but the Audit Report did not raise financial risks and this report relates to project governance.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications rising from this report. The Councils have a contractual relationship with the IT supplier, IDOX, but it was not considered a risk in the Audit Report and is not in scope of this report.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Councils' Significant Risk Register No. 5a. Key risks are set out below:

| Risk Description | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Measures |
|---|--------------|---------|---|
| Failure to develop our use of technology to enable us to be efficient and cost effective in everything we do. | Unlikely (2) | Bad (3) | These are essentially the subject of this report so are identified below. |

6. Consultations

- 6.1 No consultations were undertaken to inform this report.

7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 There are no equality implications from this report.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 8.1 The JOSIE project will make a significant contribution to efficient shared service delivery across a range of teams including Development Management, Building Control, Land Charges, Infrastructure, Heritage and Enforcement.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

- 9.1 Joining our operational IT systems across so many areas will contribute to creating a more *Efficient and Enabled Organisation*. It will enable a more *Networked and Agile Organisation*, creating the potential for mobile working and a *Digital by Design* approach to workflow. It will also allow the Councils to provide more *Efficient Public Access Arrangements* through improving the way information is made available to the public.

10. Key Information

- 10.1 In 2013 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils produced a business case to support re-design of the Planning Service. The business case highlighted the need to implement a joint ICT system to support the service transformation and ongoing operations. Requirements for the new system, covering a large number of Council service teams, were gathered between August and November 2014.
- 10.2 A tendering exercise was undertaken via the Crown Commercial Services Local Authority Government Framework, resulting in full responses from two suppliers (DEF Software Limited and Idox Software Limited).
- 10.3 The responses were evaluated between February and April 2015. The decision to award the contract to IDOX was taken in May 2015. Technical discussions continued during 2015 to resolve the matter of whether the system would be hosted by Suffolk County Council or IDOX.
- 10.4 The infrastructure to host the system was installed at SCC during the early part of 2016. Lots of background work has been undertaken during 2016, including cleansing historic data, mapping, coding the new system, and preparing for data migration (see Appendix 1). As further background material, the design principles that have guided process redesign are included in Appendix 2.
- 10.5 An Internal Audit Report was commissioned during 2015/16 to ensure that project governance arrangements are effective and fit for purpose (including post-project completion plans as appropriate); System architecture is documented and any system changes are formally approved; Users are appropriately engaged in the testing phase, trained and test scripts are followed and managed; and Procedures are documented for online and manual applications. The report itself was issued on 20 September 2016.
- 10.6 The Internal Audit Report was reported to the Joint Audit and Standards Committee on 14 November 2016 and the Committee resolved that “*the Assistant Director responsible for the JOSIE Project be asked to provide a report to the next meeting of the Joint Committee giving further information in relation to the Project...*” and the actions taken to implement Internal Audit’s recommendations.
- 10.7 In respect of Project Governance, the Audit report suggested that “*The JOSIE PID should be updated to reflect all Stakeholders roles, responsibilities and accountabilities should be documented. Key dates should be included to show transparency and expected deliverables of JOSIE.*”

The Project plan should be shared with the Project Sponsors and the Senior Responsible Officer to show full transparency of the project.”

Time has moved on and the original PID no longer provides the value that it once did. Project documentation is now available to all on Sharepoint, updated in real time: <https://suffolknet.sharepoint.com/sites/connect/SitePages/Home.aspx> → Our Ambition → Housing Delivery Programme → JOSIE. While there is still some refining to do to make this information really accessible, it is considered to be an effective way to provide transparency of the project.

- 10.8 Stakeholder Communications have been good in some areas and less so in others. There has been regular and direct engagement with the project from the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), Tom Barker, and Project Sponsors, Carl Reeder and Gary Starling. Reports have not been provided in writing, however, and this has created some risks, which were articulated in the Internal Audit report.
- 10.9 To address this, the Project Manager is now emailing agreed actions/decisions after each update meeting with SRO and Stakeholders. These email reports will be used as the basis for SLT and Portfolio Holder updates by the SRO.
- 10.10 At the more practical level, the regular weekly meetings of the Core Team are now formally minuted and shared among the team.
- 10.11 In terms of risk management, there is now a detailed risk and issues log on the Sharepoint site, which is updated regularly.
- 10.12 The Internal Audit report also recommended that JOSIE spend should be reported on to SLT to reflect ‘spend of the public purse’. This will be done by the SRO as part of the Assistant Director “Highlight Report”.
- 10.13 In terms of timescales, the new system will be live by May 2017. It will be subject to significant levels of testing and data migration in the meantime, however, so any work that flows from those tests will need to be accommodated.
- 10.14 Overall the Internal Audit Report highlighted a lack of formal project documentation and reporting, which has been addressed in the ways described above.

11. Appendices

| Title | Location |
|------------------------|----------|
| 1) Background Document | Attached |
| 2) Design principles | Attached |

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Appendix 1

In 2013 the Councils produced a business case to support re-design of the Planning Service. This report was ratified at the MSDC Executive Committee on 14th October 2013 and at the BDC Strategy Committee on 17th October. The business case highlighted the need to implement a joint ICT system to support the service transformation and ongoing operations. Consequently, budget provision was agreed in order to support the purchase of such a system.

During 2014 BMS asked Bev Herring of Blyth and Herring Ltd. to assist with the procurement phase of a replacement computer system for a number of operational services. The Councils have been using Acolaid from Idox Computer Systems Ltd. for Planning, Building Control and Land Charges services, M3 from Northgate Services Ltd. for its Environmental and Private Sector Housing services and LalPac from Idox Computer Systems Ltd. for its Licensing Service. The initial brief was to deliver requirements to enable all of these services to be delivered from one, integrated suite of computer applications.

It was suggested that the project be named JOSIE - standing for Joint Operational Systems, Integrated and Excellent. This was to demonstrate, across the Councils, that the project is about more than replacing Planning and Building Control Systems. It is also more than a replacement for Acolaid.

Whilst in the process of completing the statement of requirements the Councils decided that the replacement of their M3 system (Environmental Services and Private Sector Housing) and of the LalPac system (Licensing) would be included as "optional" items only. In some respects this was as a result of internal discussions about the benefits to be gained from replacing systems which are already operating in a joint way across the two Councils. However, this move also helped to widen the potential number of suppliers who would be able to bid for the contract.

Even with the change in scope, the project remained wider than just a replacement of the Acolaid ICT systems. Overall the Councils wish to gain the following benefits - and retaining the name JOSIE helps to reinforce this to all staff.

- Integrated services (teams, processes etc.)
- Better customer service (by providing more self-service as well as improving the way that staff deliver the services)
- More joined up approach to holding and sharing information (internally) about potential property developments in the Councils' areas
- Efficient and smart approach to service delivery
- Widening availability of the system and the information within it across services
- Financial savings (by way of decreased ICT costs and more efficient ways of working).

Requirements for the new system, covering a large number of Council service teams, were gathered between August and November 2014.

A tendering exercise was undertaken via the Crown Commercial Services Local Authority Government Framework, resulting in full responses from two suppliers (DEF Software Limited and Idox Software Limited).

The responses were evaluated between February and April 2015. The decision to award the contract to IDOX was taken in May 2015. Technical discussions continued during 2015 to resolve the matter of whether the system would be hosted by Suffolk County Council (SCC) or IDOX.

The infrastructure to host the system was installed at SCC during the early part of 2016. Lots of background work has been undertaken during 2016, including cleansing historic data, mapping, coding the new system, and preparing for data migration.

JOSIE Project Design Principles

In designing new, joint processes, the following principles will be adopted:-

1. **Shared across the Councils** - differences between the Councils will only be adopted to support requirements of sovereignty, legality or where other, linked processes also require change which is not easily possible. (Nb. Separate processes = increased cost.)
2. **With the customer in mind** - always consider the needs of the customer and make things as simple as possible. Processes will be designed "outside in" rather than "inside out" and will reduce or remove the need for customers to contact the Councils for updates and information.
3. **Digital by default** - always set up to enable "self-service"; where customers are unable or unwilling to "self-serve" the Councils will assist. The main aim is for transparency and accessible information, thus removing unnecessary requests for information. Data will always be recorded in such a way that open data standards will be supported, making information sharing and external reporting as simple as possible.
4. **Unconstrained by current or historical practice or ICT systems** - processes to be as streamlined as possible, thinking "outside the box" to implement as simply as possible.
5. **Exceptions will be treated as exceptions** - that is, they will not be designed into the process. Before an event triggers a process or system change it will be challenged to determine whether it is to become the new "norm".
6. **The lowest cost overall** - the end to end process will be considered, to avoid having situations where change to suit one area has an adverse impact elsewhere.
7. **Input once, used many times** - data will be entered (or transferred in) once and then re-used across systems and services. At the very least data will be completely shared across Uniform modules. Information held will be used to automatically populate necessary documents, reports and to pass details between modules and processes.
8. **Supports speedy case start up and fastest closure possible** - processes will be implemented to enable cases to be quickly set up and passed on through service areas to enable decisions to be made and actions to be taken as quickly as practicable. The aim will be to get as many planning decisions made or service actions taken at the earliest possible date, resulting in time being available to deal with the more complex or difficult cases.

9. **Strategically placed** - thinking across service areas rather than within individual teams; consider the end point rather than historical working practices and transfers. If the process can be improved/made quicker by changing "who does it" then this will be considered.

10. **Minimum number of "hand offs" but no single points of failure** - best practice in workflow development shows time and time again that the more times a file/case/activity is handed between teams or team members the more time it will take to complete. Each time something is handed from one person or team to another there is added activity as information about it needs to be explained. Also, every hand off runs the risk of delay if individuals are not available to immediately take something on. The converse to this is having individuals take all responsibility for a case which then means, if that individual is away, no one can cover. There is a balance to be had which needs to be found.