Renfrewshire Council

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To: Planning and Property Policy Board

On: 10 November 2015

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Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

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Heading: ePlanning and eBuilding Standards Update

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1.   **Summary**

1.1   This report provides an update to members on the ePlanning and eBuilding Standards portal.

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2.   **Recommendations**

2.1   That the Board notes the implementation timescales for the new ePlanning and eBuilding Standards portal.

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3.   **Background**

3.1   The eplanning portal is a web based system which receives and stores planning applications submitted online on behalf of all Scottish planning authorities.

3.2   The ePlanning portal allows agents and applicants to complete and submit planning applications, notice of reviews, appeals and other permissions required under planning legislation to the Council.

3.3   The portal was built by a third party, appointed by the Scottish Government and is managed by the Scottish Government in partnership with all Scottish planning authorities

3.4   The portal was launched in April 2009 and has built up a strong reputation and excellent customer base. Take up rates for the service has grown steadily and in 2014/15 of all planning applications submitted across Scotland, 63.5% were submitted through the ePlanning portal, far exceeding business case projections. ePlanning is expected to save applicants £45 million over the first ten years of its implementation whilst saving local authorities 15 million in the same period.

3.5   In Renfrewshire, during the same period, 55.5% of planning applications were submitted online through the ePlanning portal.

3.6   As the current contract for ePlanning is due to expire in March 2016, the Scottish Government has decided to bring the IT solution for the ePlanning portal in-house. The decision to replace the ePlanning portal has also provided an opportunity to build a corresponding portal for Building Standards. This joint workstream is being progressed under the badge of eDevelopment.

3.7   The following timescales have been set by the Scottish Government:-

        Current ePlanning portal – will end on 17 March 2016

        New ePlanning portal – will go live on 13 January 2016

        New eBuilding Standards portal – will go live on 2 June 2016.

        From the dates outlined, there will be a period when both the current ePlanning portal and the new ePlanning will run in parallel. On the current portal the ability to submit a planning application after the 13 January 2016 will be disabled and the user will be redirected to the new portal. The decision to have the two portals operational at the same time allows for those applications submitted prior to the 13 January 2016 to progress through the system within the application lifecycle/timescale i.e. 8 weeks.

3.8   The Scottish Government will be changing the overall style and design of the new portal but the layout and functionality of the new portal will remain the same as the current portal.

3.9   Although the ePlanning and eBuilding Standards portals will perform separate functions, when eBuilding Standards is launched on 2 June 2016, both portals will come under a single eDevelopment.scot landing page.

3.10   Various stakeholder events have been held by the Scottish Government to engage with all the local authorities. To keep agants/applicants informed there have been updates on the current ePlanning portal detailing the implementation dates for the new ePlanning and eBuilding Standards portals.

3.11   In Renfrewshire, to keep our users informed we will be updating our planning and building standards webpage, informing our agents and users of the Planning Service either when they visit our offices and/or when we are in contact with them. In addition, a communication plan will be put in place through liaison with the Council's Communication team.

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Implications of the Report

1.   **Financial** – None.
2.   **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3.   **Community Planning –** None
4.   **Legal** - None.
5.   **Property/Assets** - None.
6.   **Information Technology** - None.
7.   **Equality & Human Rights** – The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report; this report is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8.   **Health & Safety** - None.
9.   **Procurement** – None.
10.   **Risk** - None.
11.   **Privacy Impact** - None.

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List of Background Papers

(a)   Background Papers
1. http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/news/stories/2009/may/2009-05-Week-0/scottishgovernment
2. RTPI Scotland – Progressing performance: Investing in Scotland's Planning Service

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Development and Housing Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is David Bryce, 0141 618 7892, david.bryce@renfrewshire.gov.uk

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