

# newsletter

## NEW NI PLANNING PORTAL IN 2022

A new Regional Planning IT System, for Northern Ireland will be launched later this year for 10 of the 11 Councils and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The 10 councils and DfI have been working collaboratively to develop and configure the new IT system with TerraQuest, the company contracted to deliver and support the system going forward. This work continues to involve engagement with key stakeholders including Staff, Consultees, Agents and other organisations in order to ensure that the IT system provides the essential functionality needed to support the wider planning system.

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## KEY BENEFITS

This is the largest joint IT project between central and local government to date in Northern Ireland and will see benefits for all users as we seek to drive planning online in this digital age.

Key benefits include:

- Submission of applications online
- Linked front and back-office allowing for improved efficiency by streamlining administrative processes
- Improved validation and workflows to better manage workloads
- Improved Consultee interface
- Better user experience from an intuitive modern interface, making it easier for users to engage with the planning process

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## PREPARING FOR CHANGE



In preparation for the launch, each council and the Department have appointed Local Change Leads who are currently assessing the impact the new system will have on their business processes and resources and are putting in place plans for any changes needed.

Transition plans are being developed that will outline the key steps during the changeover phase from the current system to the new portal. This will include what downtime is required to facilitate the migration of data and the process for handling in-flight applications at the time of transfer.

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## TESTING

Nominees to assist with the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) have been identified within the Councils and DfI and have been helping to carry out system checks during the development and configuration phase. The final UAT phase will run over the summer and the invites for this will be issued soon.



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## TRAINING

Training will be delivered via a 'Train the Trainer' approach and nominees have been identified across the Planning Authorities to take on the Local Trainer roles.

They will receive the necessary training, guidance and support in advance which will enable them to deliver the user training to their colleagues locally. A six week window has been scheduled for the user training over the summer and will include practical tasks for users to trial on the system as well as additional materials such as user guides and demo videos. Pilot training sessions with the Local Training Leads are currently taking place.



## LOOKING FORWARD

As part of the roll-out we hope to release demos of the new portal to the wider planning community before it is launched.

Further Newsletters will also be published to advise of progress and provide more information to users about the plans for transitioning to the new portal.

In the meantime please feel free to provide feedback on this newsletter and any issues or any topics you would like to see featured.

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