



# **Housing ICT Programme 2018/19**

## **City of York Council**

### **Memorandum**

For: Assistant Director: Housing and Community Safety  
Status: Final  
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# 1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The council undertakes a significant amount of programme and project management and there is a need to ensure that standards are maintained. The project management approach employed by the council is set out in its 'All About Projects' (AAP) guide and the project management system, Verto, is used for storing information on all major projects.
- 1.2 Projects assessed as being 'large' form part of the council's corporate programme and are defined as 'major projects'. As well as being required to comply with the project management framework in the same way as all other projects, major projects are also subject to an increased level of governance and scrutiny through being regularly reported to Corporate Management Team (CMT) in its capacity as Programme Board and through having to submit monthly update reports via the council's Open Data Platform.
- 1.3 Once such major project in the council's corporate programme is the Housing ICT Programme. Initiated in April 2017, the programme is a major ICT enabled business transformation and culture change programme which aims to deliver a new operating model and systems for Housing and Building Services with the customer experience at the centre of service delivery.

## **Objective and Scope of the Audit**

- 1.4 The purpose of this audit was to provide assurance to management that procedures and controls within the system ensure that:
  - Effective project management guidance is in place and has been adopted by those involved with projects.
  - Project information is available and retained to support decisions.
  - Projects have adequate governance and risk management processes embedded into them.
- 1.5 The Housing ICT Programme was selected as an example project to consider how effectively the council's project management framework is being applied. This audit has not included an assessment of the likelihood of successful delivery and has instead reviewed compliance with the council's project management framework as set out in the All About Projects guide.

## 2 FINDINGS

### Background

- 2.1 In December, 2015, the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan: 2015-2045 highlighted that the current housing management system required an investment. It described a number of key issues inhibiting the ability to advance the service and also prioritised an audit and analysis of ICT spending, provision and support for Housing and Building Services. This Business Plan was adopted by the council's Executive Committee in February 2016.
- 2.2 The budget for the Housing ICT Programme has been set at £1.722 million, following a report to the Executive Committee in February 2017.
- 2.3 The overriding strategic objective of the Housing ICT Programme is to transform service delivery and place customers at the centre of the service. It aims to remove barriers to service improvement that inhibit the current systems; particularly system architecture, lack of integration, system interface issues, availability and cost of system support, failing end of life software, data quality issues, manual processes, duplication of effort and overly complex processes.
- 2.4 The project aims to deliver cost reductions and service improvements through empowering staff and customers, designing streamlined processes and replacing the current disparate housing management, housing asset and housing repair systems and applications, and through purchasing and implementing an integrated housing management and building services ICT solution.
- 2.5 The solution aims to be capable of deployment across a range of mobile devices, to offer customer and contractor self service, and allow a customer centric, holistic service to be delivered, with first point of contact resolution, at a place, time and manner which suits the customer.

### Compliance with the council's project management framework

#### *Retention of documents to support decision-making*

- 2.6 At the time of the review, the project was in Phase Four (Plan) of the project lifecycle, as outlined in the AAP framework. There was a large amount of information stored on Verto tracking the project's progress:
- Two mandate documents (dated Oct 17 and May 18)
  - Risk register
  - Minutes of stakeholder consultation
  - The Programme Board minutes
  - A Project Initiation Document (PID) and full business case

- 2.7 There is evidence of project monitoring, evidenced by the monthly highlight reports, milestone summaries, project plans, Risk, Actions, Issues and Decisions (RAID) logs, and programme board minutes. The milestone summary report for September 2018 says, "A full review of programme risks has taken place by the programme team and a number of key risks previously not reported on have been added to the RAID."
- 2.8 There are some notable documents missing from Verto. The most significant of these is evidence for the Gateway approval process in the form of the approval review documents. The review should have been carried out by two independent members of the council's Leadership Team.
- 2.9 It is understood, based on discussions with Project Assurance, that completion and evidencing of the gateway review process is a wider compliance issue. A finding in relation to this has been raised as part of this year's overall project management arrangements audit.
- 2.10 There was no document on Verto titled 'Prototype'. Phase 1 (Discovery) of the council's project management framework requires that a prototyping assessment is carried out, with prototypes being uploaded to Verto. There was evidence of research, planning, feasibility study and stakeholder consultation in highlight reports, but no overarching prototyping assessment.
- 2.11 Additionally, there is no Project Assessment Matrix document on Verto, required as part of Phase 2 (Pre-Project) of the AAP. The PID states, "Following completion of the corporate assessment matrix, the size of the programme has been determined as Medium." However, the project has subsequently been classified as large, appearing on the major projects highlight reports and there is no available evidence to support the size assessment, medium or large.
- 2.12 Verto does not hold evidence for completion of a Part 1 Integrated Assessment document. This assessment is carried out to understand the impact of the project (Equality/Community, Environmental and Privacy), prior to the Gateway 3 approval.
- 2.13 Whilst there is a significant amount of information captured on Verto, both in the formatted fields of the system, and in the document storage, the key documents detailed above are missing from Verto. These documents may exist within the programme team; however they are not on Verto as required by the AAP guide.

### **Governance and Risk Management**

- 2.14 The project has defined a governance structure. The Assistant Director for Housing & Community Safety is the programme sponsor and governance is provided by the Housing ICT Programme Board.
- 2.15 The Housing ICT Programme Board provides overall strategic direction for the Housing ICT Programme and oversees delivery of the programme within approved parameters of time, cost and quality. Detailed responsibilities of the

Housing ICT Programme Board are contained in a Terms of Reference document.

- 2.16 The Programme Manager reports progress, key risks and relevant issues to the Housing ICT Programme Board on a monthly basis and/or when major deliverables and key milestones are due, as evidenced in the Programme Board minutes and Highlight Reports on Verto.
- 2.17 There is risk information available for the project in the form of RAID logs and risk registers dating from May 2018. The Programme Manager updates the Housing ICT Board on key risks on a monthly basis using Highlight Reports that are aligned with those taken to Council Management Team (CMT) and consistent with governance requirements.
- 2.18 The RAID log is a comprehensive list of risks to the project, with 51 risks captured. This feeds in to the risk register, where the key risks are captured. The November 2018 risk register held 8 key risks.
- 2.19 The information captured on these documents is comprehensive, but does not fully align with the council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy.
- 2.20 The risk register only shows one risk score. It is not clear if this is the gross risk score or the net risk score. The council has a template for its risk registers and whilst additional information can be added, all key information should be included (including the gross and net risk scores)

### **3 CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 As per the PID, given the complexity of the programme, a decision was taken to submit the Housing ICT Programme to the rigour of the council's project management framework to help mitigate the key risks and successfully achieve the programme objectives.
  
- 3.2 In making a judgement on the compliance of this programme with the AAP framework, it has not been in full compliance due to several required documents missing from Verto. However, it is clear from the evidence available that it has been subject to the oversight and scrutiny required of a major project.

## **4 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

4.1 The Housing ICT Programme Team fully accepts the findings in this report and have noted, and in many cases, taken action to rectify areas of non-compliance cited. To demonstrate this further:

- We have shared our findings with the wider Digital Services Programme to take account of the All About Projects (AAP) framework and compliance;
- We have reviewed the council's Risk Management Policy and have added a net risk score to the programme RAID now;
- We have taken note of the future gateway review process and will make sure that any gateway reviews are checked with our Directorate leads before moving through them
- All required template documents in the AAP framework that will be needed for the remainder of the programme have been identified and the right people to contact as we move further through the AAP process.

4.2 Overall, we welcome the report's findings and the opportunity to respond. Areas for improvement have been identified in the overall AAP framework in terms of how established this is at the council and we agree that more needs to be done to embed this across the council, review current processes and take account of council wide feedback on the framework.