

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE, INNOVATION and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

06 January 2021

**Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation
and Director of Central Services**

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 PROGRESS WITH NEW COUNCIL WEBSITE

Members are updated on the progress with the technical implementation of the new website, and also on the preparation of the content. In liaison with the Member Working Group, the launch of the website has been deferred until June 2021.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Members are aware from previous reports to this Advisory Board that we are currently in the midst of implementing a new Council website.

1.1.2 The outline timetable to deliver the website was reported to the Advisory Board, broken down into:

- 1) a “technical” component (led by IT Services) and
- 2) a “content/customer” component led by the Head of Communications and the Head of Customer Services.

1.1.3 This report updates on progress in respect of both components.

1.2 Progress with implementation of Technical Platform

1.2.1 The implementation of the website infrastructure has been completed successfully in the Microsoft Azure cloud.

1.2.2 The user administration training has been provided to the relevant staff within Media and communications and IT services. Additional training for the development of the website has been arranged to be delivered.

1.2.3 IT services and Communications team are currently in the process of identifying the existing online and PDF forms for conversion and redevelopment and will be prioritising work based on the go-live deadline.

1.2.4 Content migration is currently in progress and the overall project timeline has been revised to accommodate the efforts involved. The overall project progress is on track.

% Complete	Task Name	Start Date	End Date
61%	Overall project progress	26/06/2020	July 2021 *
100%	Phase 1: Project Initiation & Planning	26/06/2020	10/07/2020
100%	Phase 2: System Installation & Configuration	09/07/2020	28/12/2020
50%	Phase 3: User Training & Content Population	29/06/2020	March 2021 *
100%	Phase 4: Design / Visuals / Brand Guidelines	14/07/2020	05/10/2020
25%	Phase 5: Template Build	13/11/2020	15/01/2021
25%	Phase 6: Developer Training, Custom Developments & Integration	06/10/2020	May 2021 *
0%	Phase 7: UAT	28/01/2021	June 2021 *
0%	Phase 8: Go-Live	03/03/2021	July 2021 *
0%	Phase 9: Post Go-Live	09/04/2021	August 2021 *

	Complete
	In progress
	Delayed
	Not started

* Project plan and awaiting confirmation of dates from supplier.

1.1 Progress with Website Presentation and Content

1.1.1 Work to review, edit and develop content for the new website is generally progressing well. This work is being led by our Digital Content Editor who was appointed in the summer with approximately one-third of the main sections of the new site now completed.

1.1.2 Considerable time and care is being spent to ensure that the pages are easy for residents to navigate and that digital transactions are simple. We are also ensuring that content complies with the latest regulations on accessibility for council websites.

1.1.3 Following a review of the timetable, a number of factors have led us to believe that it would be prudent to defer the launch date by approximately two months. These factors include:

- The need for a 'content freeze' on the existing website which would create problems with publishing material relating to local and crime commissioner elections in May
- The potential for teething issues with the new site and public complaints on the eve of an election

- Operational requirements associated with the Covid pandemic, the cancellation of Local Plan hearings and Boundary Review which together are limiting staff time to provide the necessary support with content migration

1.1.4 Discussion took place with the Member Working Group (Cllrs Coffin, Thomas, Boughton, Oakley and Betts) who were in agreement with this approach.

1.1.5 There is a small cost of deferring the launch date from April to provisionally June 2021 of circa £2,000 - £3,000. This is to offset the costs of a project re-plan and the re-allocation of resources by our supplier, Jadu. These costs have been built into draft Estimates elsewhere on this agenda.

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 Procurement was undertaken in accordance with procurement regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.3.1 The capital costs (including design, implementation and consultancy) of the project have been funded from the Transformation Reserve.

1.3.2 Revenue costs are built into base budget. The additional costs of deferring the launch of the site until June 2021 have been reflected in the draft Estimates elsewhere on this agenda.

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 The project is being managed through an internal project Board consisting of officers from various disciplines alongside representatives from the supplier. The Board meets monthly to monitor progress and sign off operational decisions in respect of the project.

1.4.2 The risk of not delivering the new website within the context of the digital agenda is that the Council may not be providing services in the ways that our residents wish.

1.4.3 The decision to defer the launch date in liaison with the Member Working Group was taken in order to mitigate risk and allow more time for work on content development and enhanced digital services for local residents.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users

1.6 Policy Considerations

- Customer Contact

- Communications
- Community
- Procurement

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 Members are requested to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that:

- 1) The progress in delivering the technical aspects of the website are **NOTED**;
- 2) The launch date of the site has been deferred until June 2021, in liaison with the Member Working group, for the reasons set out in the report, and this be **NOTED**; and
- 3) The additional costs of the deferral of the launch are built into draft Estimates for 2021/22 and this be **NOTED**.

The Director of Finance & Transformation and Director of Central Services confirm that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

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