

BRIEFING NOTE

Title: Hibernating the MRSP project

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Department: Community Protection

Purpose:

This briefing note is designed to help CP Senior managers make decisions on the suggested project hibernation, and states the actions required to mitigate against the increased risks.

1. Background:

The Modernising Regulatory Services Program (MRSP) project was started to ensure that NCC can continue to meet its Community Protection statutory requirements once the current computer system Flare, becomes unsupported by Civica in September 2021.

The project has made significant progress

- Soft-market testing completed
- Business Specification completed
- Business benefits outlined
- Business team leaders engaged
- Project delivery plans drawn-up
- Cost estimation completed
- Delivery Options outlined

The Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent financial impact on NCC has had significant consequences for the project. At the project boards' in May and June 2020 the following changes in strategic direction were recommended.




1. Extend Flare usage for an additional 12 months
2. Hibernate the project
3. Re-configure the project plans and objectives to minimise the total project spend

The project will now aim to deliver a modern application framework that can enable CP to adapt and improve over a longer period.

2. Actions required for a new APP Flare support contract

NCC negotiated with Civica to set up a new 12month support contract for APP Flare, ending September 2022.

The new Contract will cost an estimated £91K, IT Services hold a budget of £29K for support and maintenance of Flare which leaves a shortfall of £62K.

Action1. 	Community Protection to release £62K from its budgets.	Paul Dales & Duncan Newbutt
Action2. 	Delegated Decision to release the required new contract funds	Steven Brookes
Action3. 	Legal, Procurement and IT Contracts review and agreement on the new contract	Sarah O'Bradaigh Louise Dobson Winston Smillie

3. Minimising Project Costs

The Project Board requested that in light of current strain on NCC Budgets that the project plans and objectives be reassessed with a view to determining the minimum project activities, and so costs, required to meet the essential project deliverables.

Please note the figures quoted below are early estimates. Financial Services have yet to review and update.

Essential Deliverables.

- i) Tender/Contract for a modern workable product
- ii) Migrate live case data
- iii) Archive APP Flare
- iv) Build essential Interfaces. E.g. Payment system, NCC Address files and Citizens advice (CACS)
- v) Integrated online public forms
- vi) Required business process changes
- vii) Condensed testing
- viii) Condensed training

Impact:

The changed approach to the system implementation means we minimise bespoke changes or customisation requests, to meet local needs. This is referred to as an 'Out of the box' implementation. CP Teams would have to adjust their ways of working to meet the demands of a standard system set-up, rather than vice-versa.

Community Protection would have release colleagues from their day-to-day business activities, without backfilling their role. This will diminish the effectiveness of the service in the short term but provide ongoing efficiency gains.

Project reporting and record keeping will be condensed.

The risks of non-delivery will increase. See the risk analysis below.

It is estimated that the project to deliver the essential elements will cost £550K + £50K p.a.

Advised Deliverables, (following discussion with project team leads)

- i) Mobile Device purchase and usage £70K (150 devices) + £12K pa.

Impact:

Increasing and integrating the use of mobile devices with the new system is strongly advised by the project business team leads.

- It gives CP the greatest opportunity to improve the efficiency of their service. The budget changes under consideration, will make this an essential.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced office-based activities and encourage socially distant ways of working. Increased use of mobile devices will support these changes.

- ii) A Cloud delivered application. (Nb. Not currently considered essential.)

Impact:

Following the soft market testing the project team now recommend that a tender based on a cloud-based system will provide

- Effective support for home/site working

- Application supply chain clarity. The risk of application failure or non-availability will become a contractual supplier risk
- Long term resilience and location independent delivery.

Non-essential i.e. optional post-project longer term development activities

- Expand the current Flare user base. E.g. CPOs
- Firmstep integration
- Business Process review and improvement
- Bespoke automation and interfaces
- Geographical Information System
- Business Intelligence/Reporting development £25K (Grade I 6months)
- Interfaces with e.g. Finance; ECiNs; Housing

4. Project Hibernation and Project Risks

The project board recommended hibernating the project, targeting a restart 1st December 2020. This should allow sufficient time for NCC address its short-term budgetary constraints and allow the project to complete before September 2022.

Project Risks and Issues.

[Project RAID log](#)

Issues

<p><u>Finance</u> There is no agreement on how to fund the new 12month contract. If we are unable to extend Flare support, then CP could be without a working system in Sept 2021, and insufficient time to find, configure and migrate to a new product.</p>	<p>See Actions1, 2 and 3 above</p>
<p><u>Finance</u> There is no agreement on how NCC can fund the whole project. NCC may not be able to meet its legal regulatory service obligations when Flare support ends.</p>	<p>In April 2020, Ceri Walters and agreed to investigate report back to the Board. Action4. Finance and Community Protection to devise a workable funding option. Ceri Walters; Claire Gavagan; Paul Dales.</p>

Risks

<p>Reducing the project scope to the essentials removes any latitude or flexibility as the project progresses.</p>	<p>When unforeseen issues occur, the project will need rapid senior support to keep the project on track.</p>
<p>Hibernating the project will reduce the project momentum and enthusiasm garnered thus far.</p>	<p>Senior leaders to re-iterate the importance of the project when it re-starts.</p>
<p>The project and service expertise may not be available when the project returns from hibernation e.g. Redundancy. Any replacement individuals will take additional time to become effective, delaying project progress.</p>	<p>Thorough project documentation and plans to be kept and made available.</p>