WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15th December 2020

Report of the Website

Report Title	Unitary Website Development

1. Purpose

To update the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority on the progress and approach for delivering the new unitary website minimal viable product (MVP) for vesting day.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Note the report and the progress on the delivery of the new unitary websites

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The websites for each of the existing Local Authorities are one of the key 'front doors' to the public and our partners to be able to locate information and access help and support to public services. Having a seamless route through the sites for this purpose is a key Day 1 'Must Have'

In May, the Joint Implementation Executive (JIE) approved the approach to deliver two new unitary websites for the new unitary authorities for Day 1. The websites are critical Day 1 priorities to be 'safe and legal plus'.

The approach agreed was to create an 'umbrella' website for Day 1 which will link back to the existing sovereign councils' websites, with a two-year plan to decommission the sovereign council websites as we transfer the information, functionality and transactions to the new websites. It also links to the digital platform and ICT strategy.

Diagram A: structure of the new unitary websites on day 1.
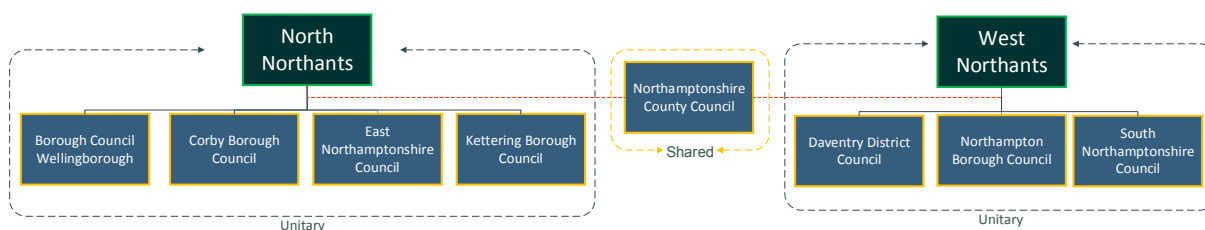
This work is the start of a longer-term project to then enable us to close the existing sites, improve user experience and transfer skills into the retained unitary digital teams to enable continuing maintenance, development, and improvements.

3.1.2 Approach

Working with our Partner Futuregov our approach to designing and building the websites for the two new unitary authorities is:

1. Phase 1 - Design & build <u>two</u> new Unitary Authority websites, providing seamless customer journeys back to existing Local Authority sites. The websites will be minimal viable products for day 1.
2. Phase 2 - Migrate/update content, enable decommissioning of existing sites and up-skill existing team to continue transformation beyond the lifetime of the contract

3.1.3 What will we achieve in the long term

*   A strong and clear presence online as part of the new identities for each of the Unitary Authorities
*   Long term savings through reducing the existing 8 websites (10 on Vesting Day) to two – hosting and support costs reductions
*   Improved online customer journeys leading to reductions in face to face and telephone calls and improved reputation – online digital experiences fit for the 'digital' age ahead
*   Better working/risk reduction – enabling us to be responsive to change and support our journey towards digital self-sufficiency in the future and supporting our adoption of the 'Digital Council' model; solutions can be tailored to needs of the new Unitary Authorities from the beginning
*   Will act as a catalyst and platform for future digital changes in the Unitary Authorities – Digital Council model/IT and Digital Strategy
*   All areas of the Council will benefit either directly (customer facing) or indirectly through the improved customer experience and channel shift, where possible
*   Upskilling of our employees to support future self-sufficiency in developing and transforming the website

3.1.4 What progress have we made to date

*   Website Project Stakeholder mapping 'Team onion'
*   Technical Workshop - Approach/ Hosting / Dependencies
*   Website research…over 115,000 URL's (North and West!)
*   Desktop research of best practice
*   User engagement plan. Residents involvement started
*   Chosen platform for the website and eforms
    Developed the vision for the website:
    o   to act on user's feedback
    o   to keep a close eye on the performance of the services
    o   to offer a familiar and accessible experience to people, to make it easy for them to find what they need
    o   to offer options to people to switch to their preferred channel
    o   to use plain English
    o   to design a responsive website

3.1.5 Product Approach

We are approaching this project using an Agile approach. An Agile approach is a process by which a team can manage a project by breaking it up into several stages and involving constant collaboration with stakeholders and continuous improvement and iteration at every stage. The Agile methodology begins with clients describing how the end product will be used and what problem it will solve. This clarifies the customer's expectations to the project team. Once the work begins, teams' cycle through a process of planning, executing, and

evaluating — which might just change the final deliverable to fit the customer's needs better. These cycles are called 'Sprints'. Continuous collaboration is key, both among team members and with project stakeholders, to make fully informed decisions.

3.1.6 What are the next steps?

Indicative Sprint Goals Through to Vesting Day

October / November

Sprint 0
Set-up agile rituals & kick-off. Introduction to project tools and team members.

Sprint 1
Understand work done to date, understand technology and programme landscape, define vision.

December

Sprint 2
Document/test how we propose to organise and structure the sites – recruit users for testing (residents and staff)

Sprint 3
Create/test prototypes of key website elements. Start building website foundations. Agree and document standards for design, tech, content & accessibility

December / January / Feb

Sprint 4
Confirm final services in scope for vesting day – adding to our backlog of user stories - designing, developing and testing solutions to meet user needs

Sprint 5 🎄
Continue to iterate the build of the sites and be able to test and validate end to end journeys across the new sites through to existing legacy sites

Sprint 6 🎖️
Launch the private Beta to a wider audience for testing and feedback. Share and engage with service owners around on-going migration roadmap

Sprint 7
Continue to test/iterate the websites, refining based on feedback. Finalise and plan any changes to existing sites that need to be made for vesting day.

February / March / April

Sprint 8
Design/test processes for content publication beyond vesting day. Informing interim/permanent future operating model in the two authorities

Sprint 9
Plan release – the transition from private beta, public beta to live. Orchestration of changes to legacy sites and finalising success measures/analytics

Sprint 10
Further testing/iteration of the websites, progression/revision of roadmap, clear communication to service areas and necessary stakeholders

Sprint 11 🚀
Vesting day launch (re/de branding existing sites), support, monitoring & snagging - continue to migrate and progress microsites/eforms/systems roadmap.

See Appendix A for high level plan

4.   Implications (Including financial implications)

4.1   Financial

4.1.1   It will be funded from Business Rate Relief (BRR) 18 project funding which was approved by the Business rates governance board in July 2019. The BRR18 total project fund is £5.65m with an outlined £3.3m for 'digital by default'. The total contract value to the deliver the two new websites is: £0.65m (£325k each). This is the total costs for the Minimal Viable Product (MVP) for Vesting Day and up to two years' roadmap to fully develop the new websites and decommission the sovereign sites. We have the option within the framework contract to review at any time. Rebranding the old sites will cost circa £200k and we have procured an accessibility toolkit at £25k.

4.2   Resources and Risk

4.2.1   Resources are met from working with our partner Futuregov and in-house ability and knowledge from the sovereign councils. We are developing a resources map for SME's to endorse going forward as the closer we get to vesting day the more resources will be required and we need to confirm these are available.

4.2.2   Risk of routing back to the legacy sovereign council websites.

4.2.3   Risk of project scope creep as more programmes want their services in the MVP but this is being partially mitigated through the enterprise change freeze approach.

4.2.4 Risk of resource availability to make prioritised MVP and associated eForm changes because the impact on websites may not have been considered as part of earlier disaggregation and aggregation decisions

4.2.5 Risks are monitored and reviewed regularly below is our governance and assurance process.
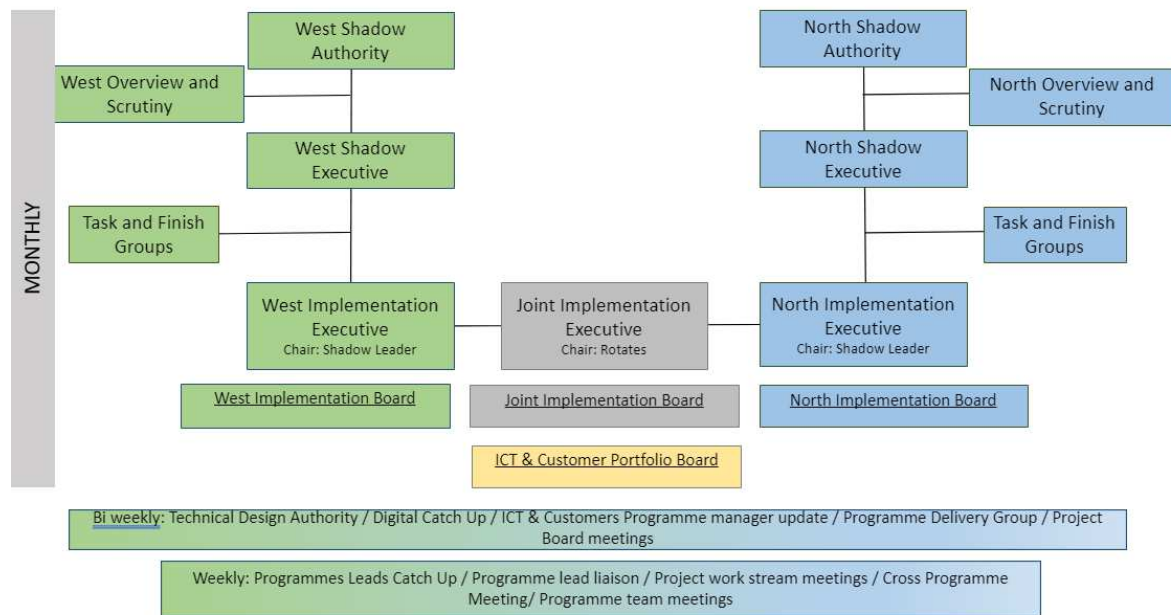
4.3 Legal

4.3.1 No direct impacts. Legal have been involved in the procurement process and we seek their advice as and when necessary

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment is being finalised for the new websites. Key to the new websites is to be accessible for all and meet the new accessibility criteria: Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Equality and access to the website is a major part of the design principles.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

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Appendix A

High Level Indicative Project Plan

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY

Sprint 0 (21st Oct - 28th Oct)

Project set-up

Sprint 1 (29th-11th) & **Sprint 2** (12th-25th)

Discover Define

From Sprint 1 (Approx 11 Sprints between 29th Oct & April 1st Vesting Day)

Design Development Iterate & Test

15th Jan 2021
Release 2 x Private Beta to test

1st Apr 2021
Vesting Day & Existing Websites Re-brand

15th Feb 2021
Roadmap initial Draft

31st Dec 2020
Website Unplanned Change Freeze

Go Live

Continue to migrate and decommission → → → March 2023 latest

FUTURE NORTHANTS