

Report of the Head of Nature Recovery

Subject: Variation to Contract Standing Orders for the renewal of Esri Arc GIS Online Software

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to proceed with a variation to PCNPA Contract Standing Orders with regards the renewal of the Authority's job management software platform for the Nature Recovery and wider teams. The Authority authorised the purchase of Esri ArcGIS Online in 2018. Should the Authority discontinue use of this system, many years of data and the system by which work is allocated, recorded and monitored and reported will be lost.

2. Background

A web-based digital platform for planning workloads, capacity planning, managing workflow, work recording, performance monitoring and to underpin financial planning was agreed in 2018. The system also manages compliance with aspects of Risk Assessment and Visitor Safety through improved co-ordination of inspection work related to Tree, Bridge and Footpath surveys.

Previous paper-based systems were deemed not fit for purpose and the move to a centralised digital platform was agreed to ensure the team operates more efficiently and effectively in the future, whatever the challenges and opportunities.

3. Summary of current and potential uses

There have been numerous positive outcomes for the Authority in having the system in place, for example:

Corporate Performance Reporting

- Workforce outputs offer insights into the work programme across access (including maintenance and cutting), sites and conservation work. It has been used as part of the People, Paths and Pollinator project to record pollinator jobs, continuation of this approach has helped evidence the mainstreaming of this work into the work of the countryside management team.

Planning and Planning Policy

- Interactive Local Development Plan Map used to help people understand the Authority's supplementary planning guidance, e.g. Seascape Character Areas and Tree and Woodland Planting Guidance.
- Welsh translation within commissioned reports. ArcGIS Pro allows Welsh versions of maps to be produced in-house.
- Analysis tools aiding the development of evidence for decision making, e.g. for house prices.
- Planning Application Searches can be undertaken online without having to contact the Authority. Results can be exported to a spreadsheet.

- Web maps for Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Tree Preservation Orders.

Nature Recovery Reporting

- Efficiencies within the Countryside Management Team due to the software helping prioritise and plan work and removing associated paper-based work as well as enabling information to be shared more easily across teams.
- Access and Rights of Way Team path surveys and feedback from the public logged as tasks within the app for the Warden Teams to action.
- Surveys (e.g. for Ash Die Back, bridges, and rights of way) were previously a mixture of paper and electronic records. These survey apps are now easily updated, available to many staff to scrutinise and made the whole system more responsive.
- The Workforce app was particularly critical during the coronavirus pandemic. Without such a system then work planning would have been extremely difficult.
- Recording scheduled monument condition monitoring with volunteers.
- Story map¹ was produced for reporting to grant funders for the Pollinator Project.

Future use

Use story maps and other functions to their fullest to support key reporting and monitoring of the Authority's work and plans, including:

- Create and deploy web maps for Communications e.g. EV charging points, filming locations, details about coast path.
- Utilise story maps for reporting state of the park and other reports.
- Use ArcGIS Insights to produce interactive data visualisation for key reports. This will save costs of having to pay for other software to do this. This will support the Authority to develop new performance measures with spatial element as we review the Authority's performance measures linked to the Authority's new Well-being Objectives and vital signs activities for National Park Management Plan. As well as when looking to develop a Conservation related model.
- Potential to explore job allocation and use of the system for other teams, including ranger team where appropriate.
- Potential to use data from the system to look at work allocation and emission reduction linked to fleet, particularly for countryside team.
- Web-based system could facilitate improved engagement with visitors and residents in relation to the practical work carried out within the National Park, particularly with regards feedback.
- Now have in place data set over number of years which could support more complex analysis of work programme to support future work programming.

¹ These are web-maps which can be used to show specific data with relevant context and with supporting information so that it can be viewed as stand-alone resource. They integrate maps, legends, text, photos and videos which provide functionality for users to explore this content.

4. Options

There are three options available to the Authority:

Discontinue using Esri ArcGIS Online.

This would result in having no system in place at all to manage the Warden's work and the loss of all the web mapping applications that are provided on the Authority's website. Discontinuing our ArcGIS subscription would take careful planning to ensure that a new system is in place to take over and that we can successfully extract all the data we have created/collected (map layers and photographs).

Purchase a comparable system

There are comparable systems on the market that provide the functionality that Workforce for ArcGIS gives the Authority. However, these would not provide all the other functionality that we currently benefit from (as detailed in section 3). Multiple systems would likely need to be sourced to provide the full breadth of functionality provided by the ArcGIS stack (and this would likely cost more).

Renew subscription to Esri ArcGIS Online

Continuing with the current arrangement to ensure continuity would provide the least risk and disruption to the Authority at this time. Options are being developed to look at the way that the Authority uses the software is being explored.

5. Financial considerations

Cost of the renewal is £20,000 (excluding VAT) for one year to 3 October 2024.

There will be no additional staffing costs for the support or development of the platform.

There will be no external developer costs.

A review of the system will take place to look at other options over the next year. There is also the option to link the Authority's license with other organisations, including Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales for example, and the costs for this will be of a similar amount.

6. Risk considerations

As detailed above, the risks of not renewing the licence are in terms of continuity and loss of data.

7. Compliance

The use of the software complies with Park purposes, policy and corporate objectives.

8. Human Rights/Equality issues

No human rights or equality issues.

9. Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

No biodiversity or sustainability implications.

10. Welsh Language considerations

No Welsh language consideration identified.

11. Conclusion

Work in the Countryside Team has been more efficient and effective since the Authority purchased Esri ArcGIS. Processes changed considerably, which has reduced administrative tasks as well as the time spent on back office support. The system is crucial to continue to work in this way. The way in which the system is used will be explored further to ensure that the Authority is making the most of this investment across all its work areas.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to approve the variation to standing orders to renew the subscription to the web-based Esri ArcGIS Online system.

Background Documents

Original decision to vary the standing orders to procure Esri ArcGIS was made in NPA on 03 Oct 2018, with relevant information in minute 11 – [Click here.](#)

Report on the variation to the standing orders for the procurement at National Park Authority Meeting of 3 October 2018 is available here:
[Click here](#)

The minutes for the Operational Review Committee on the 23 Sept 2020 which outlined the digital transformation of the Countryside Management Team (relevant information is in minute 4) – [Click here.](#)

Report of the Operations Manager to Operational Review Committee on the progress of digital transformation in 2020:
[Click here.](#)

For further information, please contact Michelle Webber / Phil Barlow

Consulted with (internal stakeholders): Research and Sustainability Appraisal Officer, IT, Performance and Compliance Officer, Area Countryside Managers, Finance Manager, Director of Nature and Tourism, Chief Executive.