

Report of the Head of Nature Recovery and IT Manager

Report on Variations to the Procurement Standing Orders

Purpose of the Report

The report seeks Member consent to vary the procurement Standing Orders to renew the Authority's purchase of its GIS System and reports on two variations to Standing Order 16 in relation to purchasing essential Health and Safety Monitoring Equipment and resolving an IT Exchange Server issue.

Introduction

The Authority has agreed Procurement Standing Orders to ensure it meets legal requirements and value for money. The Standing Orders makes provision for exceptions, when it is not possible to meet the requirement of the Standing Orders. This either requires the consent of Members to vary the Standing Orders or Standing Order 16 requires the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Fundraising to report to Members when they have enacted the provision to vary the Standing Orders.

This paper outlines three cases where this has occurred.

These are:

A – Members are asked to vary the Standing Orders to enable the Authority to renew its purchase of the Esri Arc GIS Online Software. This is due to only one providers being able to supply the system to support our GIS work.

B – Members are informed that in accordance with Standing Order 16 the Authority only obtained one quote when purchasing Essential Health and Safety Monitoring Equipment. This was due to only one company being able to provide the preferred monitoring equipment.

C – Members are informed that in accordance with Standing Order 16 the Authority only obtained one quote when purchasing support to resolve an IT Exchange Server Issue. This was due to the scale of the problem being greater than assumed when the contractor was appointed.

More details on each case are provided in the relevant Annex.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **approve the variation to standing orders to renew the subscription to the web-based Esri ArcGIS Online system, and agree to continuation of the subscription for three years to 2027.**
- **note the use of contract standing order 16 in regard the procurement of health and safety equipment to manage Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome.**
- **note the use of contract standing order 16 in regard the procurement of support to resolve an IT Exchange issue.**

Annex A

Subject: Variation to 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 Standing Orders with regards the renewal of the Authority's job management software platform, Esri ArcGIS Online for the Nature Recovery and wider teams for 2024-25, as well as seek agreement to continue to 2026-27. Options have been considered and commercially available alternative systems do not offer the scope or functionality to continue with this work. Should the Authority discontinue use of this system, many years of historic data and the system by which work is allocated, recorded and monitored and reported will be lost.

2. Background

The Authority utilises a web-based digital platform for planning workloads, capacity planning, managing workflow, work recording, performance monitoring and to underpin financial planning. 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. A centralised digital platform is essential to ensure the team operates efficiently and effectively. The system is also used across the Authority to support various workstreams, key examples are shown below.

3. Summary of current and potential uses

There have been numerous positive outcomes for the Authority since having the system in place, as previously reported to the Authority in September 2023. The platform is utilised across a range of work for Corporate Performance Reporting, Planning and Planning Policy and Nature Recovery.

Corporate Performance Reporting

- Workforce outputs offer insights into the work programme across access (including maintenance and cutting), sites and conservation work. It has previously 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. Wider work being carried out using insights will inform development of new measures for access informed by outcome of Coast Path internal audit report recommendations.

Communications and Marketing

- Bi-lingual interactive mapping that provides visitors and residents with information about facilities e.g. the Authority's carparks.
- Interpretation resources e.g. a St Davids RNLi Trail story map tour has been produced that takes users on a tour of key locations to the history of the RNLi in and around St Davids. The story map is bi-lingual and includes photos and links to 3D resources (to be published soon).

- SDF Project Map that provides details on Authority website of projects supported by the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund.

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.
- The Planning Application Search web map, this resource is well loved by the county's planning agents as it allows them to easily find the full planning history of a site. It also reduces the administrative burden on Development Management team as a result.
- Web maps for Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Tree Preservation Orders.
- Cresswell Quay Proposed Conservation Area consultation – consultees can view the detailed proposals for a new conservation area interactively. (consultation currently running).

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.
- Prioritising work and identifying risks - as part of an audit related workstream the Esri tools are allowing the Nature Recovery team to easily map critical jobs and ensure that they are tackled moving forward.
- Providing metrics – as part of our package with Esri we have “ArcGIS Insights”, this is a comparatively low-cost alternative to Microsoft's PowerBI package that allows us to produce detailed reports on any data we hold. This is currently being used to report on the survey work we undertake on the Coast Path.
- Story map¹ was produced for reporting to grant funders for the Pollinator Project.

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.

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:

- 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 elements. As well as when looking to develop a Conservation related model.
- We are currently exploring the suitability of the system for buildings maintenance and the ranger service.
- Potential to use data from the system to look at work allocation and emission reduction linked to fleet, particularly for countryside team.
- The routing software included with the package may also help to calculate the most efficient routes for the delivery of Coast to Coast or wider fleet. Supporting wider fleet decarbonisation activities.
- 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 a number of years which could support more complex analysis of work programme to support future work programming.

4. Options

There are three options available to the Authority:

Discontinue using Esri ArcGIS Online.

This would result in having no system to manage the Warden's work and the loss of all the web mapping applications that are provided on the Authority's website used for wildlife conservation, planning and engagement. Examples include:

- Map of the current Connecting the Coast wildlife conservation scheme, for landholders interested in participating. [Connecting the Coast - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Story map '15 years of Conserving the Coast', detailing the history of the Park's wildlife conservation work prior to the current scheme. [Conserving the Park - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Listed buildings register [Listed buildings - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Map of the Park's 14 Conservation Areas accompanied by the additional Planning controls in place. [Our Conservation Areas - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Map of Tree Preservation Orders [Tree Preservation Orders \(TPOs\) - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Changing Coasts map with the location of fixed-point photographic posts whereby the public can contribute to monitoring coastal erosion. [Changing Coasts - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)
- Interactive Map made to accompany the Management Plan 2020-2024, offering an alternative way for the public to engage with the plan. [National](#)

They integrate maps, legends, text, photos and videos which provide functionality for users to explore this content.

[Park Management Plan - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)

Discontinuing the ArcGIS subscription would need planning over the long term 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 other systems on the market that provide some functionality that Workforce for ArcGIS gives the Authority. However, these would not provide all the other functionality that we currently benefit from as detailed previously. Multiple systems would likely need to be sourced to provide the full breadth of functionality provided by the ArcGIS stack (and this would cost more).

Examples of comparable systems and costs:

Name	Work/job allocation facility	Survey facility?	Web mapping/web application facility?	Cost	Comments
ArcGIS Online	ü	ü	ü	£45.83 per user per month (£550 pa)	This is for 40 users, incorporating the job management system, survey system for job reporting, wildlife and monument monitoring, as well as all web mapping features. Of those 40 users, 5 also have access to the Insights software (PowerBI equivalent) highlighted earlier.
Salesforce field service	ü	û	û	£176 per user per month (£2,112 pa)	<p>Only provides one facility, no further features or benefits for the wider authority.</p> <p>Includes “salescloud” sales platform, which is unlikely to be useful to the Authority.</p> <p>May not fit with the types of field work the Authority carries out since it is aimed at different industries e.g. delivery of goods, electrical and plumbing work etc.</p> <p>May not be cost effective in the round as an additional platform would need to be purchased to provide the Authority’s web mapping needs.</p>
Eworks Manager	ü	? *has electronic forms	û	~£752.91 per month for 30-49 users	<p>Provides a comprehensive job management and fleet tracking system.</p> <p>May not fit with the types of field work the Authority carries out since it is aimed at different industries e.g. delivery of goods, IT, property management etc.</p>

					May not be cost effective in the round as an additional platform would need to be purchased to provide the Authority's web mapping needs
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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. The way that the Authority uses the software has been expanded and continues to grow. Electronic tablet devices are now being used by teams across the Authority. Which has enabled further efficiencies by removing paper-based systems in other areas.

5. Financial considerations

Cost of the renewal is £22,000 (excluding VAT) for one year to 4 October 2025. Agreement is also sought to continue with Esri for a further 3 years to provide some continuity of use, particularly in developing the opportunities further.

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

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

The system supports conservation task management.

10. Welsh Language considerations

The system supports web publication of Welsh language maps.

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 the system is used has expanded further across the Authority which provides greater value for money and benefitting across more work areas. There are opportunities for this work to be expanded further and work is ongoing on this.

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](#).

Report to National Park Authority 20 Sept 2023 on renewal of Esri ArcGIS subscription – [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 Manager, Head of Finance, Director of Nature and Tourism, Chief Executive.

Annex B

SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Purpose of Report

To inform members that Contract Standing Order 16 in respect of the procurement of health and safety equipment to monitor hand arm vibration has been utilised.

Background

The Authority have over the past year reviewed the management of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). Part of this process was to procure 30 x R-link smart watches to monitor the real time exposure of employees to the risk of exposure to vibration from vibrating equipment/machinery. This is to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements for employees using vibrating equipment. Vibration is monitored and converted to a points system to standardise the data, and there are points limits that are in place for the time an employee uses that piece of equipment. The watches record the vibration exposure.

The Authority purchased 4 x HAVi watches in 2022 at a cost of approximately £4k. Issues around Bluetooth connectivity and vibration threshold recording led to errors and loss of confidence, both by staff and managers, in the data produced. Coupled with the rota sharing of the watches between Warden teams, which led to a collapse of confidence in the HAVi watches and their potential to not measure accurately the level of vibration that employees were exposed to. Wardens have been recording the tools they have been using, the time using these tools and vibration points are calculated. The Reactec system is more user friendly, more accurate, and removes the need for paper-based forms.

The R-Link watches have been purchased so that all Wardens, including Seasonal Wardens, will be monitored. Where Seasonal Wardens are not fully recruited, Rangers will have access to the R-Link system. The system will enable the Authority to assess and manage all hand arm vibration risks easily and effectively. The need for paper-based systems is removed providing efficiencies as well as greater confidence. The devices assess exposure risk and vibration magnitude sensed by the wearer, giving real time information and alerts to employees, as well as to managers via software. Natural Resources Wales currently use the same system and an Authority visit took place at NRW Crosshands site in August 2023 as part of due diligence, as well as a week-long trial with the North Warden team (Cilrhedyn) in September of 2023. The cost of the system is circa £24k.

Financial considerations

The guidelines concerning the suspension of normal procurement regulation lay in the Authority's standing order on major contracts. Exceptions permitting suspension to the contract standing orders where there are fewer than three suitable suppliers, and therefore less than three quotes are obtainable. This product was purchased direct from the manufacturer, therefore with no comparable supplier available. While there are other outlets for short-term hiring of the watches and software, Speedy Hire for example, this option is less cost effective compared to directly using the manufacturer as the hire company will charge their premium as well.

The R-Link system has two payment systems. A Service Plan (rental) option would cost £9,241.84 for 10 devices, while a purchase model would cost £7,739.01 for 10 devices

Based on the above the HAVi system costs approximately £845 per device, while the R-Link system costs £924 for rental and £774 for purchase per device. These prices include all ancillary hardware and online monitoring software. In addition, the Authority also gained a 10% discount on the original quote, saving approximately £2500.

Risk considerations

Data protection risks are considered through completion of a data protection impact assessment as recommended by Data Protection Officer and relevant privacy notices updated.

Procurement of this equipment will support compliance with health and safety requirements for employees using vibrating equipment.

Annex C

IT Exchange Server Issue

The issue

After a Windows update to the Exchange server, the Authority was no longer able to use the graphical user interface to manage email accounts or create new users. Having tried all the proposed solutions, we created a new server. However, we still have some issues, some as a result from the addition of a new server. To resolve the issue the Authority needed to contract assistance from a consultant.

Resolution

The Authority engaged with a consultant to help rectify the issues and from an initial scoping call, agreed to a week's work broken down into two days investigation and three days to resolve the issue.

However, during the initial two days it was deemed that a lot more time would be needed, resolving it could take two or more weeks of work. An additional seven days were quoted just under the £10k but what with the original works, this would be in breach of the Standing Orders.

The issue was discussed with the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Fundraising. Seeking additional quotes or going out to tender at this point may have increase the costs and time to find a resolution, as any new company would need to do their own investigation, thus impacting on services across the Authority. in view of this it was agreed to continue with the existing consultant and to report the issue to Members.