

Questions in advance of Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Strategic Commissioning Programme Review - 18 February 2026

p	Question from	Question
1	Overview & Scrutiny Pre-Meeting	Can you explain the data migration process to the Arcus system.
The data migration process involved loading data into a tool supplied by Arcus which provide full validation of the data to ensure it matched the system configuration requirements. The source data had to be extracted from 3 different system using SQL scripts and transformed into the new data structures required by the Arcus system.		
	Question from	Question
2	Overview & Scrutiny Pre-Meeting	Are there still problems with the planning system post migration?
No major issues. Further phases of system and process improvements are currently being scoped. As with any new system it will continue to be developed to ensure residents and staff benefit from its full capabilities, while processes will be regularly reviewed and enhanced.		
	Question from	Question
3	Overview & Scrutiny Pre-Meeting	Why were so many data migration projects carried out at the same time/within such a short timescale?
The Capita ICT contract expired on 30 September 2025. Ahead of the exit of the Capita ICT contract we sought to move our systems from old server based systems to modern cloud-based systems, this resulted in numerous system moves across 2025. There would have been significant costs to HBC to extend the contract with Capita. The benefits were deemed to outweigh the potential problems and costs in delivering a large number of projects simultaneously.		
	Question from	Question
4	Councillor Hulls	At what point during the procurement process (end-2023 to April 2024 contract signing) was it identified that the Arcus bid did not explicitly include data conversion and migration costs, unlike the Idox Cloud alternative, and why was this not addressed to ensure comparable evaluations?

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The specification required suppliers to indicate whether they could support migration costs and all replied yes. All bids were scored against the agreed criteria and Arcus was the successful bidder.		
	Question from	Question
5	Councillor Hulls	Can you detail the timeline for soft market testing and 'as-is' process reviews prior to procurement, and explain why these did not fully capture the data migration complexities from legacy Idox systems, leading to underestimation in the FBC?
Soft market testing questionnaires were sent out in June 2023 and reviewed during Summer 2023. As part of soft market testing it was noted that the new system must support the migration of case information and associated documents from the existing systems. Detailed data migration plans would not have been formed at this point in the projects as they can only be finalised once a new supplier has been confirmed.		
	Question from	Question
6	Councillor Hulls	When did the council first recognise that Idox, as the incumbent supplier, had a better understanding of migration scope (potentially reducing risks), and why was the decision made to prioritise Arcus's lower upfront cost over this advantage?
All bids were scored against the agreed criteria and Arcus was the preferred bidder.		
	Question from	Question
7	Councillor Hulls	What specific non-functional requirements (e.g., scalability, accessibility, capacity, integration with GIS) were tested during supplier evaluations, and at what stage were gaps in Arcus's Salesforce-based platform identified relative to Idox Cloud?
Supplier systems are not available for testing during the procurement process. All bids were scored against the agreed criteria and Arcus was the preferred bidder		
	Question from	Question
8	Councillor Hulls	The programme timeline (Appendix A) shows mobilisation from November 2023, May 2024, but UAT for Arcus was delayed from mid-March to later due to resourcing. Can you provide the exact dates when these delays were flagged, and what contingency plans were activated?
The programme timeline dates cover the entire programme – the Arcus project was one project within a wider programme of system changes. Due to delays in completing the Arcus contract, the mobilisation for Arcus did not begin until May 2024. UAT followed the test data load in March 2025.		

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	Question from	Question
9	Councillor Hulls	Appendix C indicates a 10-day downtime (July 31–August 12, 2025) and go-live on August 13, but the Land Charges module was taken offline shortly after. What was the precise date this decision was made, and why wasn't a phased rollout considered earlier to mitigate risks?
<p>Land Charges were paused on 31st July as part of the planned shutdown during the migration. On 13th August as part of go-live review a decision was made to halt Land Charges searches as the results were not providing the correct information and therefore no search results were sent out. The service was re-started in mid-October 2025.</p> <p>A phased rollout was discussed but was determined not to be possible due to links and dependencies.</p>		
	Question from	Question
10	Councillor Hulls	When during the Design/Build phase (June–December 2024) did dependencies on external partners (e.g., East Hampshire GIS, Capita) first cause timeline compressions, and how did this impact the overall stabilisation phase extending into October 2025?
<p>The design/build phase dates of June-December 2024 related to the whole programme, Arcus was one project within the wider programme. Dependencies review with external partners (e.g. East Hampshire GIS and Capita) took place in March 2024 and the wider process redesign phase started post May 2024. ** Process redesign specifically for Arcus took place from July 2024 until May 2025.</p>		
	Question from	Question
11	Councillor Hulls	The FBC outlined optimistic milestones without holiday contingencies. At what point in 2024 were risks of slippage (e.g., due to fixed Capita exit in September 2025) escalated to the Programme Board, and what alternatives were discussed?
<p>Project Board meetings were held monthly during 2024. All risks were discussed at each project board meeting and escalated as necessary. Alternatives were to extend the contract with Capita ICT, however, this was not an option due to the significant cost.</p>		
	Question from	Question
12	Councillor Hulls	Data migration strategies were finalised in June–December 2024 (Appendix A), but legacy data quality issues led to post-go-live cleansing. When was poor data quality first assessed (e.g., during mobilisation), and why wasn't more time allocated for cleansing before go-live?

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<p>The programme timeline dates cover the entire programme – the Arcus project was one project within a wider programme of system changes. Due to delays in completing the contract, there was insufficient time to cleanse the relevant data prior to data migration. However, data cleansing took place throughout the project.</p>		
	Question from	Question
13	Councillor Hulls	Appendix B notes extra post-go-live work due to inconsistent historical standards. Can you specify the dates when specific corruption issues (e.g., duplicated comments, missing records, mismatched files) were first reported, and how many records were affected at each stage?
<p>Over the many years the legacy systems were in place, some inconsistency is inevitable however this is different from data corruption. The inconsistent legacy dataset complicated the data transformation. We do not have specific numbers, but in comparison with the large volume of migrated data, the number of records affected was minimal.</p>		
	Question from	Question
14	Councillor Hulls	The Land Charges migration involved mismatched fields from multiple legacy systems (Appendix C). At what point in the Live Data Load phase (July–August 2025) did these mismatches become apparent, and why was a full data re-load decided on September 9, 2025?
<p>For Land Charges data was migrated from one system to another. In order to make Land Charges live as soon as possible, it was decided that a full reload was the cleanest, fastest and most accurate solution.</p>		
	Question from	Question
15	Councillor Hulls	Given the ongoing Arcus-Socrata (Tyler) interface issues for self-service searches, when did testing reveal technical incompatibilities, and what is the detailed timeline for resolution to avoid further data access disruptions?
<p>There are no technical incompatibilities. There is a current workaround for the customer which means Personal Search are completed in a timely fashion. We anticipate the Socrata interface to be up and running before 30 April 2026.</p>		
	Question from	Question
16	Councillor Hulls	UAT scripts were created March 10–April 11, 2025, but tight timescales limited high-volume, scenario-based testing (Appendix B). When were resourcing constraints (HBC and Arcus sides) first identified as compressing UAT from 53 days, and what key scenarios were omitted?
<p>The programme timeline dates cover the entire programme – the Arcus project was one project within a wider programme of system changes. UAT scripts were created prior to the UAT phase of each individual project of the programme. A risk was identified in early</p>		

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June 2025 with respect to resourcing availability for UAT. UAT was focused on minimal viable product, rather than end-to-end testing.		
	Question from	Question
17	Councillor Hulls	The root cause analysis (Appendix B) highlights insufficient phased operational rollout. At what stage during End-to-End UAT (April–June 2025) were performance issues in Land Charges flagged, and why proceeded to sign-off on July 11, 2025?
A UAT exit report was signed off as the system was functioning as expected on the data sample used in testing. Issues were then flagged when the full data set was uploaded as part of go-live. A second Land Charges UAT report was signed off in October 2025.		
	Question from	Question
18	Councillor Hulls	Operational readiness checkpoints were used (Appendix A), but governance balanced "delivery pace against assurance". Can you detail the dates of these checkpoints and explain decisions to proceed despite risks like limited system knowledge affecting test scripts?
Project Board meetings were held every month where decisions were made to proceed as required. The overall programme had a deadline of 30 September as that was the date our previous ICT supplier contract ended and risks were balanced against the deadline.		
	Question from	Question
19	Councillor Hulls	When did frontline staff feedback during UAT indicate workflow integrity or data integrity problems, and how was this incorporated into issue resolution (June 30– July 11, 2025) before go-live?
During UAT all feedback was captured and reviewed. Resolution of issue was undertaken as necessary.		
	Question from	Question
20	Councillor Hulls	The Programme Board was established in November 2023–May 2024 (Appendix A), but supplier capacity risks heightened during delivery. When were these risks first escalated, and why weren't stronger contract protections (e.g., penalties) exercised earlier?
Risks was a standing item on the Project Board meetings. Escalation meetings with Arcus were held during the programme and mitigated as necessary.		

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	Question from	Question
21	Councillor Hulls	Appendix B mentions workforce turnover creating continuity issues. Can you provide timelines for key staff changes (e.g., in data or planning teams) and explain how this impacted dependency management across workstreams?
<p>A dedicated team was established to deliver the entire programme, of which Arcus was one project. There were staff changes throughout which affected all projects. The programme used a mix of internal staff and fixed term contractors to ensure delivery of implementation as set out in the paper which went to full council on 22 November 2023. We do not have a timeline for all the staffing changes however recruitment began in January 2024 and continued through the programme including a mix of Project Managers, data migration and UAT experts and other resources as required.</p> <p>The project sponsor for Arcus left 26 February 2025.</p>		
	Question from	Question
22	Councillor Hulls	The internal audit on governance, data migration, and testing is ongoing (Appendix C). What preliminary findings have emerged since its commission, and when were governance gaps (e.g., unstable department structures) first noted in risk registers?
<p>The Internal Audit for Arcus is ongoing and we have not received the results of that audit at present, these will be shared with the Governance Committee when available.</p> <p>During the programme we commissioned a programme wide audit which was carried out during April 2025 with the final report submitted on 17 June 2025. The purpose of the audit was to conduct a risk-based review and seek to verify the governance processes and controls in place over the strategic programme for the future delivery of services. The review included the application of: The Programme Strategy, the project management approach, Project Initiation Documents, allocation of key roles and responsibilities (including stakeholder engagement), programme and project management meetings and supporting documentation, risk management processes, budget monitoring arrangements, and overall reporting and escalation processes.</p> <p>The report gave a ‘substantial’ audit assurance with no required actions and found that a “sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.”</p>		

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	Question from	Question
23	Councillor Hulls	Fixed contract deadlines reduced flexibility (Appendix B). At what point in 2024 was the risk of concurrent high-risk implementations (e.g., Arcus alongside ICT switch) deemed too high, and who made the call to proceed without additional contingencies?
The fixed contract deadline was an issue and not a risk and was known about at the start of the programme. The original go live for Arcus was June 2025 which allowed for contingency, which was utilised as we went live in August 2025.		
	Question from	Question
24	Councillor Hulls	Given the FOI 24-536 response (December 2024) stating no time recording system exists in Planning Services, how was staff effort on Arcus tracked and governed from mobilisation (November 2023) to now (February 2026), and why wasn't a temporary system implemented to monitor overheads during this high-risk project?
Each project had a Project Manager who managed the resources to deliver. During the programme, individual projects utilised additional resource at required times. The Project Manager reported any resourcing issues through to the appropriate Project Board for that project and, if deemed necessary to the overall Programme Board.		
	Question from	Question
25	Councillor Hulls	The FBC showed Arcus as cheaper but omitting migration costs—when were additional remediation costs (e.g., extended Capita support, Arcus resources) first budgeted, and what is the total overrun compared to the original estimate?
The programme operated within the Strategic Commissioning budget that was established and agreed by Full Council. The programme is expected to be delivered within that budget envelope. The final budget for the programme will be reported at the end of this financial year.		
	Question from	Question
26	Councillor Hulls	Appendix C notes incurred costs for Land Charges fixes. Can you break down the timeline and amounts for these extras, including any from market volatility in specialist skills during peak delivery (2025)?
We paid Arcus for the additional work on a time and materials basis in accordance with their rate card during the period of 13 August 2025 and go-live in mid-October 2025. The additional Arcus cost for Land Charges was £37 950.00 + VAT.		

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	Question from	Question
27	Councillor Hulls	When did the council realise that migration could represent 30-50% of total costs (as suggested in external analyses), and why wasn't this factored into the FBC's risk mitigation for supplier delivery failures?
The programme operated within the Strategic Commissioning budget that was established and agreed by Full Council. The programme is expected to be delivered within that budget envelope. Risk was reviewed at each project board meeting.		
	Question from	Question
28	Councillor Hulls	With LGR approaching by April 2028, what financial provisions have been made since October 2025 for potential data migration to the new unitary authority, and when were these risks first assessed?
Whilst initial work on LGR has started, for example, to understand Day 1 requirements for the new unitary and to review data requirements as there is no decision from central government no governance is in place to make decision. Funds have been set aside as part of the budget for 2026/27 for LGR costs but this is not broken down into specific areas such as data migration as it is too early to complete that work. Once government make a decision regarding the future reorganisation of local government in Hampshire formal governance will be established which will consider the data migration requirements for Day 1.		
	Question from	Question
29	Councillor Hulls	To verify total cost overheads from Arcus implementation (April 2024 contract) to February 12, 2026, can you provide a detailed breakdown of all direct and Page 4 of 6 indirect expenses, including consultant fees, overtime, and estimated staff time costs (e.g., using average hourly rates for officers/admin staff involved in migration, testing, and remediation)?
Total Arcus spend to date is £494,019. This includes the licensing fees for the system for 2024/25 and 2025/26, implementation fees and cost of additional work.		
	Question from	Question
30	Councillor Hulls	In light of the FOI 24-536 response indicating no time recording in Planning Services, what alternative methods (e.g., project logs, estimates from team leads) were used to quantify staff effort overheads on Arcus since 2024, and what is the estimated total cost of this unrecorded time (e.g., in FTE days or monetary value)?
Each project had a Project Manager who managed the resources to deliver. During the programme, individual projects utilised additional resource at required times. We do not capture or have an estimated total cost for unrecorded time.		

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	Question from	Question
31	Councillor Hulls	The communications log (Appendix C) shows reactive messaging for Land Charges issues. When were external stakeholders (e.g., solicitors, developers) first informed of backlogs (e.g., 102 official searches in October 2025), and why wasn't more proactive warning given during downtime?
There was communication to external stakeholders and the public prior to the start of the close down period as per the communications log.		
	Question from	Question
32	Councillor Hulls	Councillor briefings were planned for September 2025 (e.g., June 24 bulletin). At what dates did officers escalate service disruptions to Members, and how did this align with public updates on the website/social media?
Status reports provided to project sponsor and project board throughout the period. During the Land Charges downtime daily meetings were held with reports provided. Updates were provided to Members through the CEO and updates were regularly made to the HBC website Land Charges pages.		
	Question from	Question
33	Councillor Hulls	Appendix B highlights strain on frontline services during peak periods. When were impacts on residents (e.g., stalled house moves, delayed searches) first quantified, and what feedback mechanisms revealed ongoing issues post-December 2025?
There were planned workarounds for all services during the close down period with regular updates provided on the number of outstanding searches. All Land Charge backlogs were cleared by mid-November 2025. In December 2025 and January 2026 100% of Land Charges searches were returned in 5 days or less.		
	Question from	Question
34	Councillor Hulls	The report claims no major issues since relaunch (October 2025), but external reports note persistent data problems. When did internal monitoring detect these, and why weren't they communicated more transparently via FOI or public channels?
As with any new system we are looking at improving the functionality. We have run a total of 8 fix runs to improve functionality and user experience with one more fix run planned.		

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	Question from	Question
35	Councillor Hulls	During the Design/Build phase (June–December 2024), when were decisions made to regress features like in-cloud document viewing (now forcing downloads) and removal of header details/summaries of public comment stances, and why were these not prioritised to match or exceed legacy Idox functionality?
This is part of the overall system design. As with any new system we are looking at improving the functionality. We have run a total of 8 fix runs to improve functionality and user experience. The new system is a different system to the legacy Idox system and therefore features will not be the same.		
	Question from	Question
36	Councillor Hulls	Appendix B notes improved digital self-service but acknowledges post-go-live productivity reductions. Can you detail the timeline when external user regressions (e.g., lack of comment stance visibility) were first identified in UAT or hypercare (August–September 2025), and how many public complaints or feedback instances highlighted these?
The system was procured according to the specification and tested accordingly. No public complaints have been registered.		
	Question from	Question
37	Councillor Hulls	What root causes (e.g., Salesforce platform limitations, incomplete data migration, or cost-saving choices) led to these functionality losses, and at what stage were they escalated as risks to public transparency and engagement?
These are not legal requirements for a Planning Register.		
	Question from	Question
38	Councillor Hulls	The FBC emphasised modernising services and improving customer experience. When did testing reveal that Arcus would reduce usability for external users (e.g., no summary views for consultations), and why wasn't a user impact assessment conducted with public stakeholders before go-live?
All bids were scored against the agreed criteria and Arcus was the preferred bidder. A user impact assessment was not part of the project.		

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	Question from	Question
39	Councillor Hulls	Appendix C mentions ongoing Arcus-Socrata interfaces affecting self-service. How do these regressions impact statutory requirements for public access to planning records, and what is the detailed timeline (with milestones) for restoring or enhancing these features?
There are no technical incompatibilities. There is a current workaround for the customer which means Personal Search are completed in a timely fashion. We anticipate the Socrata interface to be up and running before 30 April 2026.		
	Question from	Question
40	Councillor Hulls	Since stabilisation in October–December 2025, what metrics (e.g., user satisfaction surveys, portal usage stats) show the impact of these changes on residents/developers, and when were plans developed to address them in future updates?
The stabilisation period of October – December is specific to the Arcus Project and its not relevant to other projects within the programme. Following the downtime period for Land Charges, as per Appendix C - The Land Charges service became operational in mid-October, with all backlogs cleared and normal service restored within 10 days. No major issues have been reported since. In December 2025 and January 2026 100% of searches were returned within 5 days		
	Question from	Question
41	Councillor Hulls	The FBC's economic case ruled out options 1 (do nothing/renew) and 2 (selfbuild) qualitatively. When during procurement did officers reassess these against actual market bids (e.g., Idox vs. Arcus), and why was no quantitative VfM analysis (e.g., NPV, BCR) provided for specific suppliers in the FBC?
This was completed after the quality assessment was completed. The business case assessed the necessity and financial viability of the project, at that point in time no ITT had been issued.		
	Question from	Question
42	Councillor Hulls	The FBC projected efficiencies (£105,000 over term from admin savings) and commercial income (£115,000 from redeployed planning officer). To what extent have these been realised since go-live in August 2025, and when were shortfalls first identified?
The system has only been in place for six months as such no efficiencies have been realised at this stage.		

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	Question from	Question
43	Councillor Hulls	Given the FBC's critical success factors (e.g., supplier capacity, £120,000 annual budget limit), at what point post-implementation were breaches (e.g., additional remediation costs exceeding projections) escalated, and how did this affect the overall VfM?
The financial status of the project was included in each project board presentation.		
	Question from	Question
44	Councillor Hulls	The financial appraisal showed option 3 with the least negative NPV (-£342,155) and BCR (0.35). Considering actual overruns and delays, what is the revised NPV/BCR as of February 2026, and why wasn't migration cost variability better modeled in the FBC?
This calculation has not been modelled at this time.		
	Question from	Question
45	Councillor Hulls	Soft market testing in June-July 2023 informed the FBC. When did feedback reveal risks like supplier overload (e.g., other councils transitioning), and why weren't these factored into a more conservative economic appraisal?
Supplier overload risk was not relevant across all programme projects. For the Arcus implementation, potential supplier capacity risks were identified early in the mobilisation phase. By working closely with the supplier and maintaining robust controls around key milestones, planned go-live dates were met.		
	Question from	Question
46	Councillor Hulls	The FBC emphasised VfM through modernisation and automation. Given postlaunch issues (e.g., data corruption, functionality regressions), to what extent has the projected customer experience improvement been achieved, and what evidence supports this?
The system has only been in place for six months and further information is required in order to provide a detailed answer.		
	Question from	Question
47	Councillor Hulls	Considering the FOI 24-536 revelation of no time recording, how has the lack of effort tracking impacted verification of the FBC's projected efficiencies (e.g., admin time savings), and what alternative metrics confirm VfM despite unquantified staff overheads?
The system has only been in place for six months and further information is required in order to provide a detailed answer.		

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	Question from	Question
48	Councillor Hulls	Appendix B's table recommends quality-driven go-lives and early data ownership. Since the lessons workshop, what specific changes have been made to procurement templates or readiness criteria, and when were they applied to other projects?
Procurement templates and readiness criteria are under review; implementation of updates is pending.		
	Question from	Question
49	Councillor Hulls	The programme improved maturity in supplier management (Appendix B), but challenges persisted. Can you detail the timeline for embedding stronger mobilisation checks (e.g., evidence-based supplier readiness) and how this will prevent similar issues in LGR transitions?
Although no formal timeline was set, lessons learned have informed the need for stronger mobilisation checks. Evidence-based supplier readiness assessments will be embedded into mobilisation governance for future transformation/LGR programmes to mitigate similar risks.		
	Question from	Question
50	Councillor Hulls	Root causes like date-driven decisions were identified post-stabilisation (October 2025). When was the decision made to commission the internal audit, and how will its findings influence future transformation governance?
The internal audit was commissioned in October 2025. The audit has not yet reported on its findings, however findings will help ensure that future transformation programmes adopt the same governance approach and control framework.		
	Question from	Question
51	Councillor Hulls	With the report emphasising repeatable frameworks, what metrics have been tracked since December 2025 to measure Arcus's stable performance (e.g., error rates, productivity), and when will a full post-implementation review be shared publicly?
Issue tracking is ongoing and statistics can be provided. However, KPIs are not yet defined/available. Post implementation review of data and process quality has been discussed.		

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	Question from	Question
52	Councillor Lind	What further tangible service improvements can residents and staff expect to see in the near future as a result of this programme?
Further phases of system and process improvements are currently being scoped. Each system will continue to develop its functionality to ensure residents and staff benefit from its full capabilities, while processes will be regularly reviewed and enhanced.		
	Question from	Question
53	Councillor Lind	Who will be accountable for ensuring that all new complex projects incorporate the risks identified through lessons learned into their respective risk registers?
Lessons learned will be shared with future project managers and stakeholders involved in transformation and IT projects to ensure they are embedded and fully realised.		