

**Report of Director of Resources and Housing
Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee**

Date: 28th January 2019

Subject: Applications Portfolio Programme – Update on Access project

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The Public Services Network (PSN) was set up as an assured route for information sharing by central government, to facilitate shared services. It acts as a compliance regime that serves as both a commitment to a basic level of information security for connecting government departments and local authorities and also a level of trust between Leeds City Council and other public services.

Due to more stringent compliance controls brought in by the Cabinet Office in 2014 the Council has worked hard to ensure it meets PSN compliancy. The Cabinet Office contacted the Council through the Chief Executive in January 2017, to ensure that the Council brought itself into compliance as soon as possible. PSN accreditation was awarded in 2018 on the basis that good progress had been made and with the assurance we will remove Access databases running on 2003 by December 2019.

Recommendations

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and be assured that considerable effort is being undertaken to rectify the current situation with regards to the Council’s approach to maintaining PSN compliance and where progress has been made.

The project team recommends providing the Committee with another update paper on Access progress for the next meeting.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide Corporate Governance and Audit Committee with an update on the current position on Access databases and compliance to PSN.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The council relies heavily on a large number of 2003 Access Databases. This software is unsupported and carries a 'critical' score in the ITHC. There are over 300 live databases which need to be migrated to managed systems to ensure services are able to continue without disruption. A plan is in place with proposed timescales for completion by end of December 2019 and if not, this could be an issue for PSN Certification. Specifically, Access 2003 runtime is the issue for PSN Certification, not 2010 as an example (so those are not in scope right now for the 2019 deadline).
- 2.2 A re-application for PSN Certification was made to the Cabinet Office on the 30th September 2017. In November 2017, a mid-year IT Health Check was instigated in order to ratify the Council's position. The results of the ITHC showed a significant improvement.
- 2.3 A further re-application for PSN Certification was made to the Cabinet Office at the end of May 2018 using the November 2017, mid-year IT Health Check. The residual 'Security Gaps' were detailed and signed off by Tom Riordan, Chief Executive. As detailed above, PSN accreditation was awarded in 2018 with the assurance we will remove Access databases running on 2003 by December 2019.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Analysis of which databases are in use, by whom and their file paths has been identified and engagement with the service areas, users, application managers and business partners is ongoing to work together on an alternative solution where required.
- 3.2 We have received 83 responses so far to the questionnaires sent out to service areas. This is an increase of 9 since the last report to Committee. Of those 83, 20 of the respondents have identified their database as business critical (criticality based on whether those services would stop without the use of the database). Of those 20, 12 have confirmed the Access database is the main operational system of that function; meaning 8 of them are supplementary.
- 3.3 We have engaged separately with several services where they have significant numbers of databases, e.g. Highways and Transport, who have 87 databases.
- 3.4 The project team have engaged with all service areas to identify where new solutions are already in the pipeline to replace Access databases and are focussing on those that haven't, whilst still keeping a view of those that are due to be replaced; in case their timescales slip. So far, the project have confirmed that 5 databases are due to be deleted once they've fully migrated over to a new solution and 12 are being delivered by another project or programme. This means the project are prioritising the 271 that don't currently have a new solution in the pipeline.
- 3.5 The planned approach is to focus on databases which are business critical and contain highly sensitive data and the project is working on finalising the database list by planned approach.

- 3.6 Whilst the deadline of December 2019 was agreed with the Cabinet Office as the deadline for completion of this remediation task, the Council will have to reapply for PSN certification in June 2019 (this is an annual certification process). Prior to the reapplication the Council will also have to undergo a further IT Health Check by external auditors to validate our application. At this stage the Council will have to have confidence that the Access 2003 project is on track and will be able to complete by the deadline.
- 3.7 Following the last meeting of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, Councillor Ritchie wrote to the Director of Resources and Housing asking for his assistance in bringing the issue of the Access 2003 remediation work to the attention of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and to push progress within the directorate, particularly with regards to the directorates engaging with the project team. The Director of Resources and Housing has acted upon this letter, taking the matter to CLT on the 4th December 2018. The Director of Resources and Housing has asked for subsequent updates since that date and asked that all Directors be supplied with a list of all the databases within their directorates so they can actively pursue.
- 3.8 CLT also agreed a mechanism by which, under the supervision of the Head of Information Management and Governance, non-compliant databases could be deleted without the approval of a service, should an owner for a database not be determined within the timescales. This mechanism has been added to the Plan B described in 4.5 Risk Management.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation has taken place across service areas, along with application managers and business partners to gather the information needed to assess the status of the databases. Regular communications and updates are planned in and provided to the key stakeholders.
- 4.1.2 Engagement with service areas takes place regularly and is planned in on an ongoing basis, to reassure them, provide updates and discuss potential solutions. We are consulting with IG where necessary.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no issues in relation to Equality and Diversity or Cohesion and Integration.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The Access project falls under a large programme of work within DIS called the Application Portfolio Programme. This programme is set to look at all our applications within the council and to make sure we meet statutory and regulatory requirements and where possible reduce the overall cost to the Council via rationalisation. The Access replacements will take into account the other projects under the programme, e.g. GDPR and Cloud Security Principles to ensure we continue to remain compliant whatever the new solution.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The approach to resolve the Access 2003 databases is to remove or replace with suitable in-house solutions initially, thus saving time and money. Therefore internal resource is being utilised and value for money sought. Initial analysis shows that the majority of the databases can be replaced by in-house developed solutions, such as SharePoint lists or corporate case management solutions.
- 4.4.2 There are no issues in relation to resources and value for money

Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.4.3 Delegated authority sits with the Director of Resources and Housing and Senior Information Risk Owner and has been sub-delegated to the Chief Information Officer under the heading "Knowledge and information management" in the Director of Resources and Housing Sub-Delegation Scheme.
- 4.4.4 There are no restrictions on access to information contained in this report.

4.5 Risk management

Access Risks

Timescales

- 4.5.1 The project has concerns due to the lack of information being provided within timeframes that will potentially impact on timescales for delivery. This is due to a number of factors, including services being unclear about who manages or owns their databases (i.e. staff who built it have now left the council) and the level of information which is held. The project team are working with service areas to identify this information.
- 4.5.2 The amount of data held in the redundant databases and where it needs to go. Identifying what we need to keep and do not.
- 4.5.3 Dependencies on service areas to work with us in the timescales we need them to, e.g. providing information in a timely manner, being able to implement a new solution within timescales and working around their usual business workload. It's been identified by more than one service area that they have restrictions on when they can implement new solutions (e.g. financial reporting period) and timescales for new solutions in the pipeline to be delivered (e.g. Housing's new solution).
- 4.5.4 Databases which are live and in use which the project are not aware of. Work has been done to identify the databases in use, but there is a small risk there are other databases in use which tools have not yet identified – meaning the number to work with could be bigger.
- 4.5.5 The project team is now drawing up a Plan B, which will determine how we will complete all the work required within the timescales, should we not be able to obtain all the information needed to progress as currently in plan. Actions in Plan B include the 'lift and drop' of data into a compliant database whilst an owner is still determined or following consultation with the Head of Information Management and

Governance, the deletion of a non-compliant database where relevant and appropriate.

Resource

4.5.6 The amount of resource needed once the work progresses to deliver in the timescale needed with the correct skills, is a risk, if this cannot be provided. Individuals with the appropriate technical skillset are highly sought after in the City. Recruitment is currently underway to ensure the project team has capacity to complete the work within the timescales.

PSN Risks

- 4.5.7 Should action against the current PSN Remediation plan not be to the satisfaction of the PSN Authority, the Council will have to withstand a number of risks:
- The Head of PSN will inform the Information Commissioners Officer, which could culminate in the revisiting of the audit conducted by the ICO in 2013 to ensure compliance against the Data Protection Act.
 - The Head of PSN will inform the Deputy National Security advisor to the Prime Minister, who would in turn conduct an assessment based on the national risk profile.
 - The Head of PSN could instigate an external audit of all our security systems by the National Cyber Security Centre. The Council could end up under partial commissioner control.
 - Ultimately, the Head of PSN could instigate a complete 'switch off' from PSN services.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The actions outlined in this report are being managed both in the project scope and through to service delivery and any risks such as timescales have been identified (as above) and we are working with service areas and teams within DIS to remove the databases within the timeline.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and be assured that considerable effort is being undertaken to rectify the current situation with regards to the Council's approach to maintaining PSN compliance and where progress has been made.

6.2 The project team recommends providing the Committee with another update paper on Access progress for the next meeting.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 No other documents to be included.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.