

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

Date: 22nd March 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

1. 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.
2. 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

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.
2. 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 IT Health Check (ITHC). There are 288 live databases which need to be migrated to managed systems to ensure services are able to continue without disruption. A plan is in place 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 Access databases are not currently in scope 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 PSN certification is relied upon as an assurance mechanism to support information sharing, where many of the requirements request that the council present a certificate prior to sharing, or evidence alternative, more time consuming, compliance work to be completed.
- 3.2 Since the re-application to the Cabinet Office in May 2018, the PSN Assurance Team have raised concerns regarding the timescales for the resolution of one specific issue; namely the resolution of 2003 Access databases.
- 3.3 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. The project team are currently working with service areas to identify solutions that will replace 83 databases. 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 19 databases can be deleted once they are delivered by another programme/project. This project will monitor progress of these in case the timescales slip and we need to bring them in scope.
- 3.4 The previous Committee meeting raised some queries which have been responded to, please see below for questions and answers.

- 3.4.1 **How other authorities have approached Access issues and how we compare** – We have not engaged with other authorities specifically about this project, but it has been an industry problem for some time. We know that some councils have tackled this issue before, but the scale of usage isn't the same as it is with Leeds. Leeds will be somewhat unique as well, as around the Office uplift and Windows 7 project, Leeds City Council took the stance that people could use Access as a line of business productivity tool and directorates used it with little oversight.
- 3.4.2 **On whether we are still creating new databases** – It is still possible to create additional databases, as we are unable to fully restrict access to Access without removing it altogether, thus risking staff being unable to maintain existing databases and complete their work. Databases have been made since the project commenced, but the majority are copies and backups of existing, known databases. The creation of new databases is being monitored and can be reported to Committee on request. Service desk and applications teams know we should not be creating any new ones at the request of users.
- 3.4.3 **Removal of databases – can they be restored** – Yes, we have 3 months. We can also archive to other areas of NetApp removing essentially all risk. For truly unknown databases we would recommend this, as not everything is used regularly enough for 3 months to catch it.
- 3.4.4 **Resourcing – do we have enough and can we increase if necessary** – We have enough technical staff to undertake the work required and recent issues around Power Business Intelligence team resource and Solution Architect sign off have been resolved. Existing staff can be repurposed to help with some of the tasks and we are able to bring in contractors if necessary.
- 3.5 Engagement with the Cabinet Office to gather their view on the remediation programme has not yet been undertaken. The meeting is arranged for Friday 15th March.
- 3.6 The planned approach is to focus on databases which are business critical and contain highly sensitive data and further below in this report is the current statistical breakdown by status of the databases in each directorate.

Gateways

Below is a table summary of the gateways to enable the project to successfully migrate a service away from Access and over to a new solution and the tasks that are involved at each gateway.

Description	Explanation	Summary Position Statement
Engaging with service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial contact with service area/user of database - Requirements gathering – including core minimum requirements, reporting, data migration, retention. This can involve multiple meeting and workshops - Solution options considered against requirements by Solutions Architect or Principal Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial engagement with the service is nearing completion, with only 28 databases outstanding with unknown owners
Solution Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposal of solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The following solutions are

	including demo where necessary	<p>been deployed as standard: Power BI (Business Intelligence) Corporate Case Management System SharePoint Excel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where one of the 4 standard products is not a suitable replacement, alternative solutions are considered by the Solutions Architect
Solution Signed Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign off of new solution with designated lead/head of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is considered on a case by case basis
In Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requirements being developed into agreed solution, to include input from the service, i.e. checkpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 8% complete
In User Acceptance Testing (UAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In functionality testing - In user acceptance testing with end user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solution delivered and in use by service area, support continuing during an agreed 'bedding in' period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Pending Deletion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Databases which are being delivered by another project or programme and so can be deleted once migration to new solution is complete, e.g. Housing ICT solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As above
Deleted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access database deleted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 2% complete

Directorate Breakdown

Below is a tabled breakdown of databases in use in each directorate. The Access software is the problem for PSN, once the project migrates the services away from Access and on to an alternative solution, the databases themselves are no longer a PSN issue (though will be deleted). The software ultimately needs removing once the service no longer has a dependency on the databases.

Directorate	Number of Databases
Adults & Health	2
Children & Families	9
City Development	107
Communities & Environment	44
Resources & Housing	98
Unknown*	28
	Total: 288

*Unknown are those we can see the usage for and have names of users to contact but we have yet to establish an owner, therefore confirm a directorate/service area. The project is currently analysing data of users to engage with them and establish an owner.

Adults & Health Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Children & Families Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
2	6	0	0	0	0	1	0

City Development Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
107	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**87 of these databases belong to Highways & Transport and Environmental Studies and a plan of approach is being devised with business partners for Highways for these ones. They are currently being split into 'reporting' and 'non-reporting' databases, as those which are for reporting purposes can potentially be grouped together for a reporting solution. Highways are also in the process of replacing their main line of business system, so the project team are looking at the dependencies on that for the database replacements.

Communities & Environment Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
37	5	0	1	0	0	0	0

Resources & Housing Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
78	2	0	0	0	0	18	2

It is not possible to provide timescales for each database against the gateways, as the databases are being worked on concurrently and each one is at a different stage or has different target dates. The position also changes very quickly as new information comes to light that cause dates to be changed.

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 the Information Management and Governance team 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 and will escalate any problem areas. Remediation has been agreed with CLT ensuring that where owners for databases cannot be identified within suitable timescales, the Digital and Information Service will manage the outcome of the database (either deleted or move to a compliant platform).
- 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). Communication has been established with the other projects to ensure any slippage is communicated urgently. Following the correspondence from Councillor Ritchie 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 directorates, the Director of Resources and Housing has acted positively and now receives monthly updates to ensure issues can be actively pursue.
- 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. The project has mitigated this as much as possible and without completely removing essential access to databases, it's not possible to fully restrict creation of new databases.

Resource

- 4.5.5 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. We have recently allocated additional resource to the Power BI reporting team for the database conversions and have agreed a way forward for identifying alternative solutions without the need to depend solely on a Solution Architect resource.

PSN Risks

- 4.5.6 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 None.

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.