

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

Date: 24th June 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 IT Health Check (ITHC). At the outset of this programme of work there were over 300 live databases which needed to be migrated to managed systems. 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 PSN accreditation was awarded in 2018 with the assurance we will remove Access databases running on 2003 by December 2019.
- 2.3 Senior Officers from the Information Management and Governance service have been in discussion with the Cabinet Office since March 2019. The Cabinet Office have provided the following statement:

I can confirm from the discussions with you and your colleagues today that I am satisfied with the projects, provisions and positive focus from Leeds City Council, in responding to and tackling vulnerabilities which have a significant impact on your network (and potentially) critical business processes.

The solutions and remediation schedules for the highlighted vulnerabilities discussed are in principle acceptable. But strong compensating controls and mitigation will need to be aligned to these and any other highlighted vulnerabilities as remediation projects and plans are in flight to address them.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 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 31 databases can be deleted once they are delivered by another programme/project. The project team are currently monitoring these databases and working with colleagues to develop contingency plans if the dates do slip.
- 3.2 Not including the 31 databases being delivered by other pieces of work, the project is actively working on replacing 223 databases.
- 3.3 The project has been heavily focussed on removing the ability to access the 2003 databases (known as the 'runtime') in the last reporting period. The 2003 runtime is where the security risk is, rather than with the databases themselves, so it's important for the project to progress with the removal of this from across all users.
- 3.4 As some users still need to access the databases until we replace them, the project only plans to remove the runtime from users who have no dependency on a database running on version 2003 – until these are replaced later this year. The

Children & Families Directorate

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

City Development Directorate**

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
115	1	0	0	0	0	3	1

**102 of these databases belong to Highways & Transport and Environmental Studies and a plan of approach is being actioned with business partners and the applications team for Highways for these ones. 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. Of the Highways databases, the project understands that a number of these can be moved out of scope for the PSN phase of delivery, as they are not dependent on 2003 runtime to operate; though they will be replaced eventually. Only when the exact number is confirmed can we move them out of the current tables of reporting.

Communities & Environment Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
35	5	0	4	0	0	0	1

Resources & Housing Directorate

Engaging with service	Solution Identified	Solution Signed Off	In Development	In UAT	Delivered	Pending Deletion	Deleted
46	2	0	0	0	0	24	2

West Yorkshire Joint Services

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

4 Corporate considerations

4.3 Consultation and engagement

4.3.1 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.

4.4 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

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

4.5 Council policies and best council plan

4.5.1 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.

4.6 Resources and value for money

4.6.1 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.

4.6.2 There are no issues in relation to resources and value for money

Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.6.3 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.

4.6.4 There are no restrictions on access to information contained in this report.

4.7 Risk management

Access Risks

Timescales

4.7.1 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

4.7.2 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

- 4.7.3 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.
- 5.2 The work to remove the 2003 'runtime' (as outlined in 3.3 and 3.4), is a key mitigation against the security risks posed by the use of Access across the Council. As well as reducing the security risk, the removal of runtime from all users except those who actually need it, will significantly reduce the risk of the creation of new databases on this version of Access.

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.

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

7 Background documents¹

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.