

Report of Director of Resources and Housing

Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 21st September 2020

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

To provide Corporate Governance and Audit Committee an update on the progress made on eradicating Microsoft (MS) Access 2003 from the network to enable us to maintain our current PSN Compliance Certificate.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and support the actions therein.

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 To provide Corporate Governance and Audit Committee with an update on progress with the Access 2003 replacement project.

2. Background information

2.1 The Public Services Network (PSN) was set up as an assured route for information sharing by central government across public sector organisations. It provides a compliance regime to assure a good level of information security arrangements are in place. The Council has worked hard over the last number of years to achieve and maintain compliance as security risks evolve. On 20th August 2019 the Cabinet Office re-instated the Council's PSN certificate. The council network is now being actively monitored for vulnerabilities and patched appropriately.

2.2 MS Access 2003 is no longer supported by Microsoft and therefore could introduce a cyber security risk. A decision was made to completely move away from Microsoft Access and for compliance purposes we eradicated Access 2003 first as part of phase one and long term plans for phase two are being finalised in order for the council to move away from historic Access use and ensure processes are covered by appropriate solutions.

2.3 MS Access is a tool that is heavily relied upon in services and underpins important business processes, for example in Finance, Children's and Highways.

3. Main issues

3.1 Members will recall the high level project plan milestones reported in previous meetings. Progress against these milestones is set out for ease of reference at Annex 1 to this report.

3.2 Since the last meeting work has focused on the following issues:

Conversions from MS Access 2003 to MS Access 2010

3.3 Excellent progress has been made in the last reporting period on uplifts to Access 2010, amidst issues the pandemic continues to pose. On the writing of this report, there are currently two databases awaiting final uplift by developers in DIS. The rest are with the business to complete final rollout (see Annex 1 for a further breakdown of the latest statistics).

- Current secondments and resource assignments to the conversion work stream are due to be ended on 31/08/2020, meaning developers will return to substantive posts and outstanding work to be completed by the applications teams will be finalised.
- The project have consolidated all remaining 'access' (e.g. licenses and runtime) into one group and final 'full' licenses and runtime instances will be removed from DIS staff members once Business as Usual arrangements are agreed and in place.

Stop creation of new MS Access 2003 or 2010 databases

- 3.4 Service areas are fully aware they are unable to create new databases and the project closely monitors this and report statistics on this at future meetings. As we've continued to remove access for people, teams are flagging other databases to us that aren't technically in use, but need data migrating in order to remove their reliance on Access. This has added to the team's workload in recent weeks, but is being managed.

Replacement of Access 2010 databases

- 3.5 The long term replacement work of the converted databases and MS Access 2010 is currently being scoped out and planned in. The project have agreed with the Cabinet Office to deliver replacements for Access over a three to five year period. Any security risks will be mitigated for through our usual measures whilst we work to completely remove the council's reliance on Access. The next steps and analysis are underway and project plans are in hand.
- 3.6 Some of the tasks are already underway including the analysis, planning and the assessment and categorisation of the 2010 data. This will enable us to scope out how many databases need replacing in phase two of the project.
- 3.7 Appropriate governance arrangements are already in place and DIS has implemented a new Portfolio Management Office (PMO) to assist with the management and organisation of projects, including resource allocation and board/governance arrangements. All projects in DIS will report resource commitments and project progress via the PMO and the project will continue to attend regular board meetings to discuss progress, actions, risks and issues. The PMO implementation has also brought a formalised and robust method of requesting additional resources, should they be needed during a project life cycle.
- 3.8 The current Senior Responsible Officer will remain in place and the Access board will make up part of the new Compliance board under the PMO. Any escalations will go through the current channels, to the SRO and board level where needed.

PSN Compliance

- 3.9 There have been conversations taking place with Cabinet Office in the last few months and they are comfortable with the approach the project is taking and have agreed the plan for Access 2010 delivery. The Cabinet Office have responded to us in writing and this can be made available to the committee under separate cover, if required.
- 3.10 All DIS projects and programmes which have an impact on compliance have all been addressed in the Information Governance annual report, which was provided to committee in March 2020 and the Access project will report back in the same manner, alongside all projects/programmes which have an impact on compliance.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Significant consultation and engagement has taken place with all service areas and continual challenge must be maintained.

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 replacement are part of the Council's wider compliance programmes for General Data Protection Regulations, Public Services Network Information Assurance, Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards and Data Security and Protection Toolkit.

4.4. Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Analysis by DIS shows that the essential requirements of many of the databases can be met by Council solutions such as SharePoint lists or corporate case management solutions. This means services accepting the corporate solutions offered and adapting business processes whilst having solutions that meet the primary requirement of the original database.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 Delegated authority sits with the Director of Resources and Housing and Senior Information Risk Owner and has been sub-delegated to the Chief Digital and Information Officer under the heading "Knowledge and information management" in the Director of Resources and Housing Sub-Delegation Scheme.

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

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 Microsoft Access 2003 Risks

There is a risk some remediation work will be required during September and October 2020, due to technical issues that arise post rollout of upgraded databases, or any redundant databases that service users can no longer access.

Mitigation: The project have already planned for closure work and two developers will remain with the project full time, until all tasks and final communications are complete.

4.6.2 Microsoft Access 2010 Risks

Dependencies on service areas to work with the project in the timescales we need them to.

Mitigation: Services have been directed by CLT to prioritise this work, and other compliance work, over other work. This message will need to be reiterated once Access 2010 analysis begins and the project will pick up on this communication.

The risk of not getting the right technical resource recruited for this project.

Mitigation: All avenues to recruit the necessary skills and capabilities are being employed. The new PMO will also assist with assigning the correct skills to the resource pool.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Director of Resources and Housing and the Chief Digital and Information Officer continue to ensure this project is prioritised, this has been readdressed given the current situation and is still a priority project. CLT have been informed and are provided with regular updates, with escalation routes established. Risks are been managed, with remediation monitored by the Access Project Board.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and support the actions therein.

7. Background documents¹

N/A

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.

ANNEX 1 MS Access conversion statistics per Directorate.

DIRECTORATE	NEW	IN PROGRESS	WAITING ON BUSINESS	ON TEST	AWAITING GO LIVE
Adults & Health	0	1	0	1	0
Children & Families	0	0	0	0	0
Communities & Environment	0	0	0	5	0
City Development	0	0	0	55	3
Resources & Housing	0	0	0	13	16
West Yorkshire Joint Services	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	1	0	74	19

Key descriptions:

New (Not yet started) – Work has not begun on a database yet and is awaiting the developer to begin assessing and converting.

In progress – Work has begun on converting the database and the database is currently with the developer to complete.

Waiting on Business – This status is used for the project team developers to track whether we are awaiting answers from business areas about functionality of the database, whether it is still required (due to infrequent use) or discussing dates for hand over of the database with the up to date version of runtime.

On test – In user testing and awaiting feedback from user about whether database can be signed off as successfully converted or if errors have occurred and further development is needed.

Awaiting go-live – Access 2010 database is ready to go-live and Access 2003 database can be removed. Agreeing a swap over date with the business.