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**Report of Director of Resources and Housing**

**Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee**

**Date: 14th December 2020**

**Subject: Applications Portfolio Programme – Update on Access project**

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

2.2 As noted in previous committee reports, the council has an Access replacement project and have previously reported on phase one (Access 2003) and the phase two plan is 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 The project approach for replacement solutions (Solution Architect approach) in phase two 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 All databases have been uplifted from 2003 to 2010, though work is still ongoing with services to ensure stability of the newly uplifted database before the old version can be fully archived. Some remediation work is required to ensure databases can be rolled out safely to the live folders.

### Stop creation of new MS Access 2003 or 2010 databases

3.4 Service areas are fully aware they should not create new databases and the project closely monitors this. Any new databases found would be immediately escalated to The Access Project Board. No new databases have been found since February 2020. As we've continued to remove access for people, teams are flagging other databases to us which contain historical data. Where this data needs to be retained for statutory retention reasons this data has been migrated in order to remove services reliance on Access.

### Replacement of Access 2010 databases

3.5 The long term replacement work of the converted databases and MS Access 2010 has been scoped out and the methodology has been agreed. The initial phases of the

project have been planned in and are currently being resourced. 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, as well as resource planning. The Access board have approved the project team to explore the supplier framework to assist with the analysis phase and help accelerate delivery, by having a dedicated team of resource tasked to the analysis of the databases. This work is underway and being led by strategic sourcing (procurement), the Solution Architect and project manager to obtain quotes and proposals from the supplier for approval by the board.

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. The SRO will then escalate as appropriate for any significant issues that cannot be resolved.

## 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 to project completion and closure due to resource impact caused by the second national lockdown and ELI departures. The lead developer on the project has left post under the ELI scheme under accelerated circumstances (due to the changes in legislation).

Mitigation: The project have sought alternative resource to support the final delivery, though full time resource cannot be fully replaced right now and have highlighted the risk that delivery may slow, rather than stop altogether.

#### 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. This risk has been compounded recently by the current economic climate and uncertainties we face amidst the pandemic and challenge to make savings.

**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. The board have given the project the go-ahead to recruit from the existing supplier framework, which should assist with accelerating delivery, particularly the crucial analysis phase.

## 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.

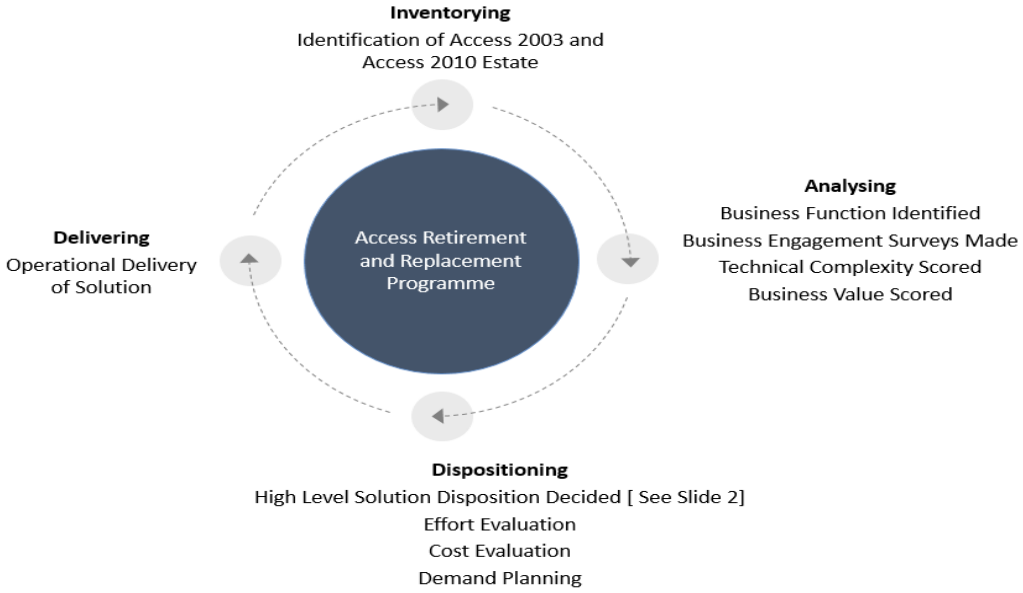
## 7. Background documents[1]

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.

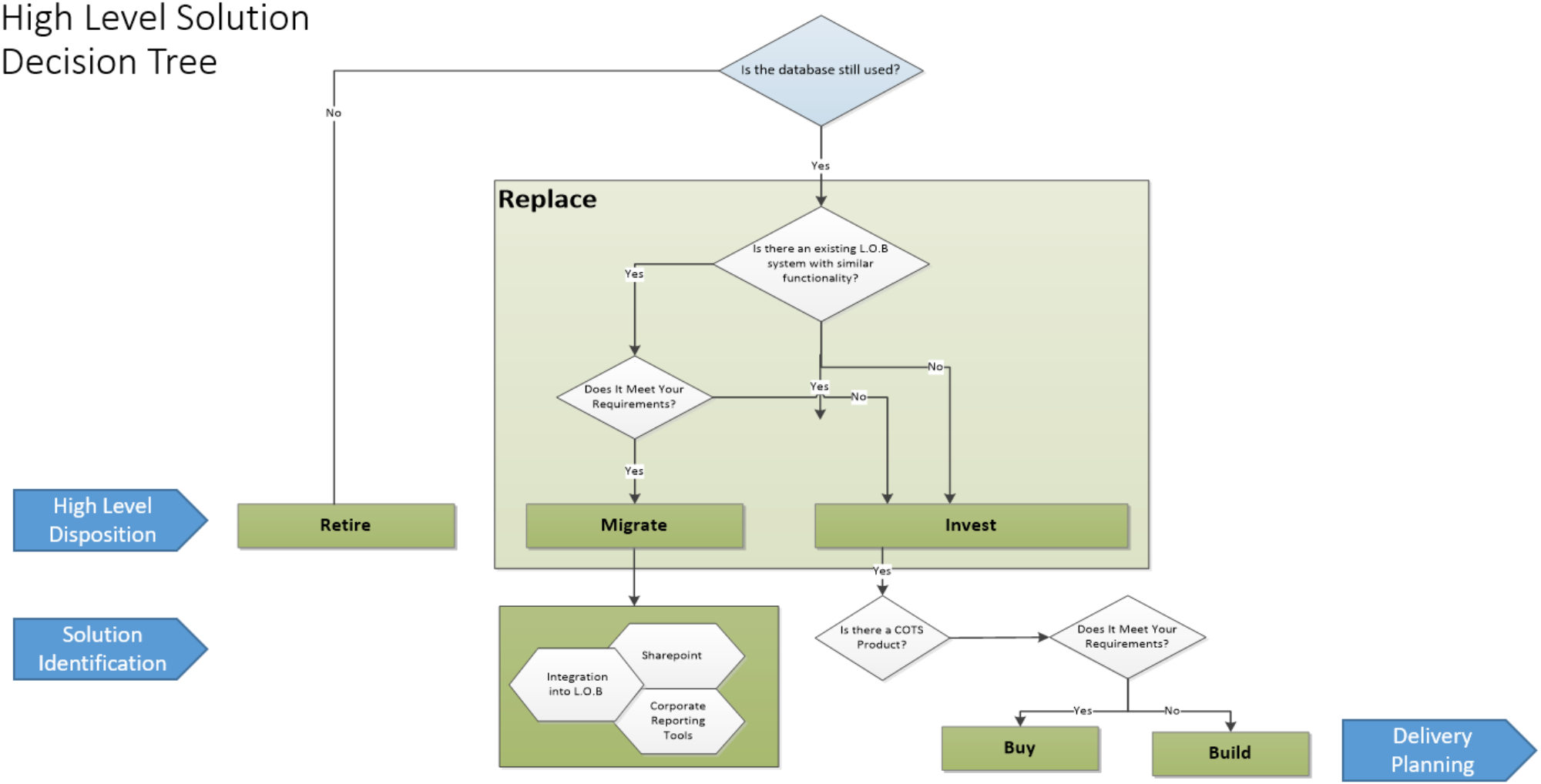
**ANNEX 1 MS Access Replacements Solution Architect Planned Approach**

# Summary of Approach

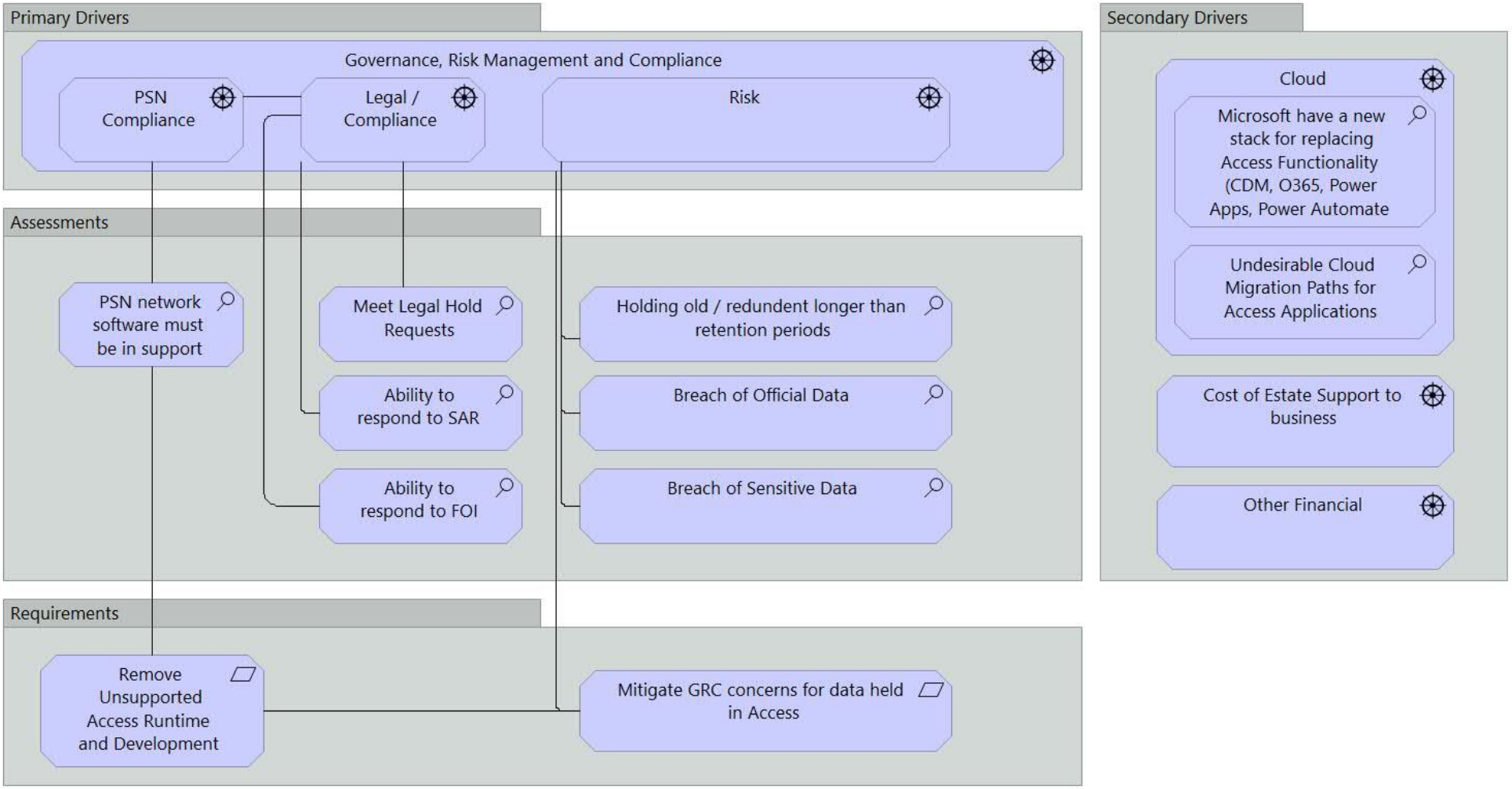



## High Level Solution Decision Tree

# High Level Solution Decision Tree




**Strategic Drivers**


Primary Drivers
Governance, Risk Management and Compliance
PSN Compliance
Legal / Compliance
Risk
Assessments
PSN network software must be in support
Meet Legal Hold Requests
Holding old / redundent longer than retention periods
Ability to respond to SAR
Breach of Official Data
Ability to respond to FOI
Breach of Sensitive Data
Requirements
Remove Unsupported Access Runtime and Development
Mitigate GRC concerns for data held in Access
Secondary Drivers
Cloud
Microsoft have a new stack for replacing Access Functionality (CDM, O365, Power Apps, Power Automate
Undesirable Cloud Migration Paths for Access Applications
Cost of Estate Support to business
Other Financial