

**Report of Director of Resources and Housing
Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee****Date: 16th March 2020****Subject: Applications Portfolio Programme – Update on Access project**

Are specific electoral wards affected? 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? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: 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.

The most up to date breakdown of the conversion figures will be sent to Members under separate cover and presented on the day of the committee.

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. It was reported to Committee on 30th August 2017, a total of 66,667 individual vulnerabilities had been revealed by the IT Health Check. The teams within the Digital and Information Service (DIS) working with the council directorates reduced this number to 595 individual vulnerabilities (reported to Committee on 30th July 2018) at which time 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. The Council will move off 2003 by July 2020.

2.3 In addition MS Access 2010 will go out of support at the end of October 2020 and it may be a requirement of the PSN that this version will also have to be eradicated from the network for compliance in 2021.

2.4 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.

2.5 The project initially identified 534 Access 2003 databases in May 2018. Of the 237 reported at the last meeting 66 have been migrated leaving 171 to do. However, a further 64 have been identified stored on C:\ drives. This will be expanded on in the Main Issues section of this report.

2.6 The long term replacement work of the converted databases and MS Access 2010 is currently being assessed and planned in.

3. Main issues

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

a) Getting the right skills and resources assigned onto the project.

- As reported to the last meeting, due to the recruitment and retention issues the Council did not have the necessary skills and capacity to develop replacement systems.

Therefore, the following actions were taken:

- The Council had adverts out since January 2020 to recruit additional resources from the contract market through a greater set of agencies and

with higher rates on offer. This has resulted in some interest and a position has been offered to one developer. Additional interviews are scheduled for w/c 2nd March for a second developer, the outcome of which will be reported at Committee.

- The Council are also, in parallel, looking to commission partners from our supplier framework to do some of this work. We are aiming to be able to appoint mid-March 2020 with the accelerated procurement route taking approximately eight weeks to complete.
- Any internal resources with the skills required have been allocated and prioritised on this project. However, this means that there are other projects that are impacted by this.

b) **Conversions from MS Access 2003 to MS Access 2010**

Due to not having the skills to replace we have focused efforts of lower skilled resources on converting MS Access 2003 to MS Access 2010 to ensure compliance to PSN this year and give us the space to address with the new skills the wider replacement challenge. 66 have been migrated since January.

c) **Directorate engagement and support**

Following the recent communication regarding new databases via Directors and Chief Officers, engagement from services has been encouraging and we have established a clear escalation process if there are any issues. This is working well.

d) **The identification of other MS Access 2003 databases**

The scan for MS Access databases traversed the entirety of the network drives, which includes users personal drives (H:\ drives), that is where all Council information and data should be stored. Since our recent communications with Directorates it has been discovered that a number of individual users have MS Access databases that they say are critical to them and their services stored locally on their C: drives which are inaccessible to our scans. It is the policy of the Council that *"Users SHOULD NOT save documents to the C:\ drive as normal practise, as it is not backed up and information may be lost or deleted if you experience any issues with your computer"*. This has resulted in a further 64 databases being discovered so far. However, the discovery of these is dependent on users declaring them. A communication about the use of C:\ drives and a reminder about the Council's Acceptable Use Policy is being drafted for the SIRO/Director of Resources and Housing to send to all staff. This communication will include a clear message stating that Access 2003 runtime will be removed by 30th June 2020.

e) **Stop creation of new MS Access 2003 or 2010 databases**

Service areas are fully aware they are unable to create new databases and the project will closely monitor this and report statistics on this to the committee at the next meeting. Any new databases found by the scans of the network drives have been deleted.

f) **The current plan:**

The table below demonstrates the current high level plan milestones:

Tasks	Timescales		Comments
	From	To	
Categoriation of the different solution options for Access replacements. E.g. What are reporting solutions, what can be done by existing systems and so forth.	20.01.20	29.01.20	Complete
CLT stakeholder communication	14.01.20	17.01.20	Complete
Conversion from Access 2003 to Access 2010	31.10.19	30.06.20	See progress chart Annex 1
Removal of Access 2003 runtime		30.06.20	
Access 2010			
The Solution Architect through review of each database is determining the target solution and as a result able to estimate the resourcing requirements to replace them within the available timeframe.	29.02.20	TBC	Until this review is complete
Analysis of data sensitivity within the databases (e.g. personal and sensitive data) in order to determine the priority	24.02.20	TBC	
Continual scanning with focus on MS Access 2010	March 2020	TBC	The inventorying will entail gathering a data inventory from across the network
Delivery of MS Access 2010 replacements depending on agreement with Cabinet	TBC	30.06.21	Delivery covers all remaining

Officer regards compliance requirements.			Access databases across the estate.
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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 GDPR, PSN IA, PCI DSS and IG 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

Services disclosing the existence of additional databases.

Mitigation: An communication from the SIRO regards the use of C:\ drives and for all services to disclose any information about databases the project aren't aware of. DIS to assess these quickly and make decisions as to course of action.

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 as per 3.1a).

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Director of Resources and Housing and the Chief Digital and Information Officer continue to ensure this project is prioritised. 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.
- 6.2 The project team recommends providing the Committee with another update paper on Access progress for the next meeting.

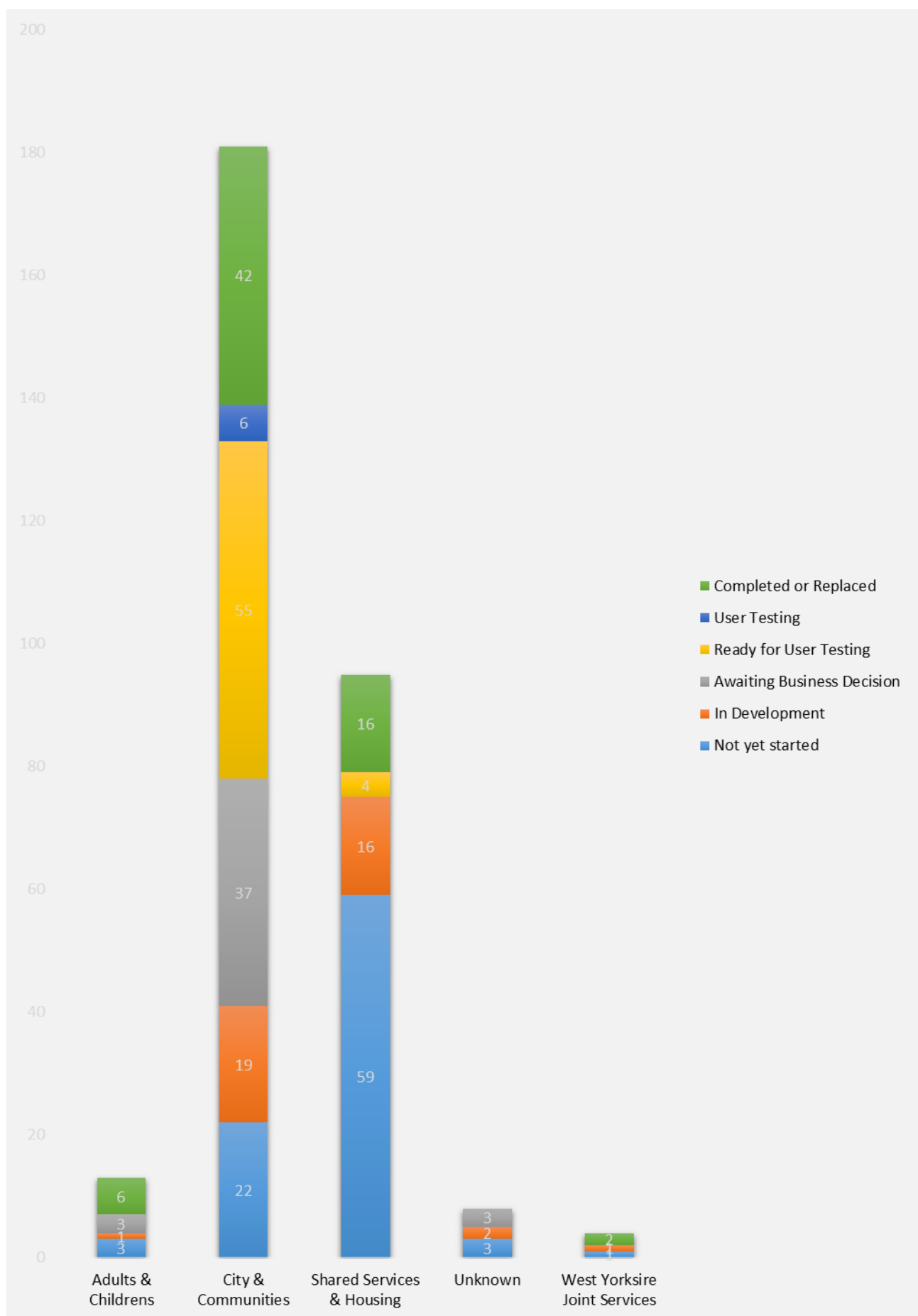
7. Background documents¹

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 Graph showing MS Access conversion statistics per Directorate.

Graph that demonstrates the position with regards to the MS Access 2003 conversions. This is based on 301 in total taking into consideration the additional 64 identified.



Key descriptions:

Completed or Replaced – Either converted to Access 2010 or replaced with an alternative solution, therefore conversion not required.

User testing – 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.

Ready for user testing – Converted by the developer and ready to engage with the business to arrange testing.

Awaiting Business Decision – 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.

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

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