

**Public Services Network compliance at RBC  
Executive Committee**

03/11/2014

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Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Transformation & OD - Deb Poole
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key Decision

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update the Executive Committee on the requirement to achieve compliance with the Public Services Network (formerly known as the Government Secure eXtranet) and to seek approval for the release of funds for year 2014/15 to maintain compliance in the current financial year.  
This is the second stage of the work required and further funding will be needed to achieve full compliance in 2015 and 2016. These additional financial implications will be included in the budget setting process for 2015/16.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is requested that Executive:**

- 2.1 Recommend the approval of an increase to the 2014/15 capital programme of £74K to be funded from borrowing.
- 2.2 Recommend that the revenue implication of £18K per be added as a revenue pressure from 2015/16 (as detailed in 4.1)
- 2.3 Recommend the release of £10K from balances in 2014/15 to fund the associated revenue costs

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council has successfully migrated its connection from the Government Secure eXtranet (GSX) to a new, secure, UK Government network, the Public Services Network (PSN). This followed the investment approved by Members in January 2014.
- 3.2 Unlike previous GSX compliance regimes, the Cabinet Office has taken a zero-tolerance approach to compliance, and is advising local authorities that they will lose their connection to the PSN should they not fully adhere to all PSN requirements.
- 3.3 As outlined in the previous paper to members (Jan 2014), there is now further funding required to maintain PSN compliance.

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- 3.4 As previously mentioned the Cabinet Office have moved to a 'zero tolerance' position on compliance. This means that unless the Council can demonstrate that it has addressed the Governments concerns, they will cease our connection to the Public Services Network.
- 3.5 If the Council were to be disconnected this would prevent RBC from managing citizens benefits, transferring secure information with our partners such as the Police and the NHS, managing secure emails and access to secure government web sites. In addition information from the Individual Electoral Registration (IER) which became live in June 2014 is required to be transmitted over the PSN.
- 3.6 Accurate costs for this second stage of work could not have been included in the previous report to members in January 2014, as this year's audit had not been completed at that point and therefore the budget implications were unknown. However, it was reported in the document that additional funding would be required.
- 3.7 Following the successful completion of the previous audit resulting in PSN compliance being awarded, this years audit has been on-going since February with 155 new high priority items requiring a corrective measure or mitigation. To gain an accurate cost for attaining the second year of PSN compliance, the high priority items have been worked on and where possible resolved without cost leaving the major items listed in section 4.3, that require funding outlined in this paper. A similar process will happen again next year but until that audit is complete, it is not possible to ascertain the issues that will be raised and therefore any potential cost to resolve.

An example of the 155 new problems that have been corrected without the need for additional funding are :-

- Old Version of Blackberry Enterprise Server
- Network Vulnerable to NetBIOS Spoofing
- VNC Service Does Not Require Authentication

As the Corporate network is a shared resource across Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils, the issues found and resource required to correct them is shared equally across both Authorities.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The schedule at Appendix 1 details the costs for 2014/15 associated with achieving compliance with the PSN. The analysis shows £73,888 capital funding required together with revenue costs of £10,408. There will be a further

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additional revenue costs from 15/16 of £17,600 to support the repayment of the principal and the interest payments, this has been calculated using the estimated life of the asset which is 5 years and will be included into the revenue pressures on the 2015/16 budget and onward. Whilst this report concentrates on the immediate requirement to demonstrate our commitment to maintaining compliance it is important to note that the long term solution has further cost implications.

These costs are based on **current PSN** requirements as determined by Central Government. However, these requirements change constantly so the financial implications may increase in future as the Cabinet Office continues to change the specification.

**Legal Implications**

- 4.2 There are implications regarding the Data Protection Act should staff not use the PSN to exchange private, confidential or sensitive information with our partners.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 4.3 The solution will require several changes to the way we operate including:
- PSN requires that we migrate from the widely used desktop environment, Windows XP, to a later version to maintain the application of security patches once support for XP ends in April 2015. Work to test all the business applications we currently use has started and will continue between now and planned completion in March 2015.
  - Microsoft support for the server operating system, Windows 2003, used on the majority of our servers at Redditch, ends in July 2015 and the project to replace this needs to begin as soon as possible.
  - An upgrade of key business applications such as the Finance, Leisure and Housing systems. These are being managed by departments directly and the costs do not form part of this report.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 4.4 During the work to patch and upgrade the servers and applications there will be breaks in the availability of the technical systems which may impact on service delivery to the customer. Details of the scheduled works have been discussed with system administrators and Heads of Service. Regular communication briefs have been sent out to staff and placed on the ORB (intranet) and where possible, works are being carried out after hours or during weekends to minimise the impact on services. However, given the quantity of patches to be applied and the tight timescales, some work will have to be done during core hours.

**5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The PSN compliance criteria change on a regular basis. Consequently there is a risk that even if the Authority commits to the spend and business changes mentioned in this report, that it could still fail future compliance audits and require additional spend and further business changes to ensure PSN access.
- 5.2 There are significant risks to business if we do not achieve compliance particularly in relation to the Benefits Service and the Elections Service. Loss of our connection would also have a detrimental effect on data sharing between the Council and other public bodies e.g.: the Police, NHS etc.
- 5.3 In order to help with the management of these risks the PSN Code of Connection compliance has been added to the Corporate Risk Register.

**6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – PSN Budget Pressures RBC

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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