

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2015
Subject:	Public Services Network Compliance
Report of:	Tina Nicholls Business Transformation Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor M G Sztymiak
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

Tewkesbury Borough Council currently uses Public Services Network (PSN) to exchange data electronically with other PSN-connected agencies. PSN connects together local authorities, government departments, the NHS, agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and Police authorities.

To remain accredited to PSN the Council must complete an annual assessment process. Failure to meet the required standards may result in the Council's connection to PSN being withdrawn.

In September 2014, Members received a report on work underway to stay connected and requested a further update once the reassessment was complete.

The Council has now been successful in its submission and has received approval to continue using PSN until January 2016.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to CONSIDER the information provided.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To provide assurance that action is being taken on a risk-related issue involving external assessment of the Council's compliance with mandatory requirements.

Resource Implications:

It may be necessary to invest in technical and policy enhancements to address cases of non-compliance with PSN requirements. Where necessary, these will be assessed and justified through a business case.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications of non-compliance with PSN requirements.

Risk Management Implications:

PSN provides a secure channel for sending and receiving data electronically, especially

Government data which is classified as 'Official' (the majority of information that is created or processed by the public sector). Non-availability of the PSN due to failure to comply with requirements could increase the likelihood of data protection breaches when exchanging data, with associated reputational, financial and service delivery impacts.

The risks associated with failure to achieve compliance with the PSN Code of Connection are being managed through a process managed by Cabinet Office and Communications and Electronic Security Group.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Reporting on the annual re-assessment process and result of this will be made to this Committee.

Environmental Implications:

None

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Local authorities, government departments, the NHS, agencies such as the DVLA and Police authorities have their own computer networks which are connected together using PSN. PSN is used mostly for information sharing, however, it is planned to increase the number of secured, shared applications across this network, to increase efficiency and reduce costs. The PSN is managed by the Cabinet Office with an annual Code of Connection compliance process involving the CESG (Communications and Electronic Security Group) based in Cheltenham.
- 1.2 The Council currently uses PSN to send and receive data electronically with other PSN-connected agencies. Currently, the main users of PSN are Revenues and Benefits (electronic transfer of data) and Customer Services ('Tell Us Once' notifications). There is other ad hoc use for secure communications with Police, the NHS and Social Services.
- 1.3 To remain accredited to PSN the Council must complete an annual assessment process, which includes an annual IT Health Check of the ICT infrastructure. Failure to meet the required standards may result in the Council's connection to PSN being withdrawn.

2.0 COMPLIANCE RESULTS

- 2.1 The Council has now been successful in its submission and has received approval to continue using PSN until January 2016.

- 2.2 Following an Internal Audit review of the self- assessment, recommendations mainly procedural related, have been identified to strengthen compliance:
 - 1. The PowerPoint presentation used to provide awareness training to PSN users

should be updated to reflect the new PSN framework - Completed

2. Where personal commitment statements have not been received, these should be requested and upon receipt by fully completed by ICT Services and signed by an appropriate officer – Completed.
3. All requests for the use of removable media devices should be supported with a business case, suitably documented and approved – Completed.
4. A review of the Council's Change Management Policy, last updated in 2010, should be undertaken – To be completed.
5. The Council's incident response process flow should be updated to reflect roles and responsibilities within the current organisational structure – Completed.
6. Consideration should be given to Patch Management being made a policy in its own right – To be completed.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 None. Being disconnected from PSN could mean that the Council is unable to fully carry out its public duties. For example, it would be unable to electronically exchange benefits data with the Department for Work and Pensions which is a mandatory requirements in respect of housing benefits data.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1 Revenues & Benefits service delivery priorities

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 6.1 Cabinet Office and CESG - Public Services Network compliance and usage requirements

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 7.1 Significant ICT and HR resource required to maintain the PSN connection

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 8.1 None

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

- 9.1 The PSN is key enabling technology for electronic Government. There is a cost to the council of maintaining the PSN connection (met by ICT service budgets).

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

- 10.1 None

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: None