 Report Number: **SLAB/2022/05**

Agenda Item: **9**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 21 March 2022 |
| **Report Title** | ICT Technical Strategy Update – March 2022 |
| **Report Category** | For Discussion |
| **Issue status:** | Business as usual |

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| **Written by:** | John McLeod, Head of IS and Projects |
| **Director responsible:** | Graeme Hill |
| **Presented by:** | Graeme Hill |
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| **Delivery of Strategic Objectives** | |
| Select the Strategic Objective(s) relevant to the issues | 1. We deliver a high quality user focussed service  2. We embed ways of working across the organisation that enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery  3. We engage with users and delivery partners across the legal aid and justice system to inform good design of our system and services |

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| **Link to Board or Committee Remit** |
| The Board has reserved authority for setting the strategic direction of the organisation. |

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| **Publication of the Paper** |
| We consider this paper is suitable for publication. |

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| **Executive Summary** | |
| This report gives the Board an update of current progress against the 2020-23 Plan.  Progress against the plan was hampered due to the pandemic most notably in our efforts to achieve Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation but also on our re-write from old applications systems to new tools due to the amount of emergency legislation we had to develop into the systems.  However, we are making good progress in all areas of the strategy and should achieve the majority of our goals by 2023. | |
| **Previous Consideration** | |
| **Meeting** | **Detail** |
| n/a | n/a |

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| **Report** |

1. The strategy was written after a process of engagement and consultation with third party suppliers and internal investigation to help set out a road map for our infrastructure over the next 3 years that best supports our key technological services and the data that they hold and process. Many of our services are now running on platforms that are out of support or reaching that stage making a coherent strategy for moving forward essential.
2. The strategy stated that the main concern of the ICT infrastructure is the security and integrity of the data that SLAB collects and processes. It must provide the tools to protect this data but also allow SLAB to deliver its core functions efficiently and ensure SLAB meets its legal obligations. The key drivers behind this strategy should influence the technology decisions we make going forward to future proof our infrastructure as far as possible into the future and maximise any investment made.
3. The key drivers being
4. Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy is concerned with how SLAB delivers its core functions and also supports the Corporate & Business Plans and the programme of projects behind these.

1. Equalities

SLAB must build systems that support our equalities obligations and [policies](https://www.slab.org.uk/corporate-information/how-we-work/equalities-and-diversity/). This is both in the collection of data for all relevant parties engaged with us but also in how we build and procure systems. Our Development Design document has equalities at the heart of how we build systems in-house and the principles and tests there can be used as the benchmark for anything procured. As a public body, all our digital services should be compliant with the latest version of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/)) as per guidance for Scottish Government, the current version being 2.1.

1. GDPR & Data Protection

Compliance with these is legally binding and our infrastructure must support the process SLAB has in place to meet these obligations. All system access must be through roles and security policies that restricts access to data and processing of data to only these permitted.

1. Communication

The infrastructure must provide access to tools that promote better communication and collaboration both within SLAB and externally with our stakeholders and customers. Using standard and recognised tools and standards for these functions is essential to communicating as widely as possible as it makes it easier for others to connect with us.

1. Technology

We must recognise the rate of technology change and the limited technical knowledge and resource available with I.S. The maintenance required to keep technology up to date for security has increased massively in the last few years and offloading more of this type of maintenance will allow internal infrastructure staff to spend more time on proactively planning for future projects and needs.

1. There are 3 components to delivering the strategy for these key drivers;

* Technical Infrastructure – the data centres and the hardware housed in these centres and the comms that links them. The first steps were to move to an updated and supported Storage Area Network (SAN), to renew the Data Centre contract and to look at the options beyond that contract
* Security framework – the level of Security framework SLAB is comfortable with. The first stage was to achieve Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus. The next step was to look at levels if certification investigating [ISO27001](https://www.isms.online/iso-27001/) and [IASME](file:///O:\Shared\IS%20Policies\Policies\IASMEStandardv5.pdf) standards and reporting back the work involved to achieve certification of these.
* Digital Services – the solutions, software and applications that present the services to SLAB to allow day to day operations to be carried out.

**PROGRESS UPDATE**

**Technical Infrastructure**

1. The new Storage Area Network (SAN) was fully implemented in March 2021 and the data centre contract has been renewed for another 2 years until April 2023. From April this year we will start investigating the next steps and whether we go full cloud with the data centre and also looking at moving our backup data centre from Thistle House as part of that.
2. The decisions will be largely influenced by how far we have progressed with moving our legacy applications off old technology and how accurately we can plan for the final date of removal of these applications.
3. We will also look into a new Virtual Private Network (VPN) to replace Citrix Workspace. The Citrix Workspace has served us well and is a great tool if all our applications are within our own network domain. However, as we move to linking to various cloud applications it becomes more of a barrier to seamless working and we are already finding we are having to deploy applications on both Citrix and on staff laptops. A more fit for purpose VPN is therefore required moving forward that would allow staff laptops to be the home of the apps we use and we would gradually phase out the Citrix workspace.

**Security framework**

1. We have just passed the accreditation again for Cyber Essentials. We are on target to achieve Cyber Essentials plus in April 2022. Once this is achieved, we will start investigating the requirements of other security accreditations [ISO27001](https://www.isms.online/iso-27001/) and [IASME](file:///O:\Shared\IS%20Policies\Policies\IASMEStandardv5.pdf).

**Digital Services**

**Office Products**

1. We are in a good position with Office 365 to move forward to the next steps. All infrastructure tasks have been completed with all staff using SLAB equipment, all staff hooked up to the phone system through Teams and all staff are now using Teams for communicating within their departments, projects and working groups to varying levels.
2. The next steps planned are to have meetings with directors and their senior managers to see what their file structures look like, how we might best move them to Teams and any potential technical or operational barriers.
3. There are three main barriers to moving fully to Office 365 functionality.
4. Final Records Management structure - Without a stable structure we would move files onto SharePoint only to have to potentially move them again once the structure is agreed. If there are certain parts of the structure that can be agreed (e.g. for Projects or PDSO) then we could start moving these areas to fully utilise Teams.
5. Laptop/SharePoint & Teams/Citrix connectivity – Teams does not work well in Citrix and so we have rolled this out to the laptops. The issue we have with the laptops is that we cannot connect to/utilise essentials like the Oracle database, Foxit and other tools without logging into Citrix which potentially will cause clunky work arounds for certain departments to fully use Teams.

To that end we need to investigate potentially replacing Citrix Workspace with a simpler VPN, as mentioned earlier, with 2 factor authentication and deploying all tools to the laptops rather than to Citrix. This would require our Microsoft deployment tools to work with all tools for I.S. to work efficiently and keep control of our software estate. We could then safely connect laptops fully to the network as all staff are using SLAB equipment and address the issues with the databases and other tools.

1. Control over personal drives – point ii above would eventually remove the l; drive as the personal drive. This would then give the option of using OneDrive or the hard drive on the laptop. The laptop option is not really an option as we would have no safe backup of files.

**ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)**

1. This is SLAB’s HR, Payroll and Financial systems, which are already on the Oracle SaaS cloud. The only action required for this service is the re-tender of the licences and the award for this should happen in March 2022.

**Direct Services Management**

1. Project to deliver a new case management system for PDSO, CLAO and the Solicitor Contact Line. We are aiming to implement the initial system on the 21st March in line with our third party implementer’s (Civica) project plan.
2. A plan will be developed to move the system forward after initial implementation.

**Reporting**

1. A solution to replace Discoverer was tendered and awarded to SplashBI in October 2021. The migration process from Discoverer is underway and we expect the top 200 reports to be completed and tested by the end of March. A plan is being drawn up to move all staff over to the new tool and to migrate the remaining reports with the aim of switching Discoverer off in summer 2022.
2. The SplashBI tool also has an Oracle cloud plug-in that should help us plug existing gaps in finance reporting. Work is underway to regather the requirements for this and we have purchased an extra 30 days consultancy from Splash to help us build these

**LAOL and SLAB Case Management**

1. These are our core bespoke digital systems for the administration of legal aid in Scotland. The next 3 deployments are currently scheduled for March, May and autumn 2022.
2. We have split the IS team into 3 dedicated areas within the department;
3. **Accounts and Solicitor Database** – recognising likely upcoming legislation and the completion of the work to remove the remainder of accounts from our older legacy system (FAMS). The Solicitor Database is integral to this and getting it off the old e-Business suite onto REACT and interfacing to the Oracle Cloud.

The current priority is to move the remaining barriers to closing FAMS and switching off paper for the remainder of our non-Counsel accounts. To switch off paper requires the implementation of the Case Management solution linking our accounts system on Legal Aid Online (LAOL) to individual firms’ case management solutions.

We are also currently working on the latest 5% increase to fees which is a bit more complex than the previous changes due to added fees and expenditure limits.

As part of the autumn 2021 deployment, we implemented new tables for the Solicitor Database. The next step is to create input and maintenance screens for Finance for the new tables. The new tables give us plenty of scope for streamlining old mandate and set up processes and linking into Legal Aid Online to give the firms more control over their own details.

1. **Internal Case Management redesign** – Team dedicated to moving the case management system from FAMS to REACT. Solely working on the new Development where possible.

There are 2 developments nearing completion; internal changes to integrate with the new applicant facing online means assessment form and the rest of the Civil letters moving to the new letter producing software. We are hoping both these will be completed by the summer.

The internal workshops for the move of the main application processing to REACT are underway. We hope to start developing the new Home and view case pages in May 2022.

1. **LAOL redesign and Continuous improvement** – team to upgrade LAOL to REACT but also utilised for doing any changes deemed necessary between now and the completion of the redesign of systems.

We completed the migration to the new Single Sign In (SSO) security model in November, replacing the outdated Oracle Internet Directory (OID) and this removed a significant security risk that has been on our audit actions for 2 years.

The deployment in March will see the deployment of the first of the upgraded screens for LAOL; User profile, firm admin, Search, notifications and new home page. We are also deploying structural changes to the party tables to lay foundations for the new applicant and equalities questions and reduce our information breach risks.

Work has started on the View case, the view and print Application pages, the remittance page and the Edit applicant screen with a view to implementing these live in the May deployment. This will mean all common pages for LAOL will be upgraded leaving only the applications and accounts to be done.

**INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

1. The Infrastructure team is currently working towards Cyber Essentials Plus. We had to abandon this work in 2020 when Covid lockdown started as assessors need access to offices to complete the assessment process. We expect to achieve accreditation early in April 2022.
2. Beyond March, a full plan will be laid out to complete the following actions

* Investigate alternative to Citrix
* Investigate Security accreditation
* Present option beyond the current Pulsant data centre contract
* Look at ways of securing the Oracle databases for interim period, if required, when support runs out in 2023

**LAOL & CASE MANAGEMENT DEPLOYMENT PLAN**

1. As stated the next 3 deployments are scheduled for March, May and autumn 2022. These currently encompass our known priorities, but we are aware that ongoing discussions with the profession may produce additional/alternative requirements, and/or place pressure on the existing timetable.
2. In particular, we have no firm date for Summary and Solemn Fee legislation, possible changes to accommodate pilots to support the early resolution of summary criminal cases, changes to children’s legal aid, coronavirus associated regulations and the permanence bill and any other legislation which hasn’t come to our attention yet. Any legislation would need to be accommodated in the priority list: the scheduling of some existing priorities may need to change as a result.

### **DELIVERY TIMETABLE**

The tables below give a comparison of the estimated timeline when the strategy was written in October 2020 and the current situation now. The biggest slippages are in the Office 365 and the internal upgrade to the Case Management system. The bigger of the risks is the Case Management system because of the outdated technology.

1. **Original Position**

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|  | **Sep 20** | **Oct 20** | **Nov 20** | **Dec 20** | **Q1 2021** | **Q2 2021** | **Q3 2021** | **Q4 2021** | **Q1&2 2022** | **Q3&4 2022** | **Q1&2 2023** | **Q3&4 2023** |
| **SAN & Compute** | Procure new kit | Upgrade current SAN | | Implement SAN | | Plan & Procure Cloud | | | Migrate to Cloud | | Remove old kit | |
| **Office 365** | Teams | Exchange & telephony | | Share Point pilot | | Roll out SharePoint for Records Management | | | | |  | |
| **Reporting** | Evaluation | | Business Case & Procurement | | Migration from Discoverer | | |  | | | | |
| **Direct Services** | Tender Evaluation | | Product Build | | | | Test & Deploy | |  | | | |
| **LAOL Upgrade** | Security, Home & Landing pages | | | | | View Case | Applications | | | | Accounts | |
| **Case Man’ment Upgrade** | Planning & Analysis, agree timetable | | | | Analysis, Build, test, deploy; Agile Module by Module | | | | | | | |

**B. Current Position**

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|  | **Jan-22** | **Feb-22** | **Mar-22** | **Q2 2022** | | **Q3 2022** | | **Q4 2022** | | **Q1 2023** | | **Q2 2023** | | **Q3 2023** | | **Q4 2023** |
| **SAN & Compute** |  |  | |  | | Plan & Procure Cloud as relevant | | | | Migrate to Cloud | | | | Remove old kit | | |
| **Office 365** |  |  | | Roll out SharePoint for Records Management | | | | | | | Disable old network | | | |  | |
|  |  |  |  | | Look at Citrix replacement | | | |  | | | | | | |
| **Reporting** | Migration from Discoverer | |  |  | | Switch off Discoverer | | | |  | | | | | | |
| **Direct Services** | Product Build | | Deploy and Improve | | | | | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| **LAOL Upgrade** | Deploy Home & Landing pages | | | View Case, Applicant & Equalities | | | Applications | | | | | | | | | |
| **Case Man’ment Upgrade** | Planning & Analysis, agree timetable | | Build Home and View case | | Build, test, deploy; Agile Module by Module | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Accounts Priorities** | Switch off FAMs, Case Management Integration, 5% fees increase | | | | Counsel solution | | Next priorities | | | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Governance Links** |
| 1 | Nothing additional to note. |
| 2 | Risk  The strategy seeks to address the key risk of our aging application and the servers they run on. |
| 3 | Legal and Compliance  Cyber security  GDPR |
| 4 | Performance  The strategy is an enabler to performance |
| 5 | Equalities Impact  The strategy is an enabler to gathering better information on equalities |
| 6 | Privacy Impact and Data Protection  N/A |
| 7 | Communications and Engagement  Progress against the plan is published via Board papers. Projects will consider engagement with stakeholders as appropriate. |

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| **Conclusion and next steps** |
| The Board is asked to consider the paper and comment on any issues. |

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| **Appendices/Further Reading** |
| N/A |