HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Audit Actions Database

Meeting/Date: CMT – 18th May 2015
Corporate Governance Panel – 3 June 2015

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Customer Services

Report by: Head of Customer Service

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Some data held within the Audit Actions Database was lost in November 2014 during a system migration piece of work. Due to a number of factors this data was found to be non-recoverable.   This resulted in additional work to manually recover as much of this data as possible and restoring it into the Audit Actions Database.

Lessons have been identified from this incident and are detailed in this report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the Corporate Governance Panel note the findings of this report.

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report summarises the issues concerning the loss of data from the Audit Actions database and the lessons learnt. The report was requested by the Corporate Governance Panel in March 2015.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Due to Microsoft support expiring for a particular server software (Windows Server 2003) IMD took steps to upgrade this software. Work started on this activity towards the end of 2014. The work covered over 40 servers running a wide variety of computer systems used by the council. Support of another piece of Microsoft software, SharePoint 2007, was also coming to an end at the end of July 2015. SharePoint is the system that was used to build the Audit Actions database.

2.2 The work in upgrading SharePoint involved migrating over 280+ sites. This migration unfortunately had to be a semi-manual process as fully automated processes proved not to work – this was not a 'drag and drop' exercise. In total over 1 million items of data were moved.

2.3 Whilst undertaking the movement of data three columns of data were lost from within the Audit Actions Database. The loss was discovered in February 2015 and at the time was thought to be recoverable. Most of the lost data was recovered but a small subset was found to be non-recoverable. This resulted in additional work being created to manually recreate the missing data.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 An investigation has occurred to establish why data was lost and not recoverable. The following sections summarise the key findings.

3.2 **Back-up of the system** – in order to manage disk space a manual task was created to back-up SharePoint systems. This was found not to be working properly.

3.3 **Movement of data held in the system** – this occurred, but some data was not manually transferred leading to gaps in the system. When this was discovered the back-ups were examined, and found to be incomplete.

3.4 **Management of resources** – the team in IMD are active across all parts of the Council, and communication between the team could have been better to ensure the migration and backup of systems and data was more closely controlled.

3.5 In addition to these concerns the investigation has also examined a number of other audit reports (internal & external) and operational records held within IMD. No other records of a similar data loss have been found, and this places this occurrence within context – what happened is extremely rare.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

4.1 Not relevant – paper is for Corporate Governance Panel.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS?
   HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

5.1 Section 6 details the actions that are being implemented to manage the risk of this occurring again.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN?

6.1 **Back up of SharePoint** – IMD revisited the steps it has in place to create back-ups. In addition it also engaged with an external supplier to help install and configure an improved backup process for SharePoint 2010. This ensures SharePoint is backed up more effectively and efficiently and also allows quicker and more granular recovery from within SharePoint. This will be very useful for the many thousands of items currently stored in SharePoint. Additional checks have also been put place to ensure disk space is being managed more closely; this will reduce the risks connected to managing back-ups.

6.2 **Check-points** – Further steps will be taken to ensure that when work such as that undertaken for the migration of SharePoint data check-points and balances are incorporated. This will ensure that adequate data backups are verified at crucial points of a piece of work should recovery be required. These checks will be formally recorded within the workplan.

6.3 **Management of resources and workload** – IMD has improved the management of resources within the group. This has mainly taken the form of a central repository of workload and resources across the group. This information is reviewed at least weekly. IMD is also using a software system that allows individual Team Leaders to manage the workload of their teams. These improvements in management of resources and workload allows IMD to manage a forward plan of demand against resource availability - and to identify when additional resources may be required to deliver pieces of work or projects.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

7.1 Having a robust data back-up and management plan supports all Council services and objectives

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 No implications

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
(Comments from the Acting Legal Services Manager / Solicitor)

9.1 No implications

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
(Comments from the Head of Resources)

10. 1 No implications

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 No implications

12   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1   The loss of data is regrettable and is extremely rare. Lessons have been learnt from the issues highlighted in this report and the chances of such a failure happening again have been reduced.

12.2   It is recommended that the Corporate Governance Panel note the findings of this report.

13.   LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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