MOPAC | MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

MOPAC MPS Oversight Board
19 July 2022

CONNECT
Report by: The Interim Director of Finance, MOPAC

1. Purpose of this Paper

To consider the issues identified with CONNECT and the implications for go-live plans.

Despite a number of significant issues emerging on CONNECT, the project team are pressing ahead with plans for a go/no go decision in August, with the team recommending to proceed. A Management Board paper will be prepared by 22 July for a detailed consideration of the Search risks and mitigations (spanning people/process/technology). A trawl of previous OBC and FBC papers has shown that these issues were not flagged to MOPAC at the time of approval. We cannot say whether they were known inside the MPS.

2. Recommendation – that the Oversight Board note the report.

3. Issues Identified at Data Board

Following a number of delays suffered by CONNECT from 2019 onwards, an updated FBC was submitted requesting additional investment of £29.2m and noting impairments of £4.1m. This was approved in March.

The project is now planning to go live with Drop 1 in November 2022 (Drop 2 is scheduled for May 2023). This is despite Data Board receiving an update on CONNECT which highlighted issues of concern with search functionality, audit capability and right of access.

Search functionality

The search functionality in CONNECT is inferior to that in CRIMINT. The implementation of CONNECT therefore has an operational impact for intel analysts and SIOs.

In order to limit the impact of the search limitations, CONNECT will feed data to IIP (Integrated Intelligence Platform). Custody data will be at Drop 1, Intelligence and Investigation data at Drop 2.

The combined search facility of CONNECT and IIP will be less sophisticated than current systems allow. Due to the limitations of IIP this will result in an overwhelming volume of data being returned to sift through (estimated at 4-6 times the amount from existing systems). Some search functionality will be lost altogether.

Their Board agreed that the efficacy of the solution needed to be understood before roll-out.

It was noted that delay to the CONNECT roll-out has knock on impacts for Command and Control and potentially creates contractual issues.

Audit

CONNECT Audit has known limitations and does not fully replicate the audit capability of Legacy Systems.

This limits the current ability of the organisation to audit activity and it creates a potential breach of data protection legislation.

The MPS are working on a Proof of Concept for use of an additional software solution to augment audit capability.

In respect of data protection legislation CONNECT breaches of s62 of the DPA which concerns logging of activity, for example collection and alteration of records.

This is not MPS specific but is a national issue - the ICO are aware of these issues at a national level and with West Mids, who have gone live.

MPS have suggested, as part of the government consultation on data protection law, that this section of the DPA 2018 is revised.

Right of access

CONNECT also creates challenges for data deletion.

The search limitations referenced above will add to the issues the MPS already has responding to access requests in a timely manner.

There are also technical challenges with deletion where it was suggested that CONNECT removes files from being searchable and retrievable but doesn't technically delete them.

This potentially means the MPS would be unable to comply with a subject access request to remove data.

If this can't be resolved there is a risk of ICO involvement.

It should be noted that many, if not all, of the limitations of CONNECT in regard to Assistive Technology, Audit capabilities and wider DPA requirements such as Logging are current issues experienced by other forces live with CONNECT. They are not bespoke / specific issues just for the MPS.

Aimee Reed as Director of Data is a Process Owner on CONNECT and attends the CONNECT Project Board. Aimee manages engagement with the ICO. There have been meetings with the ICO throughout and these will be likely to increase in frequency as the design of CONNECT is being finalised.

The MPS has worked with NEC to improve these capabilities prior to Go Live to minimise impact, wherever possible. However, they still represent significant issues which may be problematic for the ICO, as well as being of concern to MOPAC.

In addition, issues have also been identified in the following areas:

Assistive Technologies (AT)

Work is ongoing to identify the impacted audience as a result of AT issues that will be outstanding at Drop 1 Go Live.

Stop and Search/Use of Force

CONNECT is planned to be used for Stop and Search at Drop 2.

At that point the Met will lose two important changes which have been made to the E5090 electronic Stop and Search form (accommodation of an email address in order to facilitate provision of a record of the stop and search; and automatically opening a Use of Force form where appropriate).

The UoF/Stop and Search interface wasn't built into CONNECT's configuration because it wasn't a part of the business process when the detailed designs were signed off, so getting this included now is a change to the original plan.

The project team are working through whether this can be brought into Drop 2. This is dependent though on getting agreement from other forces using the same system, and they all have their own priorities so there are limitations to what changes can be made.

A priority is to get all CONNECT users nationally onto the same version so that there is a shared basis for progressing developments to the existing system. This should also help with addressing the Assistive Technologies issue (and therefore legislative compliance).

Data migration from COPA (Case Overview and Prosecutions Application) to CONNECT

At CONNECT Project Board on 30th June a further significant issue emerged whereby testing of the data migration from COPA into CONNECT failed.

This data was intended to allow uninterrupted processing of cases between MPS and CPS systems.

Although automated migration is still being pursued a manual workaround is also being explored together with CPS.

This would involve a central team of an estimated 70-80 people for a year or more to minimise impact on frontline officers.

There may be an impact on victims if the communication of cases with CPS does not progress smoothly.

Apparently though the MPS will still be the first force to be compliant with digital case file requirements for CPS.

4.   Background

The CONNECT programme, formerly known as Met Integrated Policing Solution (MiPS), will deliver an integrated core policing IT solution, which will enable the transformation of operational policing services within the MPS. This will be achieved through the replacement of standalone, antiquated legacy applications and building on the investment already made in mobile devices, to provide a richer intelligence picture.

The FBC was approved in 2018 with a contract being awarded to Northgate Public Services (now part of NEC), to implement an integrated IT platform with associated POLE (People, Objects, Locations and Events) database, and bring the MPS in line with the other 42 forces in England and Wales.

The project has suffered from three distinct delays. The first two extended implementation by a cumulative 19 months but were able to be funded within the overall approved budget. The 3rd delay (Delay 3) was caused by the impact of Covid-19 as well as the identification of scope and delivery method changes required. Delay 3 has further extended implementation by 14 months and an updated FBC has been submitted seeking additional funding for implementation and maintenance of service support until 2028 (full term of the contract).

The programme entered final end-to-end testing in November 2021 and is planned to go-live with the first component in November 2022 and the final element in May 2023. Timing will be dependent on progress with C&C. Due to the high abstraction needed for training the two programmes need to be carefully coordinated.

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