Software Lifeline

ILLUSTRATIVE REPORT STRUCTURE

Legacy Software Risk Assessment

Prepared for	[Client organisation]
System	[Application or system name]
Date	[Assessment date]

Sample only

This document demonstrates the structure and level of explanation used in an assessment. It contains no client findings or confidential information.

DECISION SUMMARY

The position in plain English

This opening section gives owners and managers a concise answer before presenting the supporting technical detail.

Overall position

[A short, evidence-based explanation of how dependent the organisation is on the system, how recoverable it currently appears to be, and which uncertainty matters most.]

Can it be rebuilt?

[Established / partly established / not established], followed by the evidence and remaining gaps.

Where is the risk?

The small number of issues most likely to affect continuity, cost or the ability to change safely.

What should happen next?

A proportionate recommendation, the reason for it and the first practical action.

Recommended route

Current position — **[Recommended next state]**

Immediate actions

- [Action that reduces exposure without changing production]
- [Information, backup or access that should be secured]
- [Decision or separately scoped technical phase]

CURRENT STATE

What was established

Findings distinguish confirmed evidence from assumptions and unanswered questions.

Area	What the report records	Status
Business reliance	Users, frequency, critical processes and the effect of downtime.	**[Status]**
Application	Components, integrations, runtime environment and deployment location.	**[Status]**
Source and build	Available source, repository history, build tools and missing dependencies.	**[Status]**
Database and data	Engine, version, backups, jobs, integrations and sensitivity.	**[Status]**
Operation	Deployment knowledge, recovery process and single points of dependency.	**[Status]**

Evidence reviewed

[A clear list of source archives, binaries, installers, database material, configuration, documentation and interviews reviewed.]

Not reviewed

[Anything outside scope or unavailable, with the effect that absence has on confidence in the findings.]

RISK AND OPTIONS

What matters, and what can be done

[Priority] **[Risk title stated in business terms]**

Evidence: [What supports the finding.]

Consequence: [What this could mean operationally or commercially.]

Control: [A realistic way to reduce the exposure.]

Options considered

Retain	Keep the system in service with explicit controls around accepted risks.
Stabilise	Improve backups, documentation, repeatability and operational resilience.
Recover	Re-establish source, build or deployment capability where feasible.
Modernise	Upgrade selected components or infrastructure in controlled stages.
Rewrite or replace	Plan a managed transition where preserving the existing system no longer makes sense.

Recommendation

[The recommended route, why it is proportionate, the principal trade-off and what evidence would cause the recommendation to change.]

NEXT PHASE

A controlled first step

The report closes with something the organisation can act on, without assuming that Software Lifeline must deliver the implementation.

Suggested objective	[A bounded outcome for the next phase.]
Proposed scope	[What should be included, what should remain untouched and which evidence should be produced.]
Client responsibilities	[Access, authorisation, backups, knowledgeable contacts and decision ownership.]
Completion test	[How the organisation will know that this phase has achieved its purpose.]

Assumptions and limitations

The final report records the agreed scope, evidence available, work not performed and any limitations affecting confidence. Source recovery is expressed as feasibility, not a guarantee.

Independent recommendation
Follow-on work is discussed separately. Depending on the recommendation and scale, it may be delivered directly, overseen independently or passed to an appropriate delivery partner.