
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRIEFING

Reason for the Report

1. To present Members with an opportunity to consider the Council's framework, resources and policies for the management of information. This briefing was requested by Members of the Committee following their consideration of the Corporate Risk Register.

Background

2. At its January 2013 meeting, the Committee considered the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which sets out the key strategic risks faced by the Council. The Register identified Information Governance as one of these risks, citing the risk of 'a lack of clarity around information governance leaving the Council exposed to the Information Commissioner's intervention and financial penalties'.
3. The Corporate Risk Register set out the current controls in place to mitigate this risk as:
 - "Policies around Data Protection and Information Security have been reviewed to ensure that they are understandable and written in plain language. These are now operational and compliance will be monitored
 - Information Governance Training Strategy approved and operational which will help to mitigate the risk of staff not understanding their responsibilities

- Records Management Team based in the Council's Improvement and Information team understand that records management is the foundation for good information governance
 - Review Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information Regulation processes as part of the Performance and Information Project (Transformation Programme) including the deployment of appropriate resources to support the activities.”
4. Additional Proposed improvement actions agreed by the Cabinet when it considered the Risk Register in December 2012 were:
- “Records Management policy will be reviewed and implemented early 2012/13; discussions with the 'Our Space' Project regarding records management; discussions with the Enterprise Architecture Team regarding Electronic Records and Document Management systems ongoing.
 - Intranet information being updated and an Information Governance page/button has been set up.
 - Working with the Our Space Project to audit and assist services that are moving accommodation to improve their records management.”
5. When the Risk Register was presented to the Cabinet a number of issues were also highlighted by the service area:
- “Performance & Information Project overrunning timescales planned
 - Still major issues with Data Protection in terms of breaches continuing
 - Compliance with timescales and the number of Freedom of Information /Environmental Information Regulation requests/Subject Access Requests outstanding raised by Information Commissioner's Office and is being monitored closely;
 - Information Commissioner's Office investigation has concluded that there is to be no further action at this time. However the Council's compliance and performance is being monitored closely.”

6. In January 2011, the previous Committee membership was advised that a review of staff involved in information management and performance monitoring was underway under the Performance and Information project, under the former 'Transformation' portfolio. The project was aimed at placing a renewed emphasis on performance and its management as a culture embedded within the Authority. It proposed an approach to managing and effectively supporting information and performance management across all service areas. It also aimed to ensure a consistent approach, appropriate resource alignment and expertise whilst improving service delivery in this area.

Way Forward

7. The Leader, Councillor Heather Joyce will be in attendance at the meeting. Mike Davies, Head of Scrutiny, Performance, and Improvement and Vivienne Pearson, Operational Manager, Improvement and Information will deliver a presentation and answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers of behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the information presented to them at the Committee meeting; and
- ii. Whether it wishes to build any further scrutiny of this subject into its work programme for 2013/14.

MIKE DAVIES

Head of Service - Scrutiny, Performance & Improvement

28 February 2013