Cheltenham Borough Council

Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 September 2011

Information Management Strategy

Accountable member	**Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Colin Hay**
Accountable officer	**Mark Sheldon, Director Resources**
Accountable scrutiny committee	**Economy and Business Iimprovement**
Ward(s) affected	**None**
Key Decision	**No**
Executive summary	1.1 Effective information management is not easy. There are many systems to integrate, a huge range of business needs to meet, and complex organisational (and cultural) issues to address. In addition to these issues we also need to ensure compliance with the law, keep data secure, and maintain and improve communication links both internally and externally. 1.2 Legislative requirements for secure effective and transparent Information management have been introduced over a number of years. To meet these requirements Cheltenham Borough Council developed a number of policies, codes of practice and guidance documents for staff and elected members. 1.3 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has now commissioned an Information Management Strategy to draw together these documents to provide a single point of reference and greater clarity. It has also reviewed the existing policies and guidance and a copy of each of these has been placed in the members' room for inspection. 1.4 The draft strategy outlines our approach for information management and sets out the vision and aims for the future. It also provides the reader with links to more detailed information on security, storage, access, distribution, use, and retention.
Recommendations	The draft Information Management Strategy is attached for the committee's consideration and comment. Any recommendations or suggestions that the committee make will be incorporated into a briefing to SLT on the 27th September 2011.

Financial implications	None arising from this report **Contact officer: Mark Sheldon** **E-mail:** mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk **Tel no: 01242 264123**

Legal implications	The Information Management Strategy will assist staff to understand and implement the various data and information related policies adopted by the council to meet the requirements of legislation. A better understanding of legislative requirements and consistent implementation of the policies will reduce the risk of successful legal challenge. **Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon** **E-mail: shirin.wotherpoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk** **Tel no: 01684 272017**
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	No direct HR implications, however awareness of the strategy and associated policies may lead to the need for further training/development. Use of the learning gateway (e-learning) will be considered as needed. **Contact officer: Amanda Attfield** **E-mail: amanda.attfield@cheltenham.gov.uk** **Tel no: 01242 264186**
Key risks	If members, senior managers and employees do not recognise their obligations and responsibilities for information management including data quality and information security then it could result in ill informed decisions, unreliable outcomes, ineffective use of resources and loss of data, leading to a reduced public reputation and a lack of confidence from regulators.
Corporate and community plan Implications	A strategic approach to the use, storage, communication and management of information and data will help the council make better informed decisions and manage its corporate plan priorities more effectively.
Environmental and climate change implications	There are no specific environmental or climate change implications arising from the report.

2. The issue

2.1 The council has over a number of years developed policies, guidance and procedures to meet the requirements of legislation and best practice. Legislation includes the;

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

2.2 The policies that we have in place to meet these requirements include;

- access to information
- information security
- data protection
- records management
- acceptable use, and
- data quality.

2.3 The SLT identified a possible risk to the council's assets and reputation if information and data were not effectively managed, securely and consistently across the organisation. To mitigate this risk it decided to commission an Information Management Strategy and to revise and update its policies. The aims of this new strategy is to;

- ensure that we continue to act lawfully and meet our e-government and transformation targets
- improve our responsiveness to requests for information and transparency requirements
- share and exchange information efficiently
- make full use of our information assets
- preserve the context, integrity, sensitivity and security of the information
- record information electronically where practicable, to ensure that it can be stored, access and re-use in the most effective manner
- generate an information management culture.

2.4 The strategy and supporting polices will provide a framework for the use and disposal of information in line with good practice. Detailed guidance will be available for staff on the intranet
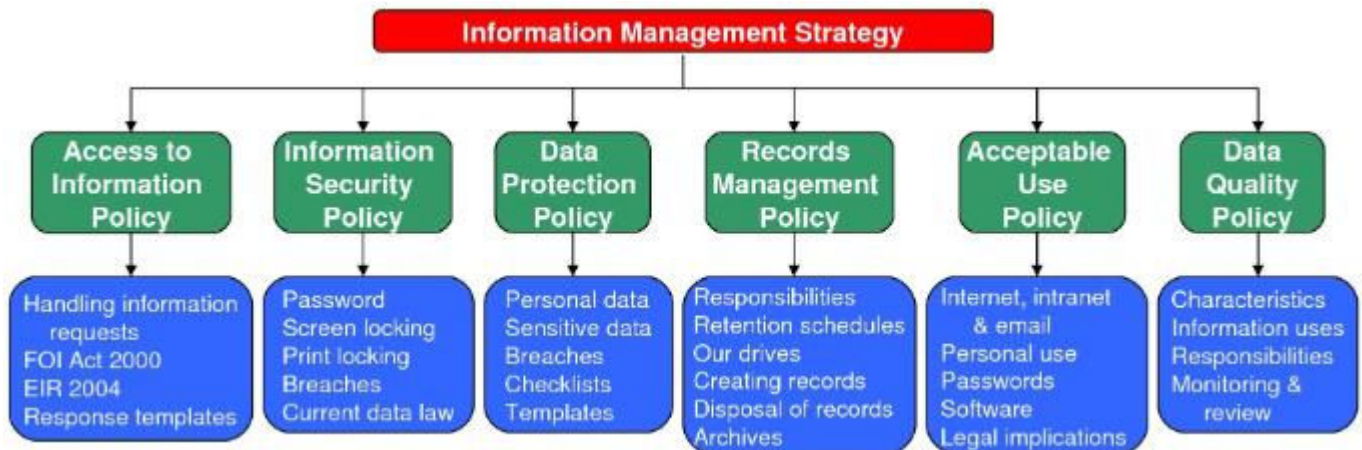
3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The committee need to be satisfied that the council is implementing effective and inclusive Information management Strategy that will reduce the risk to its assets and reputation as well as improving access and security.

4. The next step

4.1 Following approval by SLT an advice article on the intranet will inform staff of the new strategy and the revised policies. Awareness briefings will be provided by the Information Management Group to service managers at divisional management team meetings so that they can in turn brief staff and review their own procedures for compliance.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 No alternative options have been considered.

6. Consultation and feedback

6.1 The Strategy was drafted by the Information management group which is made up of a selection of officers from various services so as to ensure that there a wide consideration of its aims and content. The SLT will also be consulted on the 27th September 2011 for their consideration and input.

7. Performance management –monitoring and review

7.1 The provision of an Information Strategy is identified within the Corporate Risk register and its delivery is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

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Appendix	1. Draft Information Management Strategy
Background information	Revised and up-dated in policies in members' room