

---

**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The Chief Officer's Board (COB) is required to report six monthly to the Audit Committee on progress and planned developments of the information governance programme.

**Summary**

2. Information governance is an 'above the line' risk on the corporate risk register. This report sets out progress in the delivery of the information governance programme, focussing on the following key areas
  - (a) Information security policy
  - (b) Information risk assessment and improvement action plan
  - (c) Information governance training and awareness
  - (d) Information classification and handling
  - (e) Information sharing
  - (f) Information security incidents
  - (g) Data quality
  - (h) Transparency agenda
3. The Council is making steady progress on the delivery of the risk-based information governance programme. Prioritised action plans are being developed by Heads of Service to ensure key improvements are implemented across services effectively and in a timely manner.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that progress on the implementation of the Information Governance Programme be noted.

**Reasons**

5. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on progress in delivery of the Council's Information Governance Programme.

**Paul Wildsmith  
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purposes of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond a reflection on the Council's governance arrangements.
Efficiency	Implementation of effective information governance systems and procedures has a positive impact on efficiency.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

- Information governance remains an 'above the line risk' on the corporate risk register. This is a generic risk reflecting a number of specific information management areas that are currently assessed as high risk to the Council and as such require appropriate treatment.

### Current Position

#### Information security policy

- The Council's corporate policy statement endorsed by the Chief Executive and approved by Cabinet in December 2009 sets out the policy and objectives of information security management. The policy statement is reviewed annually by the Information Security Manager and remains relevant and fit for purpose in its original form.

## **Information risk assessments**

8. Heads of Service are currently developing risk-based action plans which will be approved by the relevant Assistant Director. The successful and timely completion of the actions will be monitored by Chief Officers Board (COB).
9. The Information Governance Team will support Heads of Service in the implementation of their actions by providing advice and guidance as necessary.
10. The requirements to share information with health services has raised the importance of compliance with the Department of Health Information Governance Toolkit (the IG Toolkit), which is the standard required for connecting to their secure network, and for providing the level of assurance that personal information will be properly managed.
11. Failure to comply with the IG Toolkit in a timely manner could present a risk to effective information sharing with health service partners in the short-term. A group has therefore been established to ensure that the Council achieves compliance.

## **Information governance training and awareness**

12. The Employees Guide to Information Security has been rolled out via the Council's intranet and is available for all staff who have access to the corporate network. For those staff with no access a leaflet has been developed covering information management issues and responsibilities and provided to line managers for distribution as appropriate.
13. In addition face-to-face awareness sessions covering Data Protection and information management have been delivered to staff nominated by Heads of Service. Over the last 6 months 130 staff members have attended the training courses.

## **Information classification and handling**

14. The Government have recently revised their information classification scheme and have an expectation that it will be adopted across the public sector. The scheme is due to be piloted in the Council commencing March 2014 with the implementation of an information classification system for emails and electronic documents.

## **Information sharing**

15. The Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team is continuing to work with key public sector partners to review and implement service-level information sharing agreements where required. In particular, the CIG Team is working closely with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) to create a central shared register of information sharing agreements so that these can be more easily monitored and reviewed and any gaps addressed.
16. Services have also made significant progress in implementing information sharing agreements with the support of the CIG Team. Examples include the Darlington

### **Information security incidents**

17. The information security incident reporting and management procedure is implemented and the security incidents identified provide the opportunity for improving processes, working practices and staff awareness.
18. None of the incidents reported to date have been categorised as serious breaches of data protection principles.

### **Data quality**

19. The Chief Officers Executive previously approved a corporate Systems and Information Strategy and COB, chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources, act as the Systems and Information Governance Group. This Group oversee a programme of work delivering against development plans for the Council's major business systems. Through a series of business process improvements we are addressing data quality in a systematic way. In addition, work is underway on the revised performance management framework, a key part of which is building in a data quality/audit check of the information that is produced and reported.

### **Transparency**

20. The CIG Team presented the third annual Freedom of Information, Environmental Information and Subject Access Request report to COB in October 2013 and Cabinet in November 2013.
21. The report made further recommendations regarding the publication of frequently requested information with the aim of reducing the cost of responding to individual requests for information and improving transparency.
22. The report also outlined changes to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 introduced by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 concerning datasets i.e. factual, electronic data obtained by the Council for the purpose of service provision.
23. When releasing a dataset under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the Council is required, wherever reasonably practicable, to provide it in an electronic form capable of re-use.
24. The Council has received one request for a dataset since the changes were introduced, which concerned Council Freedom of Information requests.
25. The CIG Team is in the process of amending the Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Request Procedure and Practice Guidance to reflect the legislative changes.

26. A detailed report will be presented to COB in the summer seeking approval for the implementation of the revised Procedure and Practice Guidance.

### **Conclusion**

27. There has been steady progress with the implementation of the information governance programme but there is still a significant amount of work to be done to reach a position where our information governance risk is effectively managed.

28. Clear risk treatment plans are in place which will reduce the risk to an acceptable level once delivered. Timely delivery of information governance improvement plans is becoming increasingly important as compliance with external standards (such as Department of Health IG Toolkit) are pre-requisites for sharing vital information with partner service providers.

### **Outcome of consultation**

29. No formal consultation was undertaken in production of this report.