AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 April 2024

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1.   The Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG) is required to report six monthly to the Audit Committee on progress and planned developments of the information governance programme.

Summary

2.   The ongoing delivery of our information governance programme continues to provide the assurance required to reduce our information risks to an acceptable level.

3.   Ongoing work includes:

   (a)   The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.

   (b)   Cyber Security Phishing Simulation.

   (c)   ICT work plan.

   (d)   Web Team work plan.

   (e)   Systems and Process Team work plan.

   (f)   Information Governance Team Work Plan.

   (g)   Work to achieve our target for the completion of on-line mandatory information governance training courses.

4.   The area of highest priority in the information governance programme is:

   (a) The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.

Recommendation

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

Reasons

6.   To provide the Audit Committee with a status report on the delivery of the Council's Information Governance Programme.

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Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

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Lee Downey, Complaints & Information Governance Manager: Extension 5451

Background Papers

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Carbon Impact and Climate Change.
Diversity	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Diversity.
Wards Affected	This report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there is no impact on any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the Budget or Policy Framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	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.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There is no specific impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Background

7. Delivery of our information governance programme has provided the assurance required to reduce our information risks to an acceptable level. While that is the case it must be recognised that the data processing activities of the Council continually evolve and must be kept under review. The processes implemented by the Council include review mechanisms to ensure this takes place.

The Microsoft Office 365 Programme

8. The Microsoft Office 365 Programme Team is comprised of the Systems Strategy and Development Manager, the Complaints and Information Governance Manager, the ICT Solutions Architects and the ICT Security and Assurance Team Leader and the End User Engagement Team and reports to SIGG.

9. Following the successful migration of those teams who volunteered to migrate to Microsoft 365, we now have a significant number of teams who are fully operational through a Microsoft Teams interface. However, there remains a significant piece of work to do to. Over the coming 12 – 18 months we intend to ensure the majority of Council services are migrated to Microsoft 365.

10. In addition to the services now using MS Teams as their primary working area, there are a number of Functional and Project Teams being used to conduct business across the Local Authority, including with partners.

11. It is vital all Council services are migrated to Microsoft 365, to enable officers to collaborate remotely, work in innovative ways and utilise the plethora of applications within Microsoft 365 to improve productivity. The need to migrate services to Microsoft 365 is also becoming increasingly necessary from an information security perspective.

Cyber Security Phishing Simulation

12. Phishing is a cybercrime in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message by someone posing as a legitimate institution to get individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.

13. A phishing email simulation exercise was undertaken in July 2023 to assess the awareness of users about the dangers of phishing emails and to assess the results to see what, if any, additional actions may be required.

14. Following the initial simulation exercise the Council ran a month long awareness raising campaign, following which a further simulation exercise was undertaken in February 2024. The outcome showed a significant improvement.

15. Further simulations are planned to improve the Council's resilience to Phishing attacks.

ICT work plan

16. SIGG also oversees the Council's ICT work programme, a summary of which is contained in the ICT Strategy - Implementation Progress report to Audit Committee.

Web Team work plan

17. Work on the darlington.gov.uk migration has been paused whilst other projects have taken priority. Work is expected to resume in April 2024 and will be the primary focus for the team for approximately 6 months.

18. Development has now finished on the Darlington Xtra and Safeguarding Boards websites. These have now been live for several months.

19. Development on the Hopetown Darlington website is almost complete. Final bug fixing and optimisations are outstanding, however, the site is expected to go live in April 2024, when ticket sales for events are due to open.

Systems and Process Team work plan

20. The Systems and Process Team are the custodians of the large corporate applications that administer the Council's business across Social Care, Education, Customer Services, all online payments, Waste Management, Building Services, Street Cleansing, Planning, Anti-Social Behaviour, Building Control, Trading Standards and Licensing. The work plan covers all major upgrades to these systems (including the intensive testing regime needed to support this).

21. The team are working in Adult Services to align the Transformation Team Programme with the System Programme, a new program of works will be drawn up. This is ongoing after a successful Rapid Improvement Event. Other work includes looking at a system to digitalise care records within the reablement team and Holicote.

22. Children's Social Care work continues with the focus being on Fostering. The team are working closely with the transformation programme manager to implement more streamline services when working with carers, as well as implementing the new pay structure ready for the 1 April 2024.

23. The Education system is now part of a much wider programme that will see it wholly replaced in 2025. Stage one of the Education system is now live alongside two out of four portals – Admissions and Establishment. Later this year we are looking to bring in the 3rd portal which will enable parents to apply for an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan for their child. Stage two was due to commence in 2024, however, this has been rescheduled to 2025 due to System C re-designing their finance module which is an integral part of this stage. School admission applications opened in September 2023, and in early March the secondary school offer took place which was successful in delivering all of the offers needed electronically and parents were able to confirm their preference via the portal. The primary school offer is due to be released in April 2024.

24. The development of the Customer Strategy is supported by the Verint work programme (Verint is the Councils CRM System) where forms are developed to allow a seamless digital interaction for the customer and a safe and secure payment option. Additional services have recently come on board with an online form offering, which includes Highways and Street Scene and we continue to

work with those that want to offer an online form option. Verint will be undergoing a major upgrade in April which will see an improvement both from a performance perspective and aesthetically.

Information Governance Team Work Plan

25. The Council's Complaints and Information Governance Team/The Data Protection Officer continues to provide advice to officers on a range of data protection and information rights matters and ensure information rights requests are handled in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); The Data Protection Act 2018; The Freedom of Information Act 2000; and The Environmental Information Regulations 2014.

26. Since the last report to Audit Committee the team has advised on 13 contracts; 10 data protection impact assessments (DPIAs); 32 data sharing agreements; as well as a data transfer agreement; a Local Authority collaboration agreement; a Memorandum of Understanding; and a Third Party Supplier Access Agreement.

Training and awareness

27. The revised table in Appendix 1 shows the position on 22 March 2024 with regard to the completion of the mandatory on-line information governance courses for IT and where applicable, non-IT users. Completion rates of over 95% remains the Council's target and represents an acceptable level of take up which must be achieved.

28. The overall completion rate for the Employee's Guide to Information Security currently stands at 85%, an increase from the 84% reported to September's Audit Committee. This course is not applicable to non-IT users.

29. In relation to the Social Media Module, a new two year expiry period was set at the beginning of this year, which explains the drop in completion rates. Completion rates currently stand at 72% overall, 84% for Academy 10 users and 30% for non-IT users. This compares to the 89% overall, 95% for Academy 10 users and 68% for non-IT users, reported to September's Audit Committee.

30. In relation to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, overall completion rates are at 70%, 80% for Academy 10 users and 41% for non-IT users. This compares to the 84% overall completion rate, 87% for Academy 10 users and 73% for non-IT users, reported to September's Audit Committee.

31. While a significant number of officers have undertaken this training previously, following the introduction of two year expiry periods in relation to all three modules, they are now required to complete it again. As the training is embedded we should see an upturn in completion rates, the reminder e-mails sent from Academy 10 and the all staff communications sent via the weekly Briefing should help with this. With regards to completion rates for non-IT users, the simplified tool box talk style modules are still being used for Social Media and Data Protection. These modules have been designed for managers to be able to deliver the sessions faster, while still imparting all the key information with reinforced learning at the end of the sessions. It is hoped these interventions will help improve numbers by the time of the next report.

Conclusion

32. The Council's information governance programme continues to address emerging issues, support compliance with data protection legislation and manage the Council's information risks to an acceptable level.

Outcome of Consultation

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

Appendix 1

22/03/2024	% Completion Rate		
	Employee Guide to Information Security not applicable to hard copy	Social Media Version 3 - New in 2020	Data Protection 2018
People Group Total	85	76	74
Adult Social Care AC10	92	84	82
Children's Services AC10	75	73	72
Commissioning, Performance & Transformation	90	90	85
Educational Services Total	95	55	55
Educational Services AC10	95	91	90
Educational Services Hard Copy	N/A	2	4
Public Health	89	100	84
Services Group Total	80	57	59
Community Services Total	71	53	58
Community Services AC10	71	75	66
Community Services Hard Copy	N/A	38	52
Highways & Capital Projects Total	88	57	53
Highways & Capital Projects AC10	88	84	75
Highways & Capital Projects Hard Copy	N/A	18	22
Community Safety	98	96	84
Operations Group Total	92	90	86
Housing & Revenues	89	90	86
Law & Governance	92	86	81
Resources	97	93	87
Strategy Performance & Communications	100	88	91
Chief Executives & Economic Growth Total	84	78	66
Darlington Partnership	100	100	100
Economic Growth	82	77	63
Council Total	85	72	70
Academy 10 Total	85	84	80
Hard Copy Total	N/A	30	41