

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Information Management</b>	<b>Item 7</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Executive</b>	
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	<b>EX0775</b>	

<b>Corporate Plan Priority:</b>	<b>CP1: Providing strong community leadership</b> <b>DT2: Building capacity</b> <b>DT3: Customer focus</b> <b>DT4: Stronger Governance</b>
<p>The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Corporate Plan priority by:  <i>Ensuring information is well managed across the Council and that the Council delivers against statutory information management targets for data protection and Freedom of Information Act.</i></p>	

**Purpose of Report:**

- (1) To propose a vision and implementation plan for information management at West Berkshire Council. (See Appendix 7(a)), and approve revised Data Protection Policy and new Freedom of Information Policy, (Appendices 7(c) and 7(e)).
- (2) To demonstrate the benefits of investment in information management - including savings in time and money spent locating documents etc. and making the Council an easier organisation to do business with.

**Recommended Action:**

- (1) To appoint the Corporate Director, Strategy and Commissioning and Councillor Mike Rodger, to lead on information management and to ensure it has a high priority in the Council.
- (2) To agree a structure of 'information co-ordinators' across functions and by service areas, to deliver a cohesive approach.
- (3) To stress the importance of compliance with statutory information management areas, including Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000, and to approve the attached revised Data Protection Policy and new Freedom of Information Policy as Council Policies.
- (4) Agree to an allocation of £7,000 from the Corporate Training Budget for training on information management.

**Reason for decision to be taken:**

- Statutory requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts
- Improving internal management efficiencies

**List of other options considered:**

- None

**Key background documentation:**

- None

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<b>Contact Officer Details</b>	
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## **Implications**

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**Policy:** Council will have an updated Data Protection Policy and a Freedom of Information Act Policy.

**Financial:** £7,000 training budget to be made available from the Corporate Training Budget

**Personnel:** As detailed in the report

**Legal:** Compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Risk Management:** Failure to comply carries significant penalties for the Council and Individual Officers.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 To date, information management has not been high on the agenda at West Berkshire Council. Because of its complex and statutory nature, it has tended to land on the 'legal' pile until such time that a new Act of Parliament demands that we revisit our processes for information retrieval and management. The new home of information management is in Information and Communication – the newly formed service unit (July 2003), responsible for internal and external communications, library service and information management. Working with colleagues in Legal Services, and reps from across West Berkshire Council, we aim to deliver the bones of the 2004/5-information management plan.
- 1.2 At the heart of **information management** is a 'vision' for the future, written against a backdrop of information 'inputs and outputs' at West Berkshire Council. (see Appendix 7(a)). This vision aims to move away from the predominantly 'statutory' approach, dictated by timetables for delivery against the Data Protection Act, and looming Freedom of Information Act in January 2005. A three year plan for information management is outlined below.
- 1.3 The Executive approved a Data Protection Policy for the Council in March 2002 and agreed that it should be reviewed regularly, which is done by this report.

### 2.3 Information Management Deliverables - Three Year Overview

#### Year One 2004/5 Objectives:

- Appoint leads for information management across the Council to build awareness and understanding of the approach.
- Review of Policy for Data Protection (attached) and delivery of records retention / management policy.
- Conduct information audit across Council, to encompass 'community needs analysis' if possible.
- Deliver training and supporting documents to staff and public, around statutory areas of information management, i.e. Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information. NB 240 staff have been trained to date in Fol, with plans to continue throughout Council.
- Launch WBC approach to Freedom of Information Act, internally and externally, with wide communications programme
- Review and update publication scheme on West Berkshire Council Website
- Ensure new IT systems help and support the information management approach.

#### Year 2 2005/6 Objectives:

- Measure effectiveness of year one.
- Educate external stakeholders on where/how to access information
- Examine new ways for public to access information and plan upgraded library IT provision
- Review policies and procedures generated to deliver statutory requirements (Subject Access Request process, for example)

#### Year 3 2006/7 Objectives:

- Implement new library IT system with capital funding to deliver vision for public access to IT
- Ensure publication scheme is available electronically, as far as possible.

## **Appendices**

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Appendix 7(a) - Information management: a vision for West Berkshire Council  
Appendix 7(b) - Governance paper for Information Management  
Appendix 7(c) – Revised Policy for Data Protection  
Appendix 7(d) - Model Action Plan for Freedom of Information implementation  
Appendix 7(e) – Freedom of Information Act Policy

## **Consultation Responses**

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<b>Local Stakeholders:</b>	N/a
<b>Officers Consulted:</b>	Liz Howlett, Leigh Hogan, Nick Carter, Corporate Board, Data Protection Rep Group
<b>Trade Union:</b>	Not consulted to date