

A Proposed Governance Framework for Information Management

Background

In order to successfully achieve the vision outlined in part 1 of this paper we must consider and agree processes and accountabilities for information management. Information has always been an essential asset to the Council, but to date no such processes, or indeed accountabilities, have existed. Services already do put a huge emphasis on information, and many have appointed Information Officers, or staff with a specific responsibility for information. However, not all Services are able to do this, and in many cases this role has been added to the responsibilities of business support staff. The Council has also relied upon the goodwill of a series of staff at a relatively junior level who have undertaken this work in addition to their existing job descriptions. This work include:

- Data protection
- Internet content creation and management
- Intranet content creation and management

And with its introduction in 2005, will also include freedom of information, together with all the associated legislative and statutory requirements

The attached appendix (Appendix 1) outlines points we would like built into the job descriptions of the data controller community (Heads of Service) so that they in turn can provide Service Area responsibility and accountability for each of the four subject areas.

In the short term the existing representatives and management structure need to be retained, but the number of reps involved in different aspects of information management has proliferated and so is less successful now, and in the long term the vision for information management within the Council requires information specialists (the Information Co-ordinators) recruited to fulfil the framework laid out below.

Objectives

The framework must meet the following objectives:

- Develop and maintain an information infrastructure that meets all needs (the organisation, its partners and the community).
- Contribute to the development & implementation of relevant strategies (Service Access, Customer Contact, ICT, E-Government), and statutory requirements (Data Protection, Freedom of Information)
- Promote the use of the internet/intranet/extranets as a major means of communication .
- Operate across Service boundaries to enable, encourage and facilitate communication and sharing of information/data

- Streamline processes and reduce duplication of data and effort (technologies and culture of “write-once, publish-many”)
- Ensure that advice and guidance are accessible to staff from within their own Service.
- Monitor performance and use and review in order to ensure continuous improvement.
- Adapt flexibly to changing circumstances and technologies.

Proposed Framework

It is proposed that

- A network of people with an interest in/responsibility for information is established to drive the agenda forward, and to ensure a council-wide approach, based around Information Co-ordinators, (see Appendix 1) Information editors and Information owners
- Each Service Grouping appoints an Information Co-ordinator, who is a member of their Senior Management team with an overview of the Grouping’s Services and its functions, and who can take ownership to drive this agenda forward within the Group. **Ultimately this role will be this staff member’s primary function, in the short term the proper operation of information management within the Council requires that an existing senior member of staff is given this responsibility in addition to their existing role**
- Information Co-ordinators will provide the necessary strategic overview within their Grouping, and also act as the link between the Services and the overall corporate agenda.
- Once the Co-ordinators are in post, the various reps meetings are decommissioned, and a single, Information Co-ordinators Group is convened in their place. This would be attended by the Information Co-ordinators (or their designated deputy), plus other relevant staff, and would encompass all information related issues.

Information Management Group

The responsibilities of this group will be to meet the objectives outlined above and:

- Manage projects as determined by corporate priorities eg Information Strategy
- Work with Service Groupings/Services Units in the completion of agreed projects eg Records Management
- Contribute to the development of the website/Intranet
- Ensure Services comply with DP and FoI
- Provide advice, guidance and expertise as required.

It is suggested that this group meet at least quarterly, with much of the interim work/communication being conducted via email.

It is proposed that the following will be *permanent* members of the group:

Head of Information & Communication, Chair
Information & Communication Manager – Information & Communication Service
Information Co-ordinators (5ish)
Press Officer
Corporate Information and E-Government Manager -ICT
Service Access Technical Manager
Web Development Officer
Representatives from Service Access, Legal (Data Protection & Fol), Equalities,
Communications (if not covered by the above membership)

Other specialists will be asked to join this group as required

Two other groups of information ‘handlers’ will be required. To a great extent these roles already exist.

Information Editors/contributors

How this function is addressed will vary in each service. Services may wish to allocate the different responsibilities to a number of staff, or combine all the roles in one or two people. There are strengths and weaknesses with either approach. Specific tasks include: website; intranet; FAQs; Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Records Management; Census and other statistical analysis; BVPI157

Information Creators/Owners

All staff are information creators or owners. They are responsible for providing content for publication in the required format and using the appropriate internal procedures, and ensuring that information is accurate and up to date

Recommendations for Implementation

Information management is, and will remain, a high priority for the Council. If the proposed governance structure outlined above is to be successful, it requires the visible support of Corporate Board and individual Directors operating within their Service Groups.

It is recommended that Directors nominate Information Co-ordinators for their Groupings.

Appendix 1

Role of the Data Controller (Head of Service)

The Data Controllers will be Heads of Service. Their role will be one of accountability, not administration.

- To be responsible for compliance with the Data Protection policy, the Freedom of Information policy and all associated legislation, within the Service
- To ensure processing of all subject access and FoI requests within the Service, and ensure compliance with statutory timescales for response
- To liaise with Information & Communication service as required
- To decide the purposes for which, and the manner in which 'personal data' is processed in the Service, and to inform Information & Communication of any changes (to ensure notification to the Information Commissioner remains current)
- To nominate DP & FoI Service Reps and provide adequate resources and support to enable them to attend the Working Groups and report back to relevant Managers
- To ensure that any work required by the Working Groups is carried out within the Service by the required deadlines
- To participate in any required training and ensure that Service staff also participate

Appendix 2

Role of the Information Co-ordinators

The Information Co-ordinator for each Service Grouping should be *at management team level*. The staff should be strongly versed in information management requirements and the role should be their primary function. The role of the Information Co-ordinator could include the following:

- Act as a main point of contact for information management for the Grouping, and manage records, archives, and other statutory requirement
- Take a lead on information policy and content within the Grouping
- Contribute to the development of information and service access strategies
- Co-ordinate the publication of information for the Service Grouping, either directly or through Information Editors (see below) and ensure that information is published and maintained in a consistent, up-to-date and accurate way.
- Work with the IC Group to improve the quality and accessibility of information
- Ensure that relevant staff within the Grouping participate in training and development needs of their service.
- Create/maintain an appropriate structure in the Service to ensure communication and feedback within the Service Grouping/Service Units and that Services contribute to projects as required.

Proposed Information Management Communication Structure

