CABINET

Information Management and Governance Arrangements
01 September 2015

Joint Report of the Chief Officer (Resources) and Chief Officer (Governance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To seek confirmation of Cabinet's approval for strengthening the Council's information management and governance arrangements.			
Key Decision		**Non-Key Decision**		**Officer Referral**	**X**
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	n/a		
This report is public.			

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **That Cabinet confirms its approval for the development of the corporate information governance function as outlined in the report, to be financed from within existing budgets.**

1   **Introduction**

1.1   As part of the 2014/15 budget, Cabinet supported an outline investment plan and associated growth estimated at £120K per year for ICT security and Public Services Network (PSN) compliance. The growth was duly approved at Budget Council on 26 February 2014, its future use being subject to a further report to Cabinet.

1.2   At its meeting on 20th January 2015, Cabinet considered a report which presented proposals aimed at strengthening the Council's information governance and other assurance arrangements, covering: Information and Communications Technology (ICT); information management; corporate anti-fraud; and internal audit generally.

1.3   Cabinet approved all the proposals in the report and in relation to information governance, resolved (Min 79(1)): "That Cabinet approves the development of the ICT service and the corporate information governance function as outlined in the report, to be financed from within existing budgets."

1.4   At its meeting on 21st January 2015, the Audit Committee also considered a report on the "Development of Internal Audit and Assurance" which set out the same proposals for strengthening information governance and other assurance arrangements.   The Audit Committee resolved (minute 26 (3)): "That the development of assurance reporting be supported and the proposed widening of the Internal Audit Service's remit be endorsed."

1.5   The Council's position regarding information governance has been commented on in the last two Annual Governance Statements and will feature again in the draft Statement due to be considered by Audit Committee on 16th September 2015. The 2013/14 statement, approved by Audit Committee in September 2014, acknowledged that following a significant body of work surrounding the Public Services Network (PSN), further actions were still required "*to ensure that the council's arrangements for collecting, storing, using and sharing information are robust and enable the most efficient and effective use of that information*". Those needs still remain and it is Officers' view that the Council currently lacks the capacity to meet its information governance obligations.

2   **Proposals**

2.1   As well as the need to address ICT related vulnerabilities, it has been acknowledged that the Council also needs to develop and improve its standards of information governance generally throughout the organisation.

2.2   The key components of the Council's current information governance arrangements are:

- Information Management Officer

- Information Management Group

- Existing policies and procedures

- On-line training resources

2.3   A self-assessment of the Council's current position has been carried out using the National Archive's information management self-assessment tool.   A summary chart and headline results coming out of this review are set out in *Appendix A.*

2.4   The conclusion from this analysis is that corporately, resources and arrangements currently devoted to information management are insufficient to address the development issues identified in this review and to maintain appropriate standards into the future. Key areas for development are therefore identified as being:

- Raising understanding of the importance of 'Knowledge and Information Management' (KIM)

- Identifying and managing significant information management risks

- Raising understanding of the information needs of the Council and putting in place standards and procedures to ensure these are met

- Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for information management and ensuring that staff and elected Members receive appropriate training, guidance and support

- Developing a culture which ensures a commitment to high standards of information management and to identifying and taking advantage of information sharing opportunities

2.5 Given the nature of information developments, particularly those relating to digital information and the associated technology, the expectation is that resources will be required not just in the immediate term, to address the gaps identified and raise standards to an acceptable level, but also to maintain those standards into the future. Furthermore, drawing on the arrangements that other local authorities have in place, buying in support, either through collaboration with other authorities or from the private sectors, is not considered to be a viable, cost effective option, at least for the medium to longer term.

2.6 Accordingly, it is proposed that the in-house corporate information governance function be expanded and developed. Since the Cabinet resolution in January 2015, this has been developed into a proposal for a function consisting of two posts; one at a higher managerial level, with a strategic focus, to provide a corporate lead on information management and governance, together with a lower graded post with responsibilities centred around the administration of day-to-day information management demands, including requests for information under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection acts.

2.7 The priority at this stage is to secure an appointment to the higher positioned post, providing the postholder with the opportunity to help develop and shape the service. It may be that, in due course, as knowledge and experience is gained corporately in this area, opportunities will arise to reduce dedicated capacity, but that is not expected to happen for a number of years.

2.8 Job descriptions for the two proposed posts have been developed and assessed under the Council's Job Evaluation arrangements. Employee consultation has recently been completed in accordance with Council protocols and the current proposals are ready to be implemented in terms of establishing and recruiting to the two posts.

2.9 Given that, following the election in May 2015, the new Council is reviewing its priorities, this report is seeking Cabinet's confirmation of the approval it gave in January 2015. Officers' views concerning the information management /governance challenges facing the Council have not changed since January 2015 and the original proposal remains as Option 1. The only other options that have been identified are not considered appropriate to enable the Council to fulfil its information governance responsibilities

3 **Options and Options Analysis**

3.1 **Option 1** – Confirm Officer proposals (the original proposal)

3.2 The proposal involves an increase in the establishment of one post. Allowing for overheads, at maximum the annual cost would be approaching £40k per annum. In the current financial year, 2015/16, costs may be in the region of £15k, depending on the recruitment process. These costs can be met from within the £120K budget approved for ICT security and Public Services Network (PSN) compliance in February 2014.

3.3 Should Cabinet confirm support for the proposal, a report will be presented to Personnel Committee seeking approval for establishing the posts. It is proposed that managerial responsibility for Information Governance would transfer to Internal Audit.

3.4 In the opinion of officers, the two proposed posts will provide the necessary knowledge and capacity to meet the information governance development needs as outlined in paragraph 2.4 as well as the capacity to deal with the information requests being received by the Council. As mentioned, expectations for the future are such that resources will be required not just in the immediate term, to address the gaps identified and raise standards to an acceptable level, but also to maintain those standards into the future.

3.5   **Option 2** –   Do not confirm Officer proposals.

	Option 1 – Confirm approval for Officer proposals to develop functions as proposed	Option 2- Do not confirm proposals.
Advantages	Enable and support better service provision through development of corporate policies, procedures and standards of information governance Enable exploration of options for better use and sharing of information Provision of greater assurance regarding information management and security; reduce the risks of inappropriate disclosure and any associated penalties	No additional costs involved
Disadvantages	Costs associated with additional resources (although these are already budgeted for)	Further delays in improving service areas. Inability to develop standards and respond to future development challenges in the interim. Unable to provide assurance regarding the security and effective management/use of information. No suitable alternatives identified to date.
Risks	Inability to recruit the requisite resources	Increasing risk of information security incidents and associated penalties/adverse publicity Inability to respond to change and to take advantage of opportunities for better information sharing arrangements Risk of wasting time and resources, with no prospect of identifying a better solution for the medium term.

Officer Preferred Option

3.6   Option 1 is preferred. Dedicated resources are required to provide the expertise, capacity, and guidance necessary to enable the Council to fulfil its information governance responsibilities.

4   **Details of Consultation**

4.1   Where appropriate, consultation has been undertaken with the Council's partner authorities. Staffing consultation on the proposals developed to date has already been undertaken in accordance with the Council's protocols.

5 **Conclusion**

5.1 Much work has been done to develop information management/governance proposals that strengthen the Council's service provision, whilst containing costs within existing budgets. Whilst this is a service area which may not necessarily be visible to and appreciated directly by the public, it is nonetheless essential for sound governance and to support effective service delivery and the safeguarding of resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

As stated in the Corporate Plan, a key element in ensuring its successful delivery is having sound governance arrangements in place. The proposals also fit with the Council's ethos.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the report.

At maximum, the annual cost of the proposals in Option 1 would be approaching £40k per annum. In the current financial year, 2015/16, costs may be in the region of £15k, depending on the recruitment process. These costs, and any others arising through job evaluation as an example, can be met from within the £120K budget originally approved for ICT security and Public Services Network (PSN) compliance in February 2014..

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources/ Information Services / Property / Open Spaces:

The Council will comply with its own policies and all relevant legislation in relation to the consultation with any affected staff, the recruitment and selection of any candidates to the newly created posts and with any job evaluation matters arising linked to the changes in management responsibility.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer, in her capacity as Chief Officer (Resources), has been involved in developing the proposals following the previous Cabinet decision, and supports option 1 to ensure that the Council meets its obligations in the area of information governance, not least to give a better platform through which to help improve service VFM and digital innovation.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer, in her capacity as Chief Officer (Governance), has been involved in developing the proposals following the previous Cabinet decision, and supports option 1 to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations in the area of information governance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	**Contact Officer: Nadine Muschamp**
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