

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of Director of Strategic Services

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Data Protection and Information Security Update Report

Executive Summary

The transactions and interactions customers, residents, and staff make with the Council often involves the sharing of personal data – e.g. in relation to council tax accounts, housing agreements, employment contracts.

It is therefore important that this data is used only in ways reasonably expected, and that it stays safe. Similarly, the secure collection, storage, and transfer must be executed with regard to sound cybersecurity practices.

Recommendation to Committee

To note this report

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure that the Committee is kept up to date with developments in the Council's data protection and information security framework.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Background

- 1.1 It is now over three years since the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. Various positive advances have taken place within the Council since then.
- 1.2 This report will cover developments in data protection and information security within the Council since the last report of April 2021.

2. Update on Progress

Information Governance Successes since April 2021

- The Salesforce customer service platform has now gone live following approval of GDPR/information security compliance and the sign-off of detailed risk and data privacy impact assessments, plus various related due diligence exercises.
- Virus scanning technology has been implemented into Salesforce to minimise the risk of viruses or malware being spread through documents uploaded to Salesforce.
- Privacy and Data Protection Policy updated to include electronic card payment transactions thus ensuring GDPR compliance and improved governance of data processing (final sign-off pending).
- Planning applications published on website being reviewed so that a previous policy of redacting photos is replaced with a policy of only redacting photos that contain personally identifiable data or images (e.g. vehicle registration numbers, private areas of properties/gardens not visible from public roads).
- Information Asset Registers (IARs) – process of updating IARs to reflect structural, procedural and legal changes implemented since 2018 is progressing.
- Internal data sharing form containing guidance on the sharing of sensitive information between internal service areas now published on intranet.
- All-Staff emails from the Data Protection Officer have been used to encourage staff to delete files that are no longer required. These have been timed to remind staff as teams look to move their data from old, shared drives to Microsoft 365 services as part of the ICT Refresh Programme.
- Improvement in Freedom of Information performance rates post-covid (see accompanying FOI report for further details).
- Successful uptake of data protection refresher training open to all employees and delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams – publicised through all-staff emails and now run on a quarterly basis.
- Various Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) between the Council and other organisations – e.g. Surrey County Council (for local Covid track and trace testing), housing associations, Waverley Borough Council, parish councils, etc – have been drawn up to ensure compliance and best practice.

Objectives for the next 6 months:

- Finish review and update of Information Asset Registers.

- Review and where necessary update information governance-related policies and Council publication scheme.
- Finalise info sharing agreements with Waverley Borough Council as part of wider collaboration project.
- Agree the timing and scope of routine third party Penetration Tests (security scans) of the Council internal and external networks with the Cabinet Office (for Public Sector Network access).
- Finalise potential joint recruitment decision with Waverley to provide coverage of the currently vacant Information Assurance Officer post.
- Pilot of Multi-Factor Authentication for Councillor access to Council systems (e.g. e-mail), aligning the security controls for access across staff and Councillors, and enabling Councillor access to the latest ICT policies.

3. Background Papers

None

4. Appendices

None