



TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 9

MEETING: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 26 FEBRUARY 2024

SUBJECT: INFORMATION GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Governance Committee with a progress update on the improvement activities undertaken to address these.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An immediate review of all Information Governance policies, procedures and guidance commenced in 2022 ensuring compliance with the Service policy and procedure guidance, Information Commissioner Officer Guidance and GDPR legislation.
- 2.2 The internal assurance report was completed in August which helped inform an action plan of immediate improvements and activities that needed to be undertaken.

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Progress with the improvement action plan was monitored by the Information Governance Task and Finish Group on a weekly basis. The Group was chaired by the ACFO in her role as SIRO. Appendix 1 shows the progress and completed actions.
- 3.2 An immediate review of all Information Governance policies, procedures and guidance commenced ensuring compliance with the Information Commissioner Officer Guidance and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Appendix 2 shows policies and procedures in place prior to review.
- 3.3 Following the review, a Management of Information Framework and new suite of Information Governance policies and procedures were produced. Appendix 3 shows policies and procedures following the review.

- 3.4 The introduction of regularly meetings between the DPO, IGA and Head of ICT ensures alignment on areas of information security. The bi-monthly SIRO meetings now include the Head of ICT to provide regular cyber security updates.
- 3.5 New Microsoft forms have been created with guidance for users to submit requests for information. These were launched on the Service intranet and external website January 2023. The use of PowerBI has been incorporated into the IG functions to ensure transparency and compliance reporting.
- 3.6 During 2023/24 further improvement activities took place, including:
- All staff are required to complete and sign off Information Governance Awareness e-learning training package. Middle managers and above are required to complete and sign off and Information Risk Management e-learning training package. Specialist training for SIRO, DPO and IGA took place by an external provider in September 2023. The IGA is working towards Data protection and information governance practitioner apprenticeship (level 4)
 - Creation of overarching Management of Information Framework covering all aspects of the Information lifecycle with signposting to direct staff to the appropriate procedure and guidance.
 - New reporting and recording systems with the use of Microsoft forms and list for FOI, Data breach, Subject access requests with automation to monitor compliance and ensure transparency.
 - New recording system for Information Asset Register, Partnerships and Data sharing with supporting documents uploaded to provide more efficient review process and compliance with procedures.
 - Introduction of new process for sharing audio and visual information using secure SharePoint links previously information was burned onto disc and collected or delivered to requestor. The new method has reduced costs and improved efficiency in release of information.

4 RISK ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The risks connected with IG are identified, monitored and managed through the departmental Risk Register for the HR Department (as the host department) and the Risk Management and Assurance Database (RMAD).
- 4.2 The Information Governance is a complex area of law with significant compliance requirements on public bodies such as the Service. There is an ongoing challenge to try to ensure that the Service employs sufficient staff with sufficient specialist knowledge, and to provide such staff with supervision, support and cover for planned leave.
- 4.3 Amendments to legislation continues to be monitored including the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill following conclusion of the second reading in the House of Lords on the 19 December 2023, currently awaiting

further updates.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Endorse the contents of this report
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Information Governance Improvement Update, 30th June 2023