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Report of: **Borough Solicitor**

Contact for further information: **Mr T Broderick (Extn. 5001)**  
(E-mail: [terry.broderick@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:terry.broderick@westlancs.gov.uk))

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**SUBJECT: ELECTRONIC RECORDS STORAGE AND MANAGEMENT**

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Borough-wide interest

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 To update members of programmed work in relation to the Council's electronic records storage and management.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the report be noted.

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### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council has had in place electronic storage of information for many years. The systems have evolved over time and support business processes in nearly all functional areas of the Council. The structuring of this storage, and the processes which surround its use and access need to be carefully managed to improve efficiency and meet information governance requirements.

3.2 Currently there is no corporate document storage solution. Services may use the Council's network for storage, while some service areas make use of software storage facilities within applications, such as case management systems, for some or all of their information.

3.3 The Council has in place governance arrangements relating to the storage of information in several policy documents. These include:

- ICT and Data Security Policy;
- Retention and Disposal Schedule;
- Corporate Catalogue;
- Records of Processing;
- Data Quality Policy;
- Data Protection Policy (at both corporate and directorate/service levels).

The policy framework is supplemented by the ICT Strategy and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) arrangements. The development and management of storage is governed within each service, guided through these support mechanisms (policies and arrangements). The systems of storage and procedures for use and access were not historically standardised on a corporate basis.

3.4 Officer work and a move to new server arrangements highlighted the need to review, on a corporate basis, the electronic storage of information. This requirement was cited in the Council's Annual Governance Statement in 2017 and by the SIRO Annual Governance Statement, as previously reported to Audit and Governance Committee.

3.5 In July 2017 Council, following reporting of the matter to Audit and Governance Committee, agreed the appointment of a temporary Data Access and Storage Governance Project Officer (2 year post on secondment) and relevant funding for the project for the regularising of network storage (see below at 4.0). The relevant funding related to BTLS expenditure of up to £10K to cover additional work in revising file structures and permissions, and tasks ancillary to the project.

## **4.0 THE PROJECT**

4.1 Officers had put a project group in place: Digital Data Information Governance Project (DDIGP) ahead of the report to Council. The DDIGP vision, as agreed with senior management, was "to provide a structured facility for storage of Council electronic records, facilitating business delivery and compliance with all relevant governance requirements".

4.2 A work plan was developed and updated into an action plan for delivery. The work is ongoing and is now in the process of being rolled out in Services, with Property Services being the first area covered.

4.3 A revised structure for the storage and access permissions on the Council's network has been developed in consultation with BTLS. This has been a lengthy process with a significant amount of officer engagement with BTLS. It has now been through proof of concept and pilot stages to test the processes to be applied from a technical and operational position. It allows for a more coherent corporate structure for electronic records and ensures there is a reduction in the need for

storage, aids efficient business delivery, contains costs and improves overall governance of records.

- 4.4 The temporary officer appointed has assisted officers in Services to review storage within their areas. This enables bespoke structuring of records founded upon corporate standards, with suitable arrangements for permissions and accountability for the data. The officer resource has been guided by the DDIGP and worked in conjunction with Heads of Service, who retain responsibility for information in their respective service(s). Shared areas for storage are permitted with permission/accountability always being allocated for this.
- 4.5 A secondary role for the post holder is to facilitate progression of the delivery of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), liaising between services reviewed and officers responsible for implementing these requirements. The Action Plan in place for GDPR has been taken forward and is nearing completion.
- 4.6 An improved process for "starters" and "leavers" has been prepared to assist the Council's requirements for administering appropriate electronic access to systems and hardware and cessation of this access on leaving/moving. However, at this stage the process is being further reviewed with BTLS colleagues to ensure the model delivers the most efficient coordinated process in line with working arrangements of both the Council, ICT service delivery and Human Resources requirements.

## 5.0 **LATEST POSITION**

- 5.1 The project is now in a phase of being rolled out to all services. There are detailed sign-off arrangements for Heads of Service on completion of any/all their service areas which secure that a suitable position for storage has been achieved and will be maintained. To ensure ongoing delivery all storage systems have an appointed officer, the information asset owner, who has day-to-day responsibility for the data held including arrangements for access (with input of BTLS where necessary). Records of the allocations are maintained centrally in the Corporate Catalogue of information assets and the Record of Processing (a document maintained for data protection purposes).
- 5.2 The latest version of the plan for completion of the project in Services is attached in the Appendix to this report. This sets a challenging agenda for officers but is one for which they receive support from the dedicated officer and BTLS colleagues in taking forward.
- 5.3 The officer based Information Governance and Data Protection Working Group meets regularly to maintain oversight in this area. This committee has previously received training session in regard to the storage arrangements.
- 5.4 Upon completion of the project there will be a further report to the Committee.

## **FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The project is planned to be delivered within existing resources.
- 6.2 The completion of the project will produce a more coherent corporate structure for electronic records and will ensure there is a reduction in the need for storage, thereby containing costs and improve overall governance of records.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The electronic storage of records was highlighted as a matter requiring attention in earlier Annual Governance Statements. The project action plan is being implemented to improve governance and to ensure continuing compliance with legislation and Council policy. This will be monitored as part of the project and entries in the Council's risk register will be reviewed / augmented and updated as the project progresses.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendix**

Latest version of the plan for completion of data storage project in Services.