



Report of: **Borough Solicitor**

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SUBJECT: ELECTRONIC RECORDS STORAGE AND MANAGEMENT

Borough-wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide members with a final report in relation to the electronic records storage and management project work on the Council's network.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the report be noted.

2.2 That the out of scope and residual items of work, identified at paragraph 5.0 and in the Appendix to the report, be taken forward appropriately.

3.0 BACKGROUND

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

3.2 Historically the systems of storage and procedures for use and access were not standardised on a corporate basis. As part of the Sustainable Organisation Review Project (SORP) new resource has been allocated to information governance and this will ensure that measures to meet regulatory and best practice requirements which have already been put in place are further developed and embedded, so that the new structure will be maintained and the now much reduced storage capacity will be monitored. This will be of assistance to and

supplemented by new arrangements for the development and commissioning of ICT support as agreed by Council in the report on SORP on 10 July 2019.

3.3 The Council already 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).

This policy framework is supplemented by the ICT Strategy and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) arrangements and detailed guidance. The development and management of storage is governed within each service, guided through these support mechanisms (policies and arrangements).

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 in the same year, as has previously been 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. To date the project's direct costs have been contained, with £3,800 spent.

3.6 The electronic records storage and management project work on the Council's network has been subject of a number of update reports to the committee throughout its lifetime and also a presentation to members.

4.0 THE PROJECT

4.1 An officer project group was put in place ahead of the July 2017 report to Council: the Digital Data and Information Governance Project (DDIGP). The DDIGP vision for the network, 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 In order to deliver the project, a broad work plan was developed and updated into an action plan. The project was completed by 18 October 2019 with all Directorates and Services able to access the new Network Folder Drive. The Network Folder Drive is the Council's principal method of storage of data outside of any specific software applications designed for such use, which are usually

deployed at service or directorate level (these are systems that are already considered compliant). Removal of redundant data from the 'old' Network Folder Drive has significantly increased the storage availability which had been a considerable concern at the outset of the project. Going forward storage capacity will need to be kept at 285 GB (which equates to 10% of the storage available, i.e. with 90% being utilised). It is to be appreciated that in line with business changes, e.g. SORP (requirement to look at storage on the cloud) and use of Skype, there may be significant movement in requirements for storage, and a likely reduction on network storage requirements (especially with use of "the Cloud") but the requirement for regulation of the facilities will not be removed.

4.3 The main project outcome was to deliver a revised structure for the storage and access permissions on the Council's network. This has been achieved, having been developed in consultation with BTLS. The new Network Folder Drive allows for a more coherent corporate structure for electronic records; ensures there is a reduction in the need for storage (e.g. reports on duplication of records); aids efficient business delivery, contains costs and improves overall governance of records.

4.4 The temporary officer appointed assisted officers in Directorates/Services to review storage within their areas. The officer resource was guided by the DDIGP officer group 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 was 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 in this regard has been taken forward and completed.

4.6 An improved process for "starters, movers and leavers" was initially part of the DDIGP, as was previously reported. However, as work progressed on the project it became clear through advice from the ICT provider that a technically supported solution should provide a more efficient option. Following discussions it was decided that this is to be a separate project to ensure the model delivers the most efficient coordinated process in line with working arrangements for the Council, including governance, ICT service delivery and Human Resources requirements.

5.0 **PROJECT COMPLETION**

5.1 The new network structure is now complete and operating, having been rolled out to all services/directorates. The detailed sign-off arrangements for Heads of Service on completion of their service areas is in place confirming that a suitable position for storage has been achieved and will be maintained. To ensure ongoing delivery all storage systems have an appointed officer(s), 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/or the Record of Processing (a document maintained for data protection purposes).

- 5.2 The items that have been identified as the project has progressed but have not fallen within its scope (after consultation with BTLS) is attached in the Appendix to this report. Corporate structuring of email records and retention is allocated high priority and a revised "starters/movers/leavers" process, which (as noted above) was to be included in the project, requires technical input and resources and has been included on the IT 'roadmap' WLBC is putting in place with BTLS. The IT 'roadmap' will provide a list of WLBC IT projects, in priority order.
- 5.3 A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been raised with BTLS to identify and move databases, scripts and applications that are still located on the 'old' G drive. These items could not be moved without technical input to avoid breaking links to documents, mailboxes etc. This RFP work is unlikely to be completed before the end of the DDIGP project. The technical requirement is that these are separately allocated space on the Council network to better control their operation.
- 5.4 The new information governance resource identified and approved through SORP will ensure that existing governance arrangements for WLBC remain and may be further developed and more pro-actively monitored, which will ensure that the files and folder structure put in place as part of the DDIGP is maintained to the corporate standard. This will be assisted by the existing arrangements for the SIRO annual governance review process. The same resource will assist in the coordination of the items highlighted in the Appendix to the report.
- 5.5 The outcome of project completion is a more coherent corporate structure for electronic records on the Council' network with appropriate management arrangements, including access permissions. This is at a suitable level to facilitate movement of information into any new structures put in place from time to time and ensures there is a reduction in the need for storage, thereby containing costs and improved overall governance of records. Further advances in terms of communications through the use of Skype and other ICT developments should deliver more efficient handling of data, e.g. reducing the duplication of stored items; which can now be managed through routine reporting developed as part of the DDIGP.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The project was delivered within existing and allocated resources. The specific cost item for the Council, of £3,800 for work from BTLS, was a pleasing result bringing it well within the original quote for these services.

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 was implemented to improve governance and to ensure continuing compliance with legislation and

Council policy. This was monitored as part of the project and entries in the Council's risk register were reviewed / augmented and updated as the project progressed. The target risk has been met through the work of the DDIGP.

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

Residual/Future Action Items