

Audit and Governance Committee

Meeting to be held on 25th November 2013

Electoral Division affected: None

Information Governance Arrangements - update

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

A progress report on Information Governance (IG) arrangements within the County Council.

Recommendation

The Committee are asked to note the report.

Background and Advice

The Committee have previously requested updates on progress in developing robust arrangements to manage the County Council's responsibilities to properly maintain the confidentiality and security of information. The Chair also wrote to the Chief Executive in August 2013 expressing the Committee's concerns particularly that little seemed to be being done to ensure that there was general awareness amongst the council's staff of the need for information security, how to guard this effectively, how to recognise that security had been breached and what action to take if it had.

The Committee will be pleased to know that in her response, the Interim Chief Executive gave a clear commitment on behalf of the Management Team that everything that could reasonably be expected of a public authority the size of Lancashire County Council was put in place to demonstrate that, as an organisation, we could be trusted to maintain the confidentiality and security of information.

She went on to outline a number of areas where good progress had been made, notably the putting in place of appropriate policies and procedures, the appointment of a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Caldicott Guardian and the establishment of Corporate Information Governance Group at senior level to ensure IG is managed and communicated properly across the Authority.

Efforts had already been made to remind all staff across the Authority of their IG responsibilities but it was recognised that much more needed to be done. To that end, One Connect Ltd (OCL) had been commissioned to do a detailed study of what the Authority's IG resource requirements were going forward. Unfortunately, due to

the recent departure of staff within OCL who were undertaking that work, that report has not been forthcoming.

It is proposed therefore that the County Council, as a matter of urgency, appoint a Head of Information Governance, one of whose first priorities when appointed will be to assess the level of resource required to manage this highly important area of work. Clearly, the recruitment process will take some time to complete and it is not expected to have someone in post until Spring 2014. In the interim, a senior officer within the County Secretary and Solicitor's Group has been nominated Information Governance Lead and his main focus will be to ensure any security breaches are handled properly, that action is being taken to mitigate against such breaches and to progress work to ensure the County Council meets the requirements of the NHS IG toolkit. Consideration is also being given to the transfer of a member of staff from within OCL to assist the Lead officer and possibly the temporary secondment of other staff within the Council.

As for the toolkit, good progress is being made and there is now only one assessment category on which the County Council has yet to achieve the required 'Level 2' attainment. That category relates to the maintenance of an up to date register of all the Council's information assets and their owners. In order to address this, a cross directorate task and finish group has been established and is now working to pull together an up to date Information Asset register for the Council and to identify IA Owners by mid-December 2013. This audit is just the first, but very important, part in ensuring our IAs are properly recorded, protected and managed in the future.

Some progress has also been made on moving towards a 'Level 3' attainment which the County Council is required to do by April 2014.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

N/A:

Risk management

Serious risks to meeting the County Council's requirements relating to Information Governance will arise if sufficient resources to manage the function are not identified and deployed.

Financial implications

Responsibility for Information Governance transferred to OCL in May 2011, together with the funding for the provision of the service. As the service has returned to the County Council, the funding paid to OCL will be adjusted in accordance with the contract, and will, as a minimum, be sufficient to fund the proposed post.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Letter from the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee to the Chief Executive.	5 August 2013	Andy Wilkinson, CSSG, 33378
Interim Chief Executive response.	17 September 2013	Andy Wilkinson, CSSG, 33378