

Corporate FOI Board

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council receives information requests from a variety of sources. These include requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and enquiries from elected members.
- 1.2 There are risks associated with the provision of information such that the corporate management team would like a board to oversee the handling of requests.
- 1.3 The Board is driving greater momentum behind the need to improve transparency and improving the consistency and quality of our FOI responses.

2. Membership

- 2.1 There will be a Corporate FOI Board with the following membership –
 - Corporate Director Development and Renewal (Chair)
 - Senior Information Risk Officer (currently the Corporate Director Resources) or nominee
 - Corporate Director Education Social Care & Wellbeing
 - Head of Legal Services
 - Service Head – Strategy and Resources (CLC)
 - Service Head – Resources (ESCW)
 - Head of Communications

3. Frequency of meetings and other arrangements

- 3.1 The Board will meet weekly or at such other frequency as may be determined by the Chair.
- 3.2 The Service Head – Strategy and Resources (CLC) will schedule the meetings and circulate the agenda.
- 3.3 The Head of Legal Services will arrange for minutes to be taken.
- 3.4 At the first meeting of the Board the Chair will appoint a Deputy Chair from the Board as cover for absence as and when required.
- 3.5 The importance of the Board is such that all Board Members will be expected to attend. Substitute attendees will only be accepted by prior arrangement with the Chair and only as an exception.

4. Board role and purpose

- 4.1 The Board will undertake the work set out below.
- 4.2 Corporate management and oversight of the Council's systems for responding to information requests, particularly the identification of, and responses to, sensitive information requests.
- 4.3 Corporate management and oversight of complaints about responses to information requests, whether made internally or externally, and the application of lessons learned from any findings.
- 4.4 Strategic development and oversight of initiatives designed to reduce the operational burden and staff costs associated with responding to information requests.
- 4.5 Strategic development and oversight of communications related to information requests and the systems ensuring consistency of response.
- 4.6 Provide momentum to improve proactive transparency publication.
- 4.7 To receive reports from the Chair of the Information Governance Group on the work of the group specific to FOI issues and to advise on matters of priority and approach.
- 4.8 To be the main corporate reporting Board for the Information Governance Group. This includes:
 - 4.8.1 Data Protection and Information Security policy matters (including security incidents)
 - 4.8.2 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act (and the Council's performance)
 - 4.8.3 Records Management
 - 4.8.4 Risk Management in relation to Information Governance Matters, and
 - 4.8.5 Staff training and awareness around Information Governance
- 4.9 The Board will also review Members' Enquiry responses as required.

5. Accountability and relationship with other groups

- 5.1 In respect of all decisions made by the Board and subject to the arrangements set out in these terms of reference the Chair's decision is final and binding on other directorates.
- 5.2 The Chair will report from time to time to the corporate management team.

- 5.3 The Council's Information Governance Group (IGG) will make reports to the Board on the work that the IGG carries out in areas falling within the Board's terms of reference.
- 5.4 Board requests for work to be undertaken by the IGG on its behalf to be actioned by the IGG chair subject to
- resource availability as determined by the IGG chair
 - or to be referred to the Line manager of the IGG Chair either at the direction of the Chair of the Board or at the IGG group Chairs discretion.
- 5.5 Board Members representing the Directorates will be expected to liaise directly with their DMT's and Directors on actions and decisions of the Board specific to their Division to secure compliance, organise actions and otherwise implement the decisions of the Board reporting back as required.