

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Annual Report on behalf of the Senior Information Risk Owner
2025/26

Date: 16 July 2026

Author: Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

Wards Affected

Borough wide

Purpose

To present a report on behalf of the Senior Information Risk Owner providing an annual review of activities in respect of information management and data security.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT:

- 1) The Annual Report on behalf of the Senior Information Risk Owner 2025/26 be noted.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council's designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), currently the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, has overall responsibility for the Council's information management framework and acts as the champion for information risk within the Council. The SIRO is currently supported by the Data Protection Officer, Deputy Data Protection Officer, Chief Digital and Customer Officer and the ICT Cyber, Compliance and Policy Manager. The SIRO is responsible for producing an Annual Report on information governance. The Annual Report has been prepared on behalf of the SIRO and is attached at Appendix 1. The report provides an overview of activity in relation to information governance, key achievements during 2025/26 as well as outlining work planned for 2026/27. It should provide

assurance that the Council has arrangements in place to ensure information risks are being managed effectively.

- 1.2 It is important that the Council recognises the need to protect its information assets from both accidental and malicious loss and damage. The loss or damage of information can have serious consequences for the Council; not only financial and reputational but also may result in the Council being unable to deliver vital services to customers. Ongoing work activity continues to ensure the management and security of our information. In particular, the Council underwent an emergency planning cyber exercise in 2025/26 to test continuity plans and processes in the event of a cyber-attack and our cyber risk register has been updated. Reports into Audit Committee on the Council's cyber risk position have been undertaken in 2025/26 and will continue in 2026/27. Work has continued in 2025/26 to improve potential vulnerabilities and in particular security around Council websites has been strengthened.
- 1.3 The Council has recently been audited by internal auditors in relation to its processes for handling Information Requests. The auditors gave substantial assurance in relation to design and moderate assurance in relation to effectiveness with recommendations which have been included within the report attached as actions for 2026/27.
- 1.4 A number of new policies were introduced in 2025/26 to improve information governance including an Artificial Intelligence Policy and Identification and Verification Policy. Wider reviews of information policies will be undertaken in 2026/27 including our Records and Retention Policy.
- 1.5 The Council has continued to implement new systems in line with the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy including a Customer Relationship Management System and Waste Software System. Both systems ensure data security in line with prescribed standards and are considered to be a safer solution for managing customer data. The implementation of these systems not only improves efficiency on Council's processes and data management but also puts the Council in a better position for the implementation of local government reorganisation.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Annual Report of the SIRO 2025/26 at Appendix 1 be noted.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Not to present an annual SIRO report, in which case Executive members will not be updated on information governance activity across the Council

and understand whether information risks are being managed effectively.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council must comply with a number of statutory obligations in the General Data Protection Regulations, Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations. Work for 2026/27 reflects recommendations from audit in terms of information requests.

6 Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Annual report of the Senior Information Risk Owner 2025/26

9 Background Papers

9.1 None identified.

10 Reasons for Recommendations

10.1 To ensure the Executive is updated in respect of the Information Governance activity across the Council in order to provide assurance that information risks are being managed effectively and to ensure Information Security policy remains fit for purpose.

11 Local Government Reorganisation

Digital and Data governance and security are key themes in the LGR transition process. The Council has made significant improvements in the last two years to improve data quality and security through digital transformation. The process of amalgamating data across existing Councils is easier where the necessary systems and processes are in place to ensure data is safe and legal.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by the Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Date:

Drafted by the Monitoring Officer

Date: