



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF THE SENIOR INFORMATION RISK OWNER (SIRO) ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the proposal to assign the **Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)** duties within the Authority to the Head of ICT and Customer Services role and responsibilities.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report seeks to formalise the assignment of the SIRO role and responsibilities to a post at an appropriate management level within the Council. The report also includes a proposal for a formal reporting process of the corporate information governance group activities to the Corporate Management Team and the Audit Committee.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report is linked to the information governance policy and the Council's ICT Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The SIRO role has evolved significantly within the public sector over the past few years to coincide with some well-publicised losses of data by HMRC and a perception that improvements in public services are being hampered by inefficient management of information.
- 4.2 With increasing financial pressure on the public sector there is also a need to maximise and exploit the information held within an organisation to plan and deliver quality services effectively.
- 4.3 The SIRO role is now a mandatory function within local government and has overall responsibility for information assets, understands and manages information risk, and provides assurance that all Information Asset Owners, (IAO's) in the Council are following their responsibilities. The SIRO also has a key role in maximising the effectiveness of information usage, both internally and with delivery partners.

4.4 The SIRO role can be further detailed as:-

- Owning the information risk policy and assessment process for the Council, ensuring that the organisation takes a responsible attitude to information and can implement appropriate data handling standards.
- Developing a management statement on risk appetite, which can vary according to current circumstances.
- Writing an annual Information Risk Return informed by quarterly Head of Service/ IAO Risk Returns covering the Council and main delivery partners, which ensure that the Council can monitor and assess compliance. The annual return also gives a structure to improvement and will include:-
 - a) Details of any changes to key individuals responsible for security matters.
 - b) Significant risks and mitigations that have implications for protective security.
 - c) All significant security incidents
 - d) Declaration of meeting all data handling standards

4.5 The SIRO role was previously being undertaken by the Head of ICT and Customer Services, prior to his recent retirement, however this role doesn't appear to have been formally assigned to this post to date.

4.6 Wales Audit Office have also highlighted that the responsibilities and accountabilities of the SIRO need to be formally assigned and vested in a role that has sufficient seniority to deliver all elements of the SIRO function, in particular

- Ownership of the information risk policy
- Ownership of the information risk assessment
- Champion information issues at a senior level; and
- Provide a written statement in relation to the security of the Council's information asset for inclusion in the Council's Statement of Internal Control/Annual Governance Statement.

4.7 The Corporate Information Governance Unit, IT Security and ICT all fall within the Head of ICT and Customer Services area. A close working relationship with the Head of Performance and Property is also required to ensure buildings security is appropriate to protect assets, and to coordinate responses to security related matters.

4.8 It is proposed that the activities and progress within the Corporate Information Governance Group are also reported to Corporate Management Team at regular intervals and that any specific items requiring input from senior management are reported by the SIRO or the Corporate Information Governance Manager to Corporate Management Team for the necessary approval.

4.9 It is also proposed that the reports produced by the SIRO are presented periodically to the Audit Committee and incorporated within the Audit Committee forward work programme.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Government Measure defines fairness and access as one of the criteria that constitutes 'improvement' within the Wales programme for Improvement 2009.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The recommendations/actions contained within the report will be covered by existing budgets.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The SIRO responsibilities are added to the Head of ICT and Customer Services job description and designation changed to add “and SIRO”.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultees that have not been included in the overall report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the responsibilities and accountabilities of the SIRO be formally assigned and vested in a role that has sufficient seniority to deliver all elements of the SIRO function, that role being the Head of ICT and Customer Services with a formal reporting structure being put in place between the existing Information Governance Group and Corporate Management Team .
- 9.2 Members agree that the reports produced by the SIRO are presented periodically to the Audit Committee and incorporated within the Audit Committee forward work programme.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the SIRO role, responsibilities and accountabilities are appropriately and formally assigned within the Authority.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Measure 2009, Wales Programme for Improvement 2010.

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Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property
Joanne Jones, Corporate Information Governance Manager
Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Information Management Review (report from the Wales Audit Office)