Information Strategy
2013

"The information you need, at any time, accessible from anywhere."

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Warwickshire County Council

Working for Warwickshire

Contents

Introduction

The County Council generates and receives a huge amount of information and information is one of our key assets. This strategy sets out our vision, principles for handling information, aims and the key actions for delivering the strategy.

The Information Strategy affects the entire organisation. It covers all the information the organisation creates, owns, collects and holds in paper and electronic format. It covers access to information by the public, staff, Councillors and partners.

Information can be used to drive efficiency and service improvement – enhancing public services and, accountability while reducing waste and improving value for money.

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Since we published our information strategy in 2007, expectations and technology have changed, with more commissioning of services, increased partnership working, flexible working and greater expectations on transparency and access.

Our organisational culture must change and adapt to ensure information is managed correctly and to the highest standards, so the public can be confident that their personal information will be protected from loss, unauthorised access and is safe from inappropriate use.

In this strategy, information is used as a collective term to cover terms such as data, information (documents and records), and knowledge. A full definition of terms can be found at the end of this strategy. Information is a very loose term that is interpreted in many different ways. It is important

to understand and distinguish between the types of information, especially documents and records and how we manage such information.

The Information Strategy is closely aligned with the ICT Strategy and the Customer Service and Access Strategy and relies on these strategies in order to deliver the information vision.

The "day to day stories" in these strategies, illustrate the positive impact our strategies will have on the lives of Warwickshire customers, citizens and our staff and partners.

Internal and external drivers

- **The Council as a commissioning organisation** – increased partnership working has implications for managing information and personal data, ownership, sharing and security.

- **Transformation and change** – changes in the Council organisation, roles and responsibilities means we need to capture records and knowledge rather than relying on individuals.

- **Reducing office space** – rationalising and reducing office space with more flexible working for staff will continue to increase demand for off-site storage of legacy paper records over the next few years and dictate a faster pace for digital working.

- **Digital by default** – the drive for efficiency, security, sharing and accessibility make electronic information the default rather than paper.

- **Data protection and transparency legislation** – proposed changes to European Union data protection regulation and further controls to keep personal data confidential and secure, balanced by Government transparency and open data for council information.

- **Regulation and inspection** – monitoring and compliance from the Information Commissioner and Care Quality Commission/NHS.

- **Public expectations** – greater awareness of rights to access information and increasing expectations in a 24/7 web-enabled world.

- **Staff expectations** - ease of use and access to data, sharing information internally and externally with partners, business intelligence to deliver and plan services, sharing customer information to deliver services efficiently.

The vision

Our customer vision is to make it easy for anyone to access services where and when they need them. The Information vision to support this, is to provide accurate, relevant, timely and consistent information to anyone who needs it, who has authorisation to access it, in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

The Information you need, at any time, accessible from anywhere.

What will the future look like?

For staff

- Information management principles and practices have been embedded in the organisation through training, culture and effective system design.

- We value customer information and protect it, so potential breaches of personal data security are extremely rare.

- It much easier to find the information we are looking for in our electronic filing systems because we describe our information effectively and have good tools for retrieving it.

- Management information is easy to access, through dashboards and through common reporting tools to inform policy and service planning.

- Our automated business processes routinely collect performance information to support continuous process improvement and to help us manage our services more effectively.

- We are able to use summarised and consolidated data to redesign, target and streamline our services.

- We have established a single source of truth for all our information assets, key staff and customer information is held in one place.

For our partners

- We share information to deliver a more streamlined service to the public and improve their outcomes.

- Data is regularly published for transparency to allow partners to plan services and organisations to deliver new services.
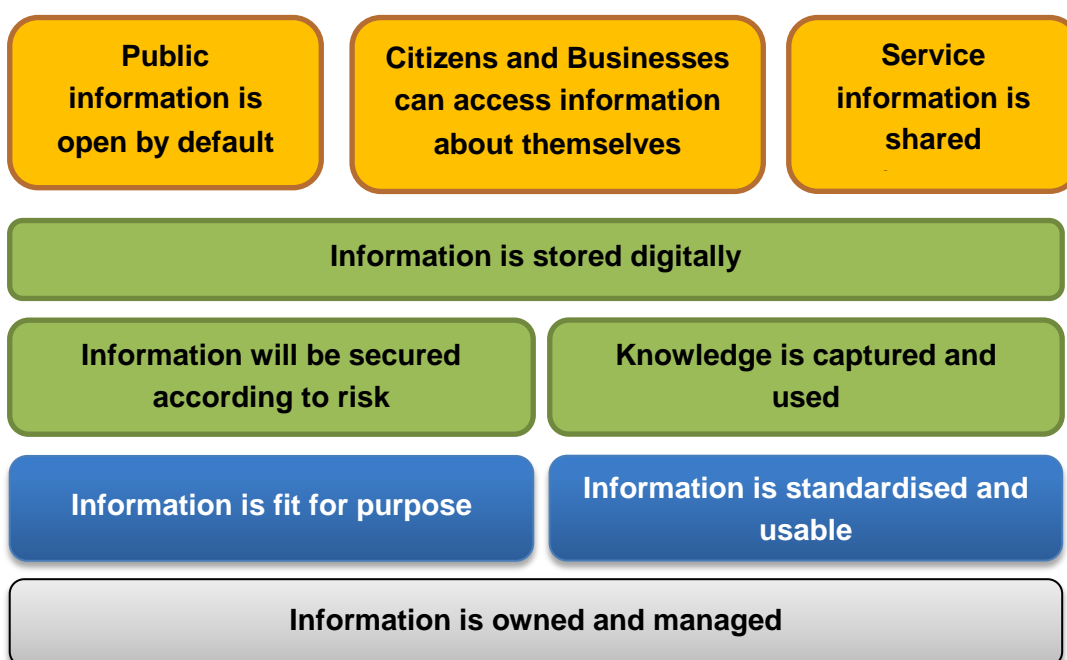
For the public

- The public can easily find information on services they require online.

- We are open and transparent and customers are able to make informed decisions on service choice, influence future services and hold the Council to account.

- When customers inform us of a change of circumstances we are able to automatically update our systems and share with other relevant public sector systems to avoid repeating the changes.

- We have integrated our services with personal data stores that put the control of key personal data where it should be – with the customer.

- Customers can access their own personal data and see the progress and outcome of service requests.

Information principles

We will be guided by the high-level 'Information Principles for the UK Public Sector', while prioritising and making these specific to Warwickshire County Council.

Public information is open by default	Citizens and Businesses can access information about themselves	Service information is shared

Information is stored digitally	

Information will be secured according to risk	Knowledge is captured and used

Information is fit for purpose	Information is standardised and usable

Information is owned and managed	

Public information is open by default: information is treated as being open and transparent unless it is personal or confidential. We publish information about our services to everyone and provide methods for anyone to access it, unless there are specific reasons not to, for example commercially and legally privileged information.

Citizens and Businesses can access information about themselves: personal, sensitive and commercial information is kept secure and confidential but accessible to the individuals.

Service information is shared: where appropriate or agreed, customer and service information will be shared with staff, partners and others as appropriate to deliver services.

Information will be secured according to risk: information is assessed based on the risk and impact to an individual, group or organisation. It is classified for handling, how it should be stored and who can have access to it.

Information is stored digitally: information is created, stored and handled in electronic format, internally and externally as our first choice.

Knowledge is captured and used: knowledge is captured as a matter of routine to help the Council share and learn from its employees' collective experience.

Information is fit for purpose: information is not collected unless we have a business reason for doing so and it can be used to deliver or plan services. Information is accurate, reliable, timely and provides value. Systems are designed to provide useful management information to all, as well as storing basic data and transactional information.

Information is standardised and usable: we provide both the information and an explanation of what it is about. We author information in a way that information can be presented and understood in different forms. There must be authoritative versions and widely adopted standards for describing and storing paper and electronic information.

Information is owned and managed: each set of information (including data sets, documents, records and knowledge) has a defined "Asset Owner" who is responsible for the management of the information. Information is stored, managed in one place and accessed many times rather than physically duplicating in different locations or systems. Paper records, data and documents held on electronic databases and filing systems are deleted when there is no longer a business need for them but retained for legal or business reasons, according to Retention and Disposal schedules. Systems are designed to dispose of data and documents when no longer required.

Appendix A - Delivering the vision

Delivery of the vision over the next few years requires significant work across a range of overlapping areas of information management. Actions will be delivered through the organisation's annual Business Plans.

Overall aims

- Create and maintain an overall i**nformation architecture** to support the design of information systems and processes.
- Build **information governance** as standard in our processes and systems for both paper and electronic information.
- Enable **access to information** and knowledge-based decision making using reliable information and effective tools.
- Improve **education** to make the management and use of information a core responsibility for all.

Actions

We will implement the Information Strategy under four key themes. The actions below will be delivered through corporate initiatives and service-led plans. We will review progress and update annually.

Information Architecture

Managing the Information Lifecycle is about asset management.
- Define our key information assets, asset owners, the relationship between information assets, how the assets are used and shared across the Council and outside with partners and citizens.
- Move away from individual silos of information by identifying and, where necessary, creating shared stores of key corporate information. Create a customer index to link the key stores of customer data.
- Establish information standards to ensure information has definition and descriptions attached to it, to allow retrieval and re-use.
- Implement electronic document and records management solutions for team working and corporate records.
- Research and approve tools and solutions to allow information to be captured, stored, accessed, analysed and presented in different formats.

Information Governance

Managing the Information Lifecycle requires a robust accountability and governance structure to be in place across the Council.
- Provide an integrated, professional Information Management service to deliver clear services for public access and support services for staff and partners.
- Review and simplify the Information Governance Framework that sets out roles and responsibilities for information, policies, guidance and standards throughout the Council.

- Incorporate changes required for information governance from the transfer of Public Health from the NHS.
- Implement a formal acceptance and understanding of information responsibilities, linked to training and awareness for all staff.
- Build privacy impact and risk assessment into the design of process and information systems to ensure information governance.
- Implement the management of electronic records, where we need to preserve for medium/long-term access.
- Commission the storage of our paper record storage and retrieval service.

Access to Information

Providing access to data and information is fundamental for all information customers – citizens, businesses and Council staff.

- Continue to make information digital where possible to deliver efficiencies and faster. customer response. This includes making use of electronic capture where possible, scanning of paper, document/record management, transfer of and collaboration around electronic information.
- Build and promote self-service access and sharing, but designed for privacy, accessibility, disposal and/or preservation.
- Publish and use open datasets, with tools to analyse and interpret.
- Make access easier to both Council information and personal data.
- Provide an information service to support and guide staff on our legal obligations for data protection and confidentiality.
- Maintain a secure, efficient storage and retrieval service for our legacy paper records.

Education

The Council operates in a knowledge-rich environment and requires all staff to be competent in accessing, using and managing information and IT.

- Implement information governance training as a core competency for staff for them to understand their responsibilities, supplemented by tailored training for teams and roles where required.
- Provide information and knowledge management skills/competencies to help staff create, find, share, evaluate and organise data, information and knowledge.
- Introduce how to use and manage information in IT systems and not just how to use the product, when training is delivered.
- Embed information responsibilities in job descriptions and reflect in recruitment and training programmes.
- Provide a professional career path for core information management staff, with graded levels of responsibility for employees to progress through.

Definitions

Data	Consists of facts, figures, codes, research and statistics. Much of our data is held in electronic databases but can also be in printed reports
Document	A bound collection of information, in paper or electronic form with content and formatting combined.
Governance	A set of multi-disciplinary structures, policies, procedures, processes and controls implemented to manage information across an organisation, supporting immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk, environmental and operational requirements.
Information	Data that has been processed into a form that gives meaning and value
Knowledge	Collected information that is used as intelligence to inform decision making or improve business practices.
Metadata	Metadata describes the data or information with a number of standard terms, so it becomes useful when finding information or when it is re-used.
Record	Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. *(ISO 15489)* *While the definition of a record is often identified with a physical document, a record can be either a tangible object or digital information which has value to the organisation.*
Records management	The practice of identifying, classifying, archiving, preserving, and destroying records, in paper or electronic format, in a controlled and systematic way.

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