

# Information Management Strategy

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## About This Document

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## Overview

'Information Management describes the means by which an organisation efficiently plans, collects, organises, uses, controls, disseminates and disposes of its information, and through which it ensures that the value of that information is identified and exploited to the fullest extent.'<sup>1</sup>

In recognising that the information held by individuals and services within Hastings BC has definite value, we can understand the importance that should be given to the provision and maintenance of that information.

This strategy will help Hastings BC become an 'Information Organisation' where information is recognised and valued as a corporate asset that is used to drive decisions, shape services, improve service delivery, and engage with customers and partners in true 2-way communications.

This Information Management Strategy is intended to establish the framework for enabling Hastings Borough Council to achieve its information management objectives and thereby meet the challenges of the modern information age.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Information Planning Branch (IPB) Information Standards

## Background

### Information

In its most basic form – generally at the point it is captured or re-used – information tends to be known as data. Data takes the form of numbers, words, and images yet to be organised or analysed to answer specific questions

Once we begin to control that data (ensuring that it is secure, reliable and of adequate quality) we tend to start calling it information. A useful definition of information is ‘evidence of business activity’. Formal forms of such information are known as records.

Information is often also called knowledge – generally when it is being interpreted so that it can be exploited to add business value. At the level of strategic or tactical decision making, information can also be described as wisdom.

Information is required by, for example:

- Service users – for exercising choice, understanding service standards, holding delivery to account
- Staff – for delivery
- Managers – for monitoring and managing service delivery; benchmarking
- Members – for decision making; monitoring strategic objectives; ensuring accountability
- Partners – for monitoring the achievement of targets
- Commissioners – for determining priorities
- Government – for Policy; monitoring new initiatives; national targets and achievements; rewarding good performance; identifying poorly performing organisations
- Regulators – for monitoring performance and use of resources; publishing comparators; planning work programmes.

## The Challenges

The introduction of modern technologies has resulted in vast increases in the volume and type of unstructured data (web, e-mail, electronic documents, electronic images and scanned documents). At the same time, we are faced with the problem of legacy formats (paper; superseded technologies).

New business processes and ways of working are emerging (contact centres, CRM, collaborative working, home working, ad-hoc practices), each with their own unique requirements for the use of information.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to exert effective control over such information during its lifecycle in order to ensure its initial and continuing accuracy, its efficient and permitted use, and its appropriate disposal.

We are faced with legislative imperatives (Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Regulation of Investigatory Powers, Environmental Information Regulations, Copyright, Local Government Acts, etc.), and government standards (Government Meta-Data Standards, Code of Practice on the Management of Records Management, etc.) which have placed new obligations upon us with respect to the way we deal with the information we hold

We are also increasingly expected to be able to exploit the potential of corporate information assets and thereby demonstrate innovation, added value, and in some cases revenue generation.

We are faced with the requirements of initiatives relating to changing the way local government works, via the e-Government and Transformational Government agendas. ("Modern government ... relies upon accurate and timely information about citizens, businesses... and assets. Information sharing, management of identity and of geographical information, and information assurance are therefore crucial" - Transformational Government, Enabled by Technology, Cmnd6683, November 2005)

Lastly, but certainly not least, all of the above continue to combine to change and increase the expectations of our customers:

- That, irrespective of background and ability, they are able to access our services and information through their preferred mix of channel(s)
- that they experience the highest quality of service and provision of information when they make contact with us
- that no artificial boundaries exist between government/local government departments with respect to appropriate sharing of customer information
- that safeguards operate to ensure their information is appropriately used and secured

## Information Management Defined

Information Management is defined as the:

- People (stakeholders)
- Policies (the rules for managing information)
- Standards (the hierarchies of concepts allowing information to be stored and retrieved, and policy applied)
- Procedures (activities which apply the rules to the structures)
- Tools and Technologies (logical and physical aids to enforcing the policies, structures and procedures)

necessary to meet the information needs of the organisation.

Effective Information Management within an organisation manifests itself as:

- An information culture across the organisation
- An information architecture comprising:
  - o strategy and supporting policies and procedures
  - o standards
  - o supporting technical infrastructures

## Information Management Objectives

Our Strategy for Information Management is intended to enable us to achieve the following objectives:

- We need to know what we know and how to find it.
- We need to be able to provide the right information in the right format to the right people at the right time and in the right place.
- We wish to be able to exploit information effectively and efficiently, minimising versions of information that we keep, realising connections between facts held for different purposes, and dissolving boundaries between data, information, and knowledge.
- We want to realise maximum business potential from the information we hold. To do this entails moving from a view of information as a resource supporting local needs to that of it being a corporate resource.
- We need to have confidence in the information we use by ensuring it is fit for purpose.
- We want to promote openness and accountability (and be seen to be doing so).
- We need to have appropriate, effective and consistent controls to ensure information to which access must be controlled is protected against loss or compromise.
- We need to be able to manage information according to business need, policy, and law. To do so, we need to understand statutory controls concerning the management of information. We also need to understand and comply with policies of partners and communities. Policies, procedures, standards and tools all need to be comprehensible and made known to those who must use them.
- We need to be able share and exchange information efficiently with others in order to enable the delivery of public services without reference to conventional boundaries. In doing so we need to meet the challenges of ensuring meaning and consistency of such information, how it is transmitted and governed, and the mitigation and management of risk arising from sharing and exchange.
- We need to meet electronic and transformational government targets.
- We need to improve our responsiveness to requests for information.
- We need to be able to record information electronically where practicable, to ensure it can be stored, accessed and re-used in the most effective manner.
- We need to create an information culture.

### Realising the Objectives

Our Information Management Strategy will enable us to achieve our objectives by providing a framework supporting:

- the statement of principles supporting a 'one whole view' of Information Management, and the integration of those information management principles into business plans
- the development and implementation of appropriate and effective policies and procedures supporting those principles
- the identification, development and implementation of appropriate standards, tools and technologies to support those policies and procedures

To achieve this vision, we will expect all our staff to take responsibility for the effective management of information.

## Our Information Management Strategy

### Purpose

The overall purpose of this Information Management Strategy is the promotion of effective management and use of high quality information across the organisation, enabling us to achieve our objectives and thereby meet the challenges of the modern information age.

### Principles

Our Information Management Strategy supports the following principles:

- Information management systems should support business objectives and effective decision making at all levels whilst enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and customer experience of service delivery.
- Information should be regarded as a corporate resource. The lifecycle of that resource should be managed to ensure its quality and integrity, and thus its use with confidence.
- Staff, customers, members, partners and other stakeholders should be able to access information as they require it, subject to appropriate security and access policies
- Information should be managed in accordance with agreed policies, procedures, standards and statutory and regulatory requirements.
- All staff members should be responsible for the effective management of the information they create.

These principles support a vision of information held by us as being trusted, accessible and usable.

Trusted information is:

- one version, captured once, and reused
- of appropriate quality for purpose and action
- compliant with business need, policy and law
- protected from misuse or loss

Accessible information is:

- managed according to its worth
- available how, when and where needed
- shared and disclosed with confidence
- open and accountable

Usable information is:

- easy to find and deploy
- presented in context, in the best way possible
- used and understood by a trained workforce

## What we will do

We will develop and adopt appropriate and effective policies and associated procedures to support the principles of this Strategy and the vision of our information being trusted, accessible and usable.

We will identify, develop, and adopt appropriate standards and tools and technologies to support those policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures we adopt under this Strategy will address the following aspects of our management of information:

### Information Openness

Ensuring that:

- we understand the importance of information openness
- we meet the requirements of relevant legislation
- we are proactive in making information available
- we are able to identify, and rectify, non compliance with those requirements
- we actively maintain the council's Publication Scheme and Guide to Information

### Handling Requests for Information

Ensuring that:

- we understand how we will deal with requests for information
- we manage the potential engagement of legislation
- we understand and meet the requirements of relevant legislation
- we monitor and review performance in handling requests for information

### Personal Information Handling

Ensuring that:

- we comply with personal and corporate obligations imposed by legislation in relation to personal information
- we understand those obligations, and formally accept responsibilities arising from those obligations
- we have in place, and maintain, adequate arrangements for personal information security
- we know how we will deal with requests for personal information
- we monitor and review our performance in handling requests for personal information

### Information Accessibility

Ensuring that:

- we understand the importance of ensuring information accessibility
- information is easily discoverable by those entitled to access it
- we use 'plain' language and avoid jargon in all the information we publish
- the information we publish is accessible to those who consider themselves to have a disability
- we are able to demonstrate compliance with anti-discrimination legislation
- we are able to offer language variants of the information we publish, where appropriate
- our information is produced in standardised formats according to document type

## Information Quality

Ensuring that:

- information is captured accurately and consistently
- we are able to ensure the authenticity and reliability of information we capture
- the quality of information we hold is maintained during its life
- we create and keep records containing adequate information to record the accountability and evidence relating to our decisions and activities

## Information Standards

Ensuring that:

- we understand the importance of ensuring that the information we publish conforms to national and local standards
- adequate levels of classification are applied to the information we publish
- appropriate meta-data standards<sup>2</sup> are applied to information classification
- appropriate naming standards are used
- standard referencing schemes (e.g. people, addresses) are used
- information interchange standards<sup>3</sup> are used

## Information Retention and Disposal

Ensuring that:

- we conform to legal and statutory requirements and best practice
- we know how long we should keep information
- we do not keep information for longer than is necessary
- we dispose of our information in an appropriate and consistent manner
- we identify and archive information worthy of permanent preservation

## Information Security

Ensuring that:

- we understand the importance of information security
- our information is maintained with appropriate security
- we can transfer information with appropriate security
- our information is protected against destruction or loss
- we can assure business continuity during disaster recovery

## e-Mail as Information

Ensuring that:

- we recognise e-mail as information
- we can manage e-mail as information

## Information Sharing

Ensuring that:

- we know when information is being shared
- we know what information is being shared
- we have in place formal agreements to manage all aspects of such information sharing
- we can be open about what information sharing is taking place

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<sup>2</sup> Meta data standards are used to describe information about a document. Examples include author, version, status, review dates and retention periods.

<sup>3</sup> Information interchange standards describe how information should be exchanged between different organisations and bodies.

## Standards

The policies and procedures adopted under this Strategy will be informed by the following standards and codes of practice:

- The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records Under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act
- National Archives Records Management Standards
- ISO 15489 Records Management
- The Office of the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme
- The Records Management Society of Great Britain Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities
- Audit Commission Data Quality Standards 2007
- Government Connect Code of Connection – information security
- BS7666 - land and property referencing
- BS8766 - people referencing
- ISO27002 - information security
- e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) - information interchange
- e-Government Metadata Standards (e-GMS) - meta-data for information classification
- Integrated Public Services Vocabulary (IPSV) - vocabulary for information classification
- Local Government Classification Scheme (LGCS) – information classification
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) - web content accessibility
- BSI DISC PD 008 Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information stored on Electronic Document Management Systems

## Tools and Technologies

The policies and procedures adopted under this Strategy will inform requirements for the exploitation of tools and technologies to support:

- Information Search and Discovery
- Web Content Management
- Enterprise Information Management
- Knowledge Management
- Collaborative Working
- Information Classification
- Metadata Management
- Information Asset Register
- Publication Scheme
- Electronic Document and Records Management
- Customer Relationship Management
- Land and Property Referencing
- Electronic Forms
- Identity Management
- Single View of the Customer
- Document Image Processing and Management
- Workflow
- Flexible Working
- Awareness and Training

## Legislation

The policies and procedures adopted under this Strategy will be informed by the requirements of the following legislation:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Reuse of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1972
- Local Government Act 2000

## Awareness

We will exploit our existing internal communications channels to ensure that staff at all levels are made aware of the principles underlying our Information Management Strategy and the associated policies, procedures, standards and tools which we will develop and adopt in support of the Strategy.

We will use our established external communications channels to ensure that service users, stakeholders, and members of the public, are made aware of the principles underlying our Information Management Strategy.

## Responsibilities

Responsibility for the direction and monitoring of this Strategy ultimately rests with the Corporate Management Group.

Responsibility for executive action required by the Strategy will be the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Executive, supported by the Head of Service for Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and the Council's Information Officer.

All staff will be responsible for the successful management, in accordance with this Strategy, of the information they control.

All managers will be responsible for ensuring that people they manage are made aware of their responsibilities, for supporting those people in those responsibilities, and for ensuring those people are given access to appropriate training or guidance.

## Review

This Strategy will be reviewed annually.

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