



PENRYN Town Council

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE POLICY

Summary

This Information Governance (IG) policy provides an overview of the organisation's approach to information governance; a guide to the procedures in use; and details about the IG management structures within the organisation.

This policy covers Information Governance matters in relation to all of the information assets of Penryn Town Council (PTC).

The Council believes that accurate, timely and relevant information is essential to deliver the highest quality services. As such it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure and promote the quality of information and to actively use information in decision making processes.

There are four linked strands that run through good information governance:

- Openness/transparency
- Legal compliance
- Security
- Quality assurance

Non-confidential information about the Council and its services will be available to the public through a variety of procedures and media.

Service users and others will be given lawful access to information about themselves.

The Council will respect the common law of confidentiality, the right to privacy under the Human Rights Act, the principles and rights set out in the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act, and will follow as appropriate guidance given by the Information Commissioner and professional and other national bodies.

The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedures, guidance and training to ensure the effective and secure management of its information

assets and resources, including information about service- users and others, and about staff.

The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedures, guidance and training for information quality assurance and the effective management of information.

Context

Background

This policy acts as an umbrella policy over other policies relating to elements of Information Governance (IG) that provide more detail about how the different strands are managed within the Council. All of the other policies which fall into the various areas of IG; Confidentiality, Data Protection, Information Security, Freedom of Information, Information Lifecycle, etc, are traceable up to the IG Policy.

Information is a vital asset in terms of both the service the Council provides to customers, and the efficient management of services and resources. It plays a key part in corporate governance, service planning and performance management.

It is of paramount importance that information is effectively managed, and that policies, procedures, structures and accountabilities provide a robust framework for IG.

Objective

This IG policy provides an overview of the Council's approach to information governance; a guide to the procedures in use; and details about the IG management structures.

Scope

This policy covers IG matters in relation to all of the information assets of PTC. There are many types of information asset the Council is responsible for, including:

- **Information:** customer and service user databases, system documents and procedures, archived information etc.
- **Software:** Applications, system, development tools and utilities.
- **Physical:** Equipment such as PCs, laptops, PDAs, memory sticks, smart phones, information on paper (please see the Information Storage Policy for further details).

Anyone who processes information for the Council or on behalf of the Council must either abide by this policy or prove that they have equivalent policies in place.

Details

Policy Details

PTC recognises the need for an appropriate balance between openness and confidentiality in the management and use of information. The Council fully supports the principles of corporate governance and recognises its public accountability, but places equal importance on the confidentiality of, and the security arrangements to safeguard, both personal information about customers, service users and staff and commercially sensitive information. The Council also recognises the need to share information with outside organisations in a controlled manner consistent with the interests of its customers and service users and, in some circumstances, the public interest.

The Council believes that accurate, timely and relevant information is essential to deliver the highest quality services. As such it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure and promote the quality of information and to actively use information in decision making processes.

The above paragraphs reflect four linked strands that run through good IG:

- Openness/transparency
- Legal compliance
- Security
- Quality assurance

Openness

- Non-confidential information about the Council and its services will be available to the public through a variety of media;
- The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedure, guidance and training to ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act;
- Service users and others will be given ready access to information about their rights;
- Service users and others will be given lawful access to information about themselves;
- The Council will have clear procedures and arrangements for handling queries and complaints from service users and others;
- The Council will have clear procedures and arrangements for liaison with the press and other broadcasting media.

Legal Compliance

- The Council will respect the common law of confidentiality, the right to privacy under the Human Rights Act, the principles and rights set out in the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act, and will follow as appropriate guidance given by the Information Commissioner and professional and other national bodies;
- The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedures, guidance and training to ensure compliance with the above laws, rules and guidance;
- The Council regards all personal information about staff as confidential except where the public interest dictates otherwise.

Information Security

- The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedures, guidance and training to ensure the effective and secure management of its information assets and resources, including information about service users and others, and about staff;
- The Council will promote effective confidentiality and security practice among its staff through policies, procedures, guidance and training;
- The Council will establish and maintain incident reporting procedures and will monitor and investigate all reported instances of actual or potential breaches of confidentiality and security;
- The Council will establish and maintain business continuity procedures.

Information Quality Assurance

- The Council will establish and maintain policies, procedures, guidance and training for information quality assurance and the effective management of information;
- All staff have responsibility for the quality of information produced within their role;
- When possible the quality of information should be confirmed when it is received;
- Where possible common definitions, known as data standards will be set and used to support the sharing, exchange and comparison of information across the public sector.

Management

Policy management

The Town Clerk is responsible for overseeing day to day IG issues; developing and maintaining policies, standards, procedures and guidance, coordinating IG in the Council and raising awareness of IG.

The Town Clerk is responsible for managing corporate information risks.

All staff are responsible for ensuring they comply with the Information Governance Policy, Standards, Guidelines and Procedures.

Users accessing Council information are required to adhere to the Information Governance Policy, Standards, Guidelines and Procedures.

Breaches and non-compliance

Any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken. Serious breaches of this policy by Council employees will amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Where external service providers, agents or contractors breach the policy, this should be addressed through contract arrangements.

If you see a breach of this policy, you must report it using the Town Clerk.

How the impact of the policy will be measured

The Town Clerk will monitor compliance with the policy and performance with regard to information governance.

Potential risks will be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure this policy is kept up to date.

Evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as demanded by business need by legislation changes by the council.

Document information

Users should read this policy in conjunction with the following Council policies, procedures and guidance:

- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Press and Media Policy