

BARROW BOROUGH COUNCIL
INTERNAL AUDIT FINAL REPORT IT 75
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROCEDURES REVIEW

Executive Summary

Introduction

High profile data losses, system outages and project failures in both the public and private sectors have raised the need for comprehensive, documented, policies and procedures in order to create a robust and sustainable IT management system.

In order to protect itself, an organisation needs to have robust documented procedures describing its policies, security concepts, security safeguards, guidelines, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices, assurance and technologies. A well-documented control framework should provide a foundation from which to secure information systems and assets including connected computing devices, personnel, infrastructure, applications, services and the totality of transmitted and/or stored information. Well documented procedures can bring many benefits to an organisation including but not limited to:-

- providing risk mitigation to enforce and demonstrate compliance with legal, regulatory and best practice;
- providing a baseline for the service to be measured against and driving service improvements;
- providing operational efficiencies and consistency;
- assisting with change management; and
- providing operational resilience to reduce risks if key talent/expertise leave or become unavailable.

Audit Objectives

The audit was agreed with management as part of the 2020/21 IT Audit coverage. The main objective of the audit was to review the information security policies and procedures that have been adopted by the Council to deliver information technology services which support business needs and objectives.

The scope of the audit was discussed and agreed with the IT Manager before the audit commenced.

Key Points

Restricted Assurance

Two major issues

Five Important Issues

Audit Conclusion – *Restricted Assurance*

As a result of the audit we have concluded that whilst there are some information technology security areas covered by policy and procedure, significant weaknesses have been identified in the system of control and associated documentation, which put the system objectives at risk. We have identified two major issues, which relate to:

- accelerating the completion of the development of a coherent and managed suite of policies that form part of an overarching Information Security Management System; and
- ensuring all policies undergo the appropriate approval process to ensure they are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed.

We have also identified five important issues which concern:

- introducing a suitable review and/or approval process for procedural documentation to ensure the guidance is appropriate for the user and follows best practice;
- ensuring areas for which there are currently no policy or procedures are incorporated within the documentation set;
- ensuring all policies are compliant with the Council's Document Control policy using the standard format;
- creating and implementing a standard format for procedural documentation, to ensure all appropriate information is captured; and
- presenting policies and procedures to staff in a user-friendly and accessible way as part of a policy and procedure communication plan.

Management Response

We have received a constructive management response from the Corporate Support Manager, accepting each of the recommendations.

Acknowledgement

Internal Audit and MIAA would like to thank IT Services and other staff for their co-operation and assistance during the review.