Records Management Project – Proposal for Phase 2

Background

1. At its meeting on 26 February 2007, the Senior Management Team (SMT) requested that all offices review their retention schedules. In response, on 18 June 2007, the Information Manager presented SMT with a project proposal to develop a records management policy, audit all records and documents, produce a retention schedule for each office, work with offices to improve their filing structure and implement the policy procedures and guidelines to achieve good and consistent document, record and information management practices.

2. This was approved and became the records management project, phase 1, which ran from August 2007 to June 2009. It achieved, or is on schedule to achieve, all of its intended benefits. At the end of the project a report detailing key findings and making recommendations for further activity was prepared. This paper summarises that report and seeks OMG approval for phase 2. The full records management project final report, which has been signed off by the Head of Research, Information and Reporting, is attached at Annex A for reference.

Contact: Gordon Hobbs, Information Manager (86229)

Timing

3. Further progress requires OMG approval of the project proposal for phase 2 (Annex B).

Discussion

4. OMG is invited to comment on this paper and to approve the project proposal and development of a project initiation document for phase 2 of the records management project. The main findings and recommendations of phase 1 are summarised below.

Industry standards

The guiding principle of records management is to ensure that information is available when and where it is needed, in an organised and efficient manner, and in a well maintained environment. Existing SPCB record keeping practices do not currently align to the international standard ISO 15489 (ISO 15489 provides guidance on managing records of originating organisations) and do not yet comply fully with the FOISA code of practice on records management.

It is recommended that phase 2 of the project analyses how the SPCB can align to existing records management standards.
Document management
The current network drive structure is outdated and not fit for purpose. It is not conducive to information sharing due to its silo structure. The absence of corporate standards has resulted in haphazard folder structures and inconsistent naming, retention, and version control. Retrieval of information is therefore labour-intensive and costly, with no guarantee the most up-to-date information has been found. The shared drives are currently being used as both document and records repositories despite their not meeting the standards required for the storage and management of electronic records.

It is recommended that phase 2 of the project reviews shared drives against good practice and industry standards with a view to making recommendations concerning the setting up of a corporate shared solution which will improve information sharing and access.

Records management
Although we talk about keeping records we do not currently have the tools and processes in place to maintain the security, reliability and authenticity of these documents, nor provide protection from inappropriate access and usage and ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Electronic records are maintained alongside documents which are of no long-term value which increases the cost of maintenance of such documents.

It is recommended that phase 2 of the project investigate the potential to store electronic records, according to industry standards, in a central location to improve access and management. Technological solutions that would allow automated record keeping processes to be introduced should also be investigated.

The records management project identified areas where the SPCB could improve current practices to comply with the FOISA section 60 code of practice on records management.

It is recommended that phase 2 of the project investigate how the SPCB can fully adhere to the FOISA section 60 code of practice on records management.

Personal drives
Personal drives (H:\ drives) are intended to provide SPCB staff with an area to store information of a personal nature e.g. performance management documents, private documents and working drafts not yet ready for wider consumption. Access is therefore restricted to the staff member. This drive is not, and should not be, used to store corporate information; this is a significant risk to the SPCB since it renders information irretrievable for FOISA and other enquiries without the direct
involvement of the member of staff. However, the use of personal drives to store corporate information remains commonplace throughout the SPCB.

It is recommended that phase 2 investigate solutions to the reduction of reliance on personal drives for the storage of corporate information.

Email management
Microsoft Outlook is being used as a storage tool for key corporate information, when in fact it is a method of delivery. This creates an additional storage area, separates related material, causes confusion over where the most up to date version is held and poses the same risk as H:\drives rendering information irretrievable at a corporate level. The limited functionality of Outlook encourages poor record keeping practice and the manual processes required to remove email from this restricted environment to a corporate store are lengthy and complex.

It is recommended that phase 2 investigate solutions to the issues concerning email management identified in the records management project.

Resource Implications
5. As detailed in the project proposal, resource implications for phase 2 will be staff time. BIT and SPICe time is estimated at 120 days per office at a cost of £50,400. BIT estimate that an additional 40-50 days of Logica support may be required at a cost of £37,500. Following agreement from OMG to develop a PID, these estimates will be verified against the further detail which will be provided. Records management champions and Group and Office Heads will be consulted to inform solutions.

Dependencies
6. Success is dependent on top-down leadership and support from BIT and RM champions throughout the SPCB.

Equalities Implications
7. There are no direct equalities implications, but the SPCB records retention schedule and policy, procedures and guidance will continue to be developed with a clear awareness of potential equalities implications.

Publication Scheme
8. This paper can be published.

Next Steps
9. Subject to agreement from group members, this paper recommends that the Information Manager embark on phase 2 of the records management
project to investigate and make recommendations to resolve the issues highlighted in the final report.

**Decision**

10. OMG is invited to comment on this paper and approve the project proposal for phase 2 of the records management project.

**SPICe**  
**September 2009**