

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **28 April 2009**

Report by: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Scrutiny Review of Records Management**

Purpose of report: **To ask Cabinet to approve the response to the report of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee Review of Records Management.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee, and;**
- b) advise the County Council that, in considering the report of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council be recommended to welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee and to agree the response of the Director of Law and Personnel to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report.**

1. Financial implications

1.1 Many of the review's recommendations concern changes or improvements to processes and procedures to improve their effectiveness, using existing resources. As such these recommendations do not have direct financial implications.

1.2 The response to Recommendation 2 includes the appointment of a support post in order to ease the pressure of building management work on the Archives and Records service as a whole. This will be a priority for funding from within the Law & Personnel Directorate budget.

1.3 Recommendation 10 proposes the establishment of an additional post on a time-limited basis to enable additional work to be undertaken in key areas, many of which are identified in other recommendations. The Review Board made this recommendation on the basis of an "invest to save" approach, as investment in areas such as electronic document records management, digital storage and training now has the potential to generate savings and reduce the risk to the Council in future. In response to this recommendation, it is intended to make a bid for a two year post to the departmental underspend, which has resulted partly from efficiency savings and income generation by other back office services in the Directorate. .

1.4 Those other recommendations with financial implications, which require agreement across the County Council, will be considered in accordance with our corporate arrangements, as set out in the response and action plan.

2. Background

2.1 Records Management supports business efficiency and accountability across the Council. The Review provides a very useful analysis of our current work and cost effectiveness as well as highlighting future challenges and opportunities. It also emphasises the changing

context for records management nationally and internationally in terms of the use of technology to support the Service.

3. Response

3.1 The Scrutiny Review's conclusions and recommendations are all agreed. Some recommendations , can be taken forward by the Records Management Service alone.

3.2 Other recommendations recognise the corporate role of the Records Management Service and its links to work elsewhere. Recommendations 7 and 8, for example, link into the Electronic Document and Records Management work which is being pursued in a coordinated way by all departments. We would welcome the co-operation of departments in enabling Recommendation 5 to be achieved (record management 'champions'), as we see this as an essential element in ensuring best practice throughout the County Council, assisting the Records Management Service to work most effectively with departments.

3.3 The scrutiny review process, and in particular the benchmarking survey, has provided new contacts with similar services in other counties which will enable the exchange of ideas to continue in future.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Effective records management is crucial to the effectiveness of the County Council's work and its ability to meet legal requirements. Records and the information they contain are an important asset and should be managed with the same care as the County Council's other resources. The Scrutiny Review has provided a welcome opportunity to take stock of our systems and to draw together the forthcoming challenges and opportunities which need to be addressed.

ANDREW OGDEN
Director of Law and Personnel

Contact Officer: Elizabeth Hughes Tel: 01273 482356

The Scrutiny Review of Records Management - Draft Action Plan

Appendix 1

	Recommendation from Scrutiny Review	Response of Director	Timescale
1	Additional warehouse space will now be required for several years to come if the records management service is to be able to manage all modern records as intended and minimise the associated risks to the Council in this area. The Council needs to consider how this could be resourced, either corporately or through departmental budgets.	Agreed, although this will need to be pursued corporately.	March 2010
2	Repairs to the buildings should be prioritised in order to enable the use of currently empty shelf space and to reduce staff time, costs and risks associated with damaged records. In the longer term, alternative ways to manage the buildings should be investigated in order to avoid specialist records staff being diverted from their records management duties.	Agreed. There is an established procedure, co-ordinated by CRD Property Services, for prioritising finite corporate maintenance resources that take into account the needs of the service. Roof repairs to Units X and Z were carried out in 2008/09 and repairs to Units R and M will commence on site about June 2009. A support post for Archives and Records is being recruited to relieve pressures of buildings management on staff in both areas	July 2009
3	Secure carrying receptacles (e.g. security wallets) should be introduced for highly sensitive records in order to improve security of records in transit.	Agreed. Relevant classes of records will be identified in consultation with departments and wallets procured for these. Procedures for returning files to departments will be carried out according to the Data in Transit Policy.	September 2009
4	Records management should be included in staff induction and on-line records management training made available to all staff, supported by specific advice from the records management team as required.	Agreed. Discussions on the feasibility and funding of an online training package have been initiated.	March 2010
5	A network of departmental records management champions should be created. Each department should nominate a champion who will receive additional training from records management, promote good records management in their	Agreed. Such a network of champions is proposed in the work being undertaken by Adult Social Care and Children's Services departments, and overseen by the Information Governance Group.	March 2010

	Recommendation from Scrutiny Review	Response of Director	Timescale
	department and meet quarterly with other champions and records management staff to share good practice and promote consistency of approach.		
6	The Records Management service should undertake the National Archives self-assessment process, prioritising the modules so that those likely to be of most benefit are undertaken first.	Agreed. The modules on records management function and records disposal have been prioritised for this year	2 modules per year
7	The Council should continue to take a proactive approach to the introduction of EDRM and scanning technology in order to realise the medium and long term benefits, but should be aware that this will not relieve pressure on systems for managing paper records in the short term.	Agreed. A corporate scanning feasibility study is nearing completion which evaluates the case for back-scanning and day-to-day scanning and considers the best model for scanning. See also comments under recommendation 8.	Ongoing Scanning report April 2009 Additional report on central scanning bureau September 2009
8	There should be a mechanism for ensuring a co-ordinated corporate approach to EDRM once the EDRM pilot project concludes.	Agreed. This is being pursued corporately through the E-Government Steering Group.	EDRM toolkit June 2009 Deployment plan September 2009
9	The records management team needs to increase its work with departments now to ensure that the same standards of records management are applied to e-records systems as are currently applied to paper records. Ways to free up staff time to undertake this role must be identified as a priority.	Agreed. This is linked to recommendation 10.	June 2009
10	On an 'invest to save' basis, resources for a time-limited additional post should be considered. This would recognise the demands of the 'transitional' period when EDRM is	Agreed. A bid will be made against the departmental underspend for a post for two years.	Decision July 2009

	Recommendation from Scrutiny Review	Response of Director	Timescale
	being established at the same time as the paper records workload must also continue to be managed. The post should enable increased provision of advice and input to departments on the introduction of EDRM, the revision of retention schedules and offer training for staff.		
11	The specific charges made to departments should be reviewed with a view to using these to incentivise good records management and to relieve pressure on the records centre.	Agreed. The success of any incentive will need to be balanced against any increase in the bureaucracy of an internal charging regime. This will be considered corporately by the Council's senior finance team.	September 2009
12	The potential savings and feasibility of a single corporate or multi-organisation contract for destruction of confidential waste should be explored.	Agreed	September 2009
13	Costs of private sector provided records management should be investigated to determine whether ESCC's current charges to external clients are set at an appropriate level.	Agreed.	June 2009