

Information Management Assessment: progress report February 2011

Background

The National Archives carried out an Information Management Assessment of the Department for Transport Centre (DfT(C)) in June 2009. In August 2010 a report of the findings was published containing 36 recommendations. These formed the basis of the department's action plan.

On 24 February 2011 The National Archives formally reviewed DfT(C)'s progress against the action plan. This report is an assessment of our main findings.

Summary

There is demonstrable ongoing commitment to, and support for, good information management (IM) and recognition of the benefits it can bring. The lead shown by the Head of the General Counsel's Office has been effective in keeping the profile of IM high, through the work of the 'Better Records Management' project and the 'Knowledge and Information Management Strategy' project workstreams. There is evidence of the creation of tools to educate staff, and to monitor and support information management objectives. Despite the impact of the recent restructuring programme, staff movements and realignment of services, good information management remains a priority. The departmental records officer (DRO) and head of KIM report directly to the senior information risk owner (SIRO), which has a positive impact.

Other progress includes a staff awareness programme on information and record management, supported by leaflets and training sessions. In addition, the record management contract and service level agreement with Department for Communities and Local government (CLG) has been strengthened to better reflect DfT(C) needs.

IMA review 2009

The IMA highlighted areas of good practice within the department. With the Permanent Secretary's support, DfT(C) was showing evidence of a robust information assurance process. There was clear communication to staff about effective data handling and information assurance. This firm basis was used to embed sound information management policies and procedures across the organisation. The commitment of the lead Director General and senior management was central to this. The development of a KIM strategy was under way and the cultural change needed to embed effective information management was recognised.

The IMA highlighted the following areas that the department needed to focus on to ensure the required cultural and procedural changes are addressed:

- The SIRO at Director General-level has responsibility for the governance of information management in DfT. However, the department should formally identify a records and information management champion and strategic lead at board level.
- DfT(C) should identify and mitigate the relevant corporate information management risks. Once identified, these need to be managed and high-level risks placed on the corporate risk register.

- DfT(C) should ensure consistency when deciding what information has business value. At the time, users were keeping everything or very little on the formal systems.
- Middle managers generally did not understand the need for effective management of information. Several middle managers delegated all information management tasks to their staff and failed to lead by example. Middle managers need to be seen to be valuing and managing their information.
- The DfT(C) business record officer (BRO) role, although important, was often filled by junior grades, which limited their authority to enforce good records management practice. Many were limited to requesting the creation of both paper and electronic files. There was little evidence of BROs being involved in general records management issues.

Progress against recommendations

The Permanent Under-Secretary has championed KIM at board level and has provided leadership and strategic vision for DfT(C). Currently, the department is in a similar position to other central government departments that are undergoing an extensive restructure in terms of services provided, staff numbers and relationships with its arms length bodies and agencies. To embed the new structure electronic records storage options have been rationalised with work carried out on access permissions to shared areas and the introduction of new processes that make saving information more efficient. Other main areas of progress include:

- information risk has been identified, assessed and added to the corporate risk register
- the records management contractual arrangements with CLG have been revised and strengthened. The records management policy now clearly establishes responsibilities for both DfT(c) and CLG
- the KIM strategy will gain board approval in March 2010. The implementation of the KIM strategy is being supported and managed through a series of work streams and the 'Better RM' project. Both are led by senior managers
- the role of the BRO is being redefined to address the need for a more efficient, skilled and supported network. A specific BRO toolkit to support BROs and their managers has been produced
- the annual audit checks for Private Office records are now integrated within the department's information assurance management exercise.

Next steps

DfT(C) has continued to address the ways in which good knowledge and information management can support the department in a changing and challenging business environment. Senior managers have demonstrated a high level commitment to KIM. The interrelationship between information assurance and information management is being understood by management and made clear throughout the organisation. The introduction of BRO and KIM skill requirements and the evolving support networks being introduced will provide the structure to create the changes needed.

The next steps are as follows:

- The completion of the new IT strategy, which will establish how the department's IT systems and technologies support efficient and effective information management practice.
- DfT(C) to continue to work on defining appropriate retention schedules for electronic records and ensuring that they are applied, with a clear communication plan in place to advise staff when a record is created, and when the retention period becomes effective.
- DfT(C) to continue to work with The National Archives to Identify and gain agreement for a senior responsible owner for all aspects of digital continuity. To include, digital continuity risk profile for DfT(C) and integration with the ongoing information assurance programme.
- DfT(C) to continue to strengthen and support the BRO network to enable them to become an invaluable IM resource.

Once structural changes are embedded, DfT(C) will have positioned itself to more effectively record, store, access and reuse its information in support of current and future business priorities. DfT have the components in place to become a KIM exemplar for government.

Performance management framework

Risk matrix

Governance and leadership	IMA	February 2011
Strategic management		
Business objectives		
Management controls		
Resourcing		
Risk management		

Records management

Creation		
Storage		

Appraisal, disposal and transfer		
Sustainability of digital records		
Management		

Access

FOI/Data Protection		
Re-use		
Security		

Compliance

Staff responsibilities and delegations		
Policies and guidance		
Training		
Change management		

Culture

Commitment		
Staff understanding		
Knowledge management		