

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 25 MARCH 2010

INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW OF DATA HANDLING UPDATE

REPORT BY TREASURER, CHIEF CONSTABLE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Introduction

1. At the last meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee, members considered the Interim Annual Internal Audit Report from the Chief Internal Auditor. This report summarised the results of internal audit work undertaken during the first half of the year (2009-10), including the completed computer audit review of data handling. The Committee requested a report be presented to the next meeting to detail progress being made by the Force to address identified weaknesses within data handling.

Review of Data Handling

- 2.1 The review of data handling was undertaken in August 2009 and concluded that only limited assurance could be placed on the effectiveness of the control environment. Although a number of good security controls and policies were in place, opportunities to improve controls in a number of areas were identified. The following issues were identified:
 - Many of the policy and guidance documents are in need of review to reflect recent changes in regulation and technology.
 - There is currently still an operational need to continue the use of backup tape volumes carrying unencrypted data, some of which are transported in insecure containers.
 - In view of the number of security-related documents in existence, it would be beneficial if the Force Information Security Policy (or a separate overarching document) were to be updated to make reference to the other policy and guidance documents in appropriate areas.
 - Some backup media is currently stored in rooms over which IS do not have sole control, thus potentially weakening security.
 - No formal policy for the retention of archival data has been developed and approved. This could potentially lead to breaches of the Data Protection Act and other regulations.
 - Greater use of password-protected screensavers could be made, and at present there are a number of laptops whose default closure modes enable them to be restarted without the requirement to enter the boot password.
- 2.2 To date, of the 14 recommendations made, seven have now been fully implemented, six are being progressed within agreed timescales and one recommendation has been rejected. All outstanding recommendations have been programmed to be fully completed by July 2010 with the exception of the development and implementation of a corporate records management policy which is due to be completed by December 2010.
- 2.3 Issues raised in respect of policy guidance and documentation have now been addressed and secure storage has been implemented for transportation of back up media. Access to storage of back up media is now secure and media

cabinets are now kept locked. The recommendation relating to password-protected screensavers and amending the default closure of laptops was rejected and reliance is being placed on raising awareness of officers with regards to secure use of laptops.

Sussex Police Response

- 3.1 Sussex Police recognise the importance of good data handling practices and welcome both the review and its recommendations. While it is recognised that there is still some work required to complete implementation of the recommendations, significant progress has already been made and the remaining tasks necessary are planned and on target.
- 3.2 The recommendation around enforcement of password-protected screensavers was carefully considered but rejected due to concerns around staff performance and environmental impact.

Conclusion

4. Internal Audit follow up work will be undertaken in the 2010-11 internal audit plan to verify all actions taken and the Committee will be further updated on the status of recommendations made.

RECOMMENDED – That a further progress report setting out the status of any outstanding recommendations will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

RICHARD HORNBY
Treasurer

MARTIN RICHARDS
Chief Constable

JOHN GODFREY
Chief Executive

Contact: Gavin Jones, Chief Internal Auditor,
Tel: 01243 82132
E-mail: gavin.jones@westsussex.gov.uk