

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTION NO. 1

Mr Wellum to ask the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee:

Openness and Transparency with Council Data

There is an Internal Audit report titled "Transparency Code" published 1/10/2020. Internal Audit found weaknesses, and that the weaknesses had provoked avoidable freedom of information requests from the public. Internal Audit made recommendations.

In July 2021 the authority provided links to Government Procurement Card spend files - one of the key datasets that Government recommend for all local authorities to publish.

Who is the officer (position) in the authority responsible for the systems, including a timetable, to ensure that recommended datasets are published timeously?

REPLY by Councillor Stevens (Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee):

Thank you for your question, Mr Wellum.

The October 2020 Audit identified some issues with publication of data under the Transparency Code, as some information was out of date or missing key information.

Following the Audit recommendations, work was undertaken by the Information Governance Team to update the RBC Website and include a specific page for the Transparency Code. This was completed in July 2021. The Data Protection Officer led this work. This work is overseen by the Information Governance Board which is chaired by the Monitoring Officer.

The Board has asked Internal Audit to review the contents of the page and provide feedback to the Board and IG Team that the audit recommendations have been completed.

The Information Governance Team has produced an internal policy which provides for the updating of the material on these pages. This is will be finalised in October once it has been reviewed by Board members.

A number of Officers have been identified as the systems/data owners and will be responsible for keeping the Transparency pages updated.

Information Governance Team will be responsible for carrying out quarterly checks of the pages to ensure compliance with the policy and they will keep the Board appraised of any further issues.

The Information Governance Board will complete an annual review of the policy to ensure that any organisational or personnel changes have been accounted for and that the accountabilities in the policy are up to date and the information has been published in accordance with the policy.