

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance Services - Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	Elected Mayor - Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	8 October 2025
Title:	Information Strategy 2025 - 2029
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report.

Proposed decision(s)
That the Executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROVES the Information Strategy 2025-29.

Executive summary
<p>This report sets out a proposed Information Strategy for the Council, following completion of the previous strategy.</p> <p>The report sets out that an effective information strategy is crucial for ensuring that data is handled efficiently, securely, and in a way that supports the Council's Strategic priorities. This report outlines the key reasons why having a robust information strategy is essential for complex organisations and proposes that the draft Information Strategy is adopted by the Council.</p> <p>The report sets out the vision for information articulated in the Strategy which is that 'the right information will be available to the right users, at any time, accessible and used ethically to support achievement of the Council Plan.'</p>

The report structures the Strategy around three themes:

- Good Data management
- Ethical use and reuse of data
- Use of data to transform.

Progress against the Strategy will be reported on an annual basis within the annual SIRO report and overseen by the Information Strategy Officer working group.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed Information Strategy for the Council. In today's fast-paced and data-driven world, complex organisations face the challenge of managing vast amounts of information. An effective strategy for information management is crucial for ensuring that data is handled efficiently, securely, and in a way that supports the Council's Strategic priorities. This report outlines the key reasons why having a robust information strategy is essential for complex organisations and proposes that the draft Information Strategy, attached to this report at Appendix 1, is adopted by the Council.

1.2 A Member decision is required as it within the Mayor's remit to agree a strategy that will drive the Council's approach to the management of its information.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	Delivery of this strategy will positively support these ambitions by ensuring the Council is able to transform the way we deliver public services, ensuring they are more efficient, responsive, and tailored to the needs of residents.
A healthy Place Safe and resilient communities	Delivering activity which will ensure the Council's data is fit for purpose, ethically used and able to be used to improve and transform service delivery, will directly support compliance with the elements of the Best Value Statutory Duty, set out below:
Delivering best value	



2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive:

- **APPROVES** the Information Strategy 2025-29.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 Having a strategy in place to manage information effectively is vital for a complex organisation. It enhances decision-making, improves operational efficiency, ensures data security and compliance, facilitates collaboration, and supports innovation and growth. Prioritising information management will enhance the ability of the Council to achieve the Council Plan objectives.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 This is the second Information Strategy developed by the Council and it builds on the progress made in the previous Strategy.

4.2 This Strategy will act as the basis for efforts to improve and exploit information for the benefit of Middlesbrough and its residents within an ethical framework.

4.3 This Strategy closely interlinks with the Council's emerging Digital Strategy and Transformation Strategy. Both of which will rely on information being held appropriately to enable improved services to customers to be delivered.

4.4 An effective Information Strategy will deliver the following benefits:

- Enhanced decision making by ensuring accurate and timely decisions are taken, using excellent data and intelligence
- Improved operational efficiency through use of efficient information management to support activity to transform and streamline services through the Council's transformation programme and business as usual performance management
- Ensuring good data security and compliance with information governance legislation, regulations and standards
- Improving the Council's ability to use data to drive innovation.

4.5 The Information Strategy, appended to this report at Appendix 1, sets out:

- The legislative, regulatory and governance framework that the Strategy will operate within
- The vision of the strategy, which is that 'the right information will be available to the right users, at any time, accessible and used ethically to support achievement of the Council Plan.'
- The current position of the plan and its ambitions over the next four years
- The key principles that underpin the Strategy which are derived from government's seven information principles for the public sector
- The strategic objectives of the strategy, around which activity will be structured:
 - Good Data management
 - Ethical use and reuse of data
 - Use of data to transform.

4.6 Following adoption of this Strategy, progress against this Strategy will be overseen by the existing Information Strategy working group which comprises representatives from ICT and Information Governance and is chaired by the Senior Information Risk Owner

(SIRO). This group will develop and deliver a detailed implementation plan for the key actions identified in the strategy. Progress against this Strategy will be reported annually within the Annual SIRO report to Audit Committee.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable to this report.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The Council could choose to operate without a strategy, however codifying its activities against a stated vision provides the best chance of achieving that vision and improving outcomes for the residents and businesses of Middlesbrough.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	The strategy, during the life of its implementation, may result in financial impacts as the detailed delivery plan is developed and individual decisions are implemented. Where this is the case, those decisions will be brought forward and taken through the Council's decision making processes to ensure the financial impact is fully understood and considered.
Legal	The purpose of this Strategy is to ensure ongoing compliance with the Council's legal obligations in relation to information management, implementation of measures to support good practice in relation to data protection and records management
Data Protection	
Risk	Implementation of the Strategy will positively contribute towards management of the following risk within the Strategic Risk Register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (SRR 13) If the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements are not fit for purpose and appropriate action is not taken to rectify this at pace, this could result, censure from the Council's auditors within a public interest report that would damage the Council's reputation and/or in government formal intervention including removal of powers from officers and members and direction of council spend.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	Implementation of the Strategy will positively impact on the Council's ability to demonstrate compliance with its obligations in this area through delivery of the theme within the Strategy focussed on ensuring data is ethically used and re-used.
Reducing Poverty	Effective implementation of the Strategy will support the organisation to be better able to use its data to understand its communities and individuals, enabling to identify where
Climate Change / Environmental	

Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	targeted interventions can be made to improve outcomes. It will also improve the quality of policy making by ensuring policy authors use data driven insights to design and implement their policies in these areas.
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Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Publication of the Strategy	Head of Governance, Policy and Information	31 August 2025
Provide a first report on the Strategy within the next annual report of the Senior Information Risk Owner to Audit Committee	Head of Governance, Policy and Information	30 September 2025

Appendices

1	Information Strategy 2025 - 2029
2	Impact Assessment level 1

Background papers

Not applicable.

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