

FOI Implementation Steering Committee Minutes

November 15th 2007

In Attendance

- Mrs. Janet Chisholm – Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports, and Culture
- Mr. Christopher Eakin - Immigration Department
- Ms. Tamara Ebanks – Ministry of Communications, Works & Infrastructure
- Ms. Linda Evans - Portfolio of Internal & External Affairs
- Mrs. Carole Excell – Freedom of Information Unit
- Mr. Mike Johnston – Portfolio of the Civil Service
- Ms. Yvette McLaughlin – Ministry of Tourism
- Mrs. Cornelia Olivier- Government Information Services
- Ms. Tamara Selzer – National Archive
- Mrs. Wanda Tatum – District Administration

Apologies for absence

- Mr. Jan Liebaers – National Archive
- Mr. Samuel Rose – Ministry of Tourism

Non- Attendance

- Mr. Richard Barton – Portfolio of Legal Affairs
- Mr. Orrett Connor- Cabinet Office
- Ms. Angelique Crowther - Ministry of District Administration, Planning, Agriculture & Housing
- Mr. Gilbert McLaughlin – Computer Services
- Mr. Tim Hubbell – Cabinet Office
- Ms. Kimberly Huggins – Ministry of Educations, Training, Employment, Youth, Sport, and Culture
- Mrs. Jacqueline Jefferson-Ziemniak – Portfolio of Finance and Economics
- Mr. Daniel Rattan – Ministry of Health and Human Services
- Ms. Jo Richards – Portfolio of Civil Service
- Mr. Mark Tibbetts – Cayman Airways

Welcome and approval of minutes / action items

Mrs. Carole Excell began the meeting by reviewing the most recent minutes of all the subcommittees. Grammatical adjustments were amended in the minutes, which were then approved.

The Committee members were asked if they reported to their department heads about the progress made in FOISC. This is crucial because Chief Officer and Heads of Department need to be updated regularly.

The draft implementation plan has been sent out to the public and is placed on the FOI website awaiting consultation and comments. Some public authorities still may not understand the law, indicating that training and sensitization need to be consistent.

Terms of Reference

The communication subcommittee processed the questionnaire provided to civil servants during sunshine week. The comments ranged from liking the idea of a transparent government, to completely disagreeing with the principles underlying the freedom of information law. The results indicate that with support a cultural shift can occur.

The requirement to provide guidance on how to protect whistle blowers (part of FOISC terms of reference) has not been assigned to any sub-committee. Although the FOI Unit will create a draft document, the document requires review and comment. It was suggested that the Legal Sub-Committee consider their role in preparing this guidance document.

Report to Cabinet Outline amendments

Suggestions were made to adjust the quarterly report to be presented in cabinet. These included

- A paragraph summarizing activities conducted by each public authority.
- Updating the status of the IT and Legal subcommittee work
- A progress plan based against the implementation plan
- Updates of risk and mitigation measures.

A suggestion was made to circulate the quarterly report to Chief Officers first, prior to presenting to cabinet. The committee agreed upon this approach.

Communications and Public Participation Subcommittee

The head from the committee spoke about the recent events conducted by the subcommittee. These included, planning for FOI sunshine week, adding international consultants Ms. Laura Neuman's PowerPoint presentation into future sensitization training, creating a new slogan "your government your business" and processed questionnaires passed out during sunshine week.

Implementation planning Subcommittee

The committee reviewed a report on the Chief Officer and Head of Department briefings. In all 200 senior staff members have obtained some sort of sensitization training.

The subcommittee is attempting to resolve the issue of what files are considered the property of the United Kingdom. The committee will work in accordance with the National Archive Law that defines how the Governor shall organize his records.

The committee decided to hold another heads of department briefing for those public authorities who did not attend the previous meeting. The committee also is reviewing the process of selecting the Information Commissioner and analyzing the work plan to create a risk log.

IT Subcommittee

A committee member reviewed the activities that the subcommittee had undertaken. The subcommittee reviewed different perspectives on which IT tracking system to choose. One perspective was to create an in-house tracking system. The committee has also looked at six other countries tracking systems. The committee reviewed the cost of implementing the system, cost of training employees and the specific technical requirements of the Cayman Islands Government.

The committee also discussed how to create an e-publication scheme, which public authorities could use as a template to prepare for addition to the www.gov.ky website.

Legal Committee

The legal subcommittee is reviewing their current terms of reference. The committee is working on reviewing the laws of the Cayman Islands to determine what laws conflict with the FOI Law.

The Committee is also reviewing the process of charging fees for a FOI request, defining personal information and third party rights under the regulations.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for January 17th 2008.