

Minutes of the Freedom of Information Steering Committee

June 23, 2008

Present:

Mrs. Carole Excell, FOI Unit

Mr. Michael Johnston, POCS

Ms. Cornelia Olivier, GIS

Mrs. Wanda Tatum, District Admin

Ms Tammi Selzer, CINA

Apologies:-

Mr. Christopher Eakin, Immigration

Attendance at meetings

It was noted that attendance at FOISC meetings had dropped dramatically. Persons had been selected by their Chief Officers to attend this meeting and were not turning up even though there was only 6 months left before implementation. It was discussed whether this was due to the notice in advance of the meeting but it was noted that FOISC is usually held every third Thursday of the month. Other thoughts were whether the right people were on the committee or whether FOISC was meeting too frequently. It was noted by Mrs. Excell that with 6 months to go we could not be meeting too frequently with one meeting per month. Persons were asked to send a deputy if they could not attend. It was noted that it is accountability time, the phase of the project that public authorities have to do the greatest amount of work. It was suggested that there should be a theme for each meeting and the agenda sent out in advance.

Chief Officers Retreat

This has been changed to the 9th of July. There will also be a retreat for Ministers and an Information Managers Meeting. A representative from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative will be presenting at this retreat.

IM Training.

2 courses have been held so far with one due in July. A news release was printed on the training.

Sensitization training

This will be re-started in July. CD's have been distributed to Information Managers once they completed the course. Ms. Tammi Selzer agreed to provide feedback on her in-house training.

Redaction

It was noted that we should not suggest that IM's use Adobe Acrobat professional to redact electronic documents as it may be reversed by the applicant. We are to await specific guidance from CINA.

Electronic letters

It was noted that the standard response letters to be used by IM's should be available electronically. An IM work page should be included on the FOI website and have this information. It was noted that this would also be in the electronic tracking system.

Information Commissioner

The action plan is to be updated for the appointment process to commence. Coordination will be required around appropriate dates. We await word that the Regulations have been passed in the LA.

FOI (General) Regulations

These Regulations have been drafted and finalized. Some minor amendments need to be done before they are sent to Cabinet.

Cabinet Report – July

It was discussed what should be in this report from FOISC:-

- Information Commissioner selection process
- Attendance at FOISC meetings
- Focus Group report
- Information Mangers Training and Records management training
- Sensitization Sessions

Committee members discussed what the repercussions are for public authorities who do not prepare for FOI. It was noted that this would be reflected in

(1) Performance Assessments of Chief and principal officers

(2) Information Commissioners powers to take actions against public authorities

It was noted that there had been a request for the FOISC Cabinet reports by a member of the media. The FOI Unit is to speak to the Cabinet Secretariat as to the release of these reports.

It was noted that there were some public authorities that are actively putting in place systems for FOI; Immigration already has a section on their website for FOI.

For the next meeting on the agenda should be:

- Results of Focus Group
- Cabinet Report

The next meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2008 at the Eastern Conference Room from 10:00-12:00.