

Report to:	MSMTM
Report by:	Helen Gardner-Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS)
Meeting Date:	8 March 2024
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Scottish Information Commissioner's Publication Scheme Assurance Report 2023-24 VC203440
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	None

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this Committee Report (CR) is to provide assurance that the Scottish Information Commissioner (the Commissioner) is publishing and making accessible as much information as possible, as required by law, in line with the Commissioner's policy and as required by the governance reporting arrangements.

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend
 - (i) the Senior Management Team (SMT) notes the CR and the assurance provided in paragraph 14
 - (ii) this CR is published in accordance with paragraph 22

Executive summary

3. The Commissioner has adopted the Model Publication Scheme (MPS).
4. The HOCS has management responsibility for the publication and maintenance of the Commissioner's Publication Scheme and the GTI and ensuring that the Commissioner's GTI complies with updates of the MPS (last updated in March 2021).
5. The Commissioner's GTI
 - is published on the Commissioner's website
 - allows anyone to see what information is available (and what is not available) in relation to each class
 - states what charges may be applied
 - explains how to find the information easily
 - provides contact details for enquiries and to get help with accessing the information
 - explains how to request information that has not been published
6. Key Documents are reviewed, as far as possible, in line with the approved review dates and the SMT consider the list of reviews that are outstanding, due and not completed every 2 months.

7. In the GTI, Class 3 (How we take decisions and what we have decided), we publish agenda, Committee Reports (and related papers) and minutes of the SMT meetings where we do not need to withhold information on the basis of the relevant exemptions either in the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 or in the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.
8. The Committee Report (CR) template includes a publication section and a recommendation on publication is being used for all committee reports. This means that decisions about whether to publish information related to matters considered at meetings of the SMT are taken at the point of making the decision and not after the decision.

Governance Reporting Arrangements

9. The Key Document C1 Governance Reporting Arrangements (GRA) requires the HOCS to provide assurance that the Commissioner is publishing and making accessible as much information as possible, in line with the Commissioner's published good practice.

Website accessibility

10. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 ('the Regulations') set out requirements regarding website accessibility and the Regulations provide that all public sector bodies must publish an Accessibility Statement that explains how accessible their website is. The Commissioner's Website Accessibility Statement can be viewed here: [Accessibility | Scottish Information Commissioner \(itspublicknowledge.info\)](https://www.scottishinformationcommissioner.gov.uk/itspublicknowledge/info)
11. We conduct regular reviews of the documentation on our website, part of that review will ensure that all future versions of PDFs on our website will be assessed for accessibility before publication.
12. Some of our older PDFs, published before 23 September 2018, do not meet accessibility standards. The Regulations do not require us to fix PDFs or other documents published before 23 September 2018 if those documents are not essential to providing our services. It is not planned to fix these until these documents are subject to our regular reviews. This does not impact users' ability to access our services and all of these documents are available in different formats on request.
13. As we move forward, our aim is that all new PDFs or Word documents will meet accessibility standards.

Assurance

14. I am able to provide the following assurance:
 - we are publishing and making accessible as much information as possible in line with our published policies and procedures
 - the GRA requirements regarding assurance are met by way of this CR
 - the related objectives in the Operational Plan 2023-24 relating to the maintenance of a compliant publication scheme and guide to information and, also, assurance reporting have been achieved.

Risk impact

15. This annual review and assurance report are controls in place to ensure that the impact of the operational risk relating to the failure to monitor and review our publication scheme is mitigated.

Equalities impact

16. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this review.

Privacy impact

17. There is no privacy impact arising from this review.

Resources impact

18. There is no resource impact arising from this review.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

19. None arising from this report.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

20. None arising from this report.

Consultation and Communication

21. MSMTM minute.

Publication

22. This CR should be published in full.