Report to: **Audit and Governance Committee**

Date of Meeting 29 January 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Information Governance Board Annual Report

Report summary:

To provide an update on the work of the Information Governance Board.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget   Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework   Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Committee note the annual report.

Reason for recommendation:

The Information Governance Board was set up by the Audit and Governance Committee to have oversight of information governance across the Council. It is important that the Committee receive a yearly update on the work of the Committee.

Officer: Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance melanie.wellman@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply)**:**
☐ Assets and Economy
☐ Communications and Democracy
☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
☐ Environment - Operational
☐ Finance
☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; This is an annual update report only so there are limited risks arising.

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

☐ A supported and engaged community
☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. The Information Governance Board was set up by the Audit and Governance Committee in 2024 to fulfil the following functions:-

   - Developing an Information Governance strategy and monitoring its effective delivery
   - Identifying and managing information risks
   - Maintaining an Information Asset Register and Record of Processing Activity and supporting associated data asset owners
   - Oversight of information sharing arrangements
   - Receiving reports of information data breaches and security incidents and identifying and implementing areas for improvement
   - Receiving and monitoring the Councils performance in responding to Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulation and subject access requests
   - Monitoring the Council's Transparency Code compliance
   - Monitoring trends in relation to requests for information
   - Producing an annual report to the Executive Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee on the work of the Board.

2. The members of the Board are:

   - Senior Information Risk Owner ,
   - Information Governance Manager and Data Protection Officer,
   - Portfolio Holder for Data Protection,
   - Chair of Audit and Governance Committee
   - Lead for Corporate HR,
   - Representative of Strata,
   - Lead for Corporate Communications and IT

3. Since July 2024 the Committee have met on five occasions as follows:-

Date of meeting	Work carried out
25 July 2024	The Board considered the following:- 1. Terms of Reference for the Information Governance Board 2. Updated Data Protection Policy 3. Confidential update on DWP Memorandum of Understanding 4. Update on corporate data retention and data classification 5. Reviewed outcome of internal audit of Information Governance Policies and Compliance with Retention Policy

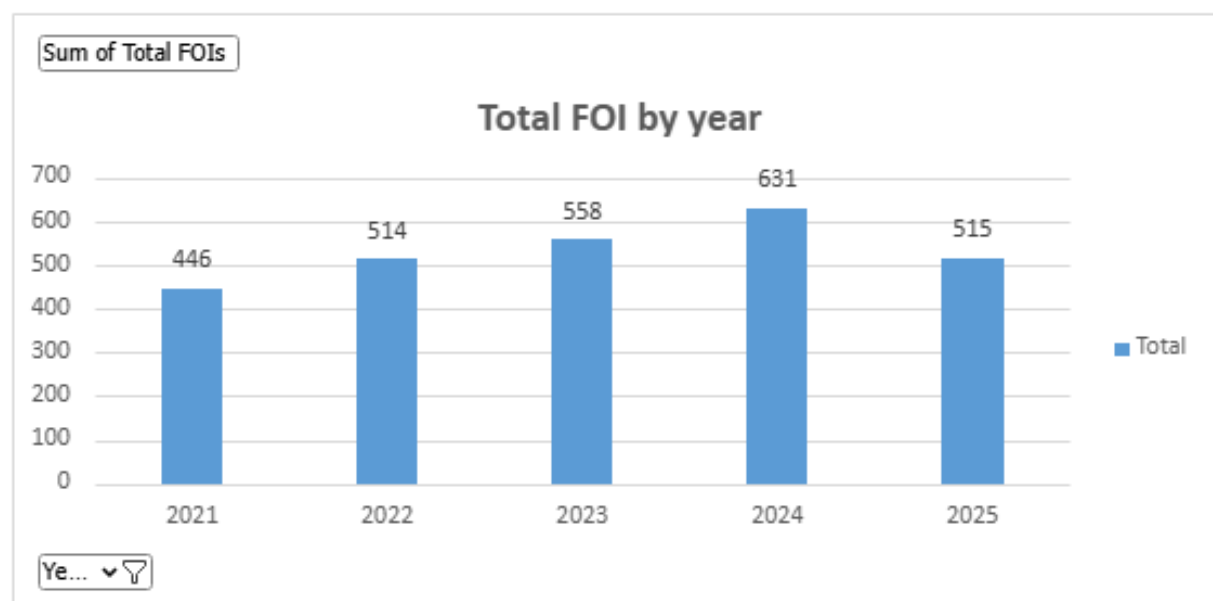|	
	6. Updated on security incidents 7. Updated on Freedom of Information, Subject Access requests and Data breaches 8. Approved the Forward Plan for the Board
22 January 2025	The Board considered the following:- 1. Plans for a new Information Governance Strategy and the implications of Local Government Reorganisation 2. Updated on work on the Information Asset Register 3. Updated on the Council's Information Sharing Agreements 4. Data breaches and security breaches update 5. Update on subject access requests 6. An update on Transparency Code compliance and an audit that was due to take place 7. An update on a confidential Information Governance related audit that had taken place 8. An update on progress in relation to the Boards Froward Plan

8 April 2025	The Board considered the following:-
	
	1. An update on Freedom of Information requests and subject access requests and were introduced to the newly appointed Interim Information Governance Manager
	2. Reviewed and requested changes to:-
	  a) Freedom of Information Policy 2025 – 2030
	  b) Information Governance and Risk Policy 2025-2030
	  c) Records Management Policy 2025 – 2030
	  d) Subject access policy and procedure 2025-2030.
	3. Updated on Cyber Assessment Framework
	4. Updated on Security Incidents
	5. Agreed the Forward Plan for meetings

8 August 2025	The Board considered the following:- 1. Updated Information Governance Policies and requested changes to: • Data Protection Policy • Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy

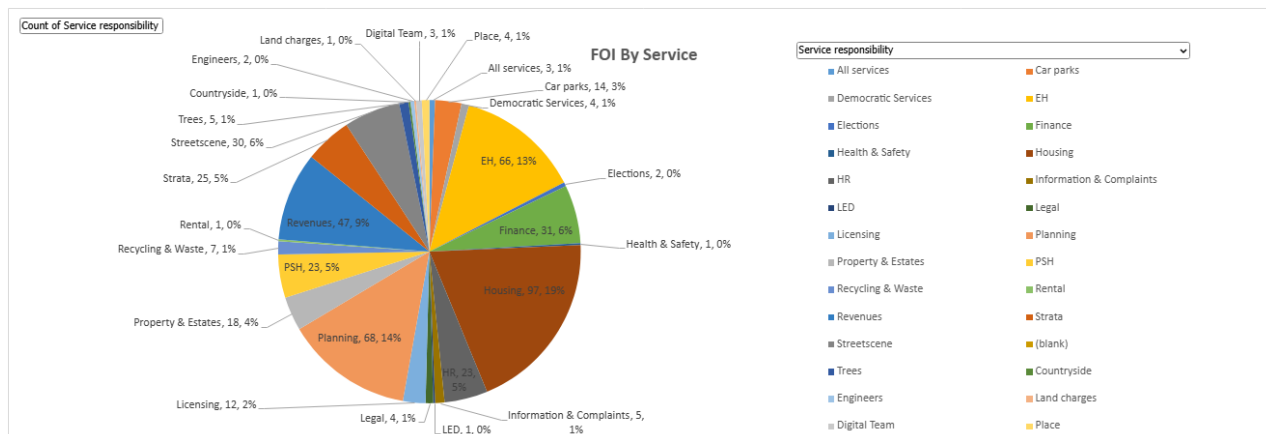|	
	• Subject Access Request Policy 2. Confidential update on the Cyber Assessment Framework and compliance with that Framework. 3. South West Audit Partnership final report on the Local Government Transparency Code compliance. 4. Progress on implementation of actions coming out of a confidential information governance related audit. 5. The Forward Plan and proposed the inclusion of a review of the Council's AI policy.
6 November 2025	The Board considered:- 1. Annual Report of the Information Governance Board 2. Update on security incidents 3. Update on Freedom of Information, subject access requests and data breaches 4. Forward Plan

4. Key statistics

The Committee has considered key statistics as follows:-
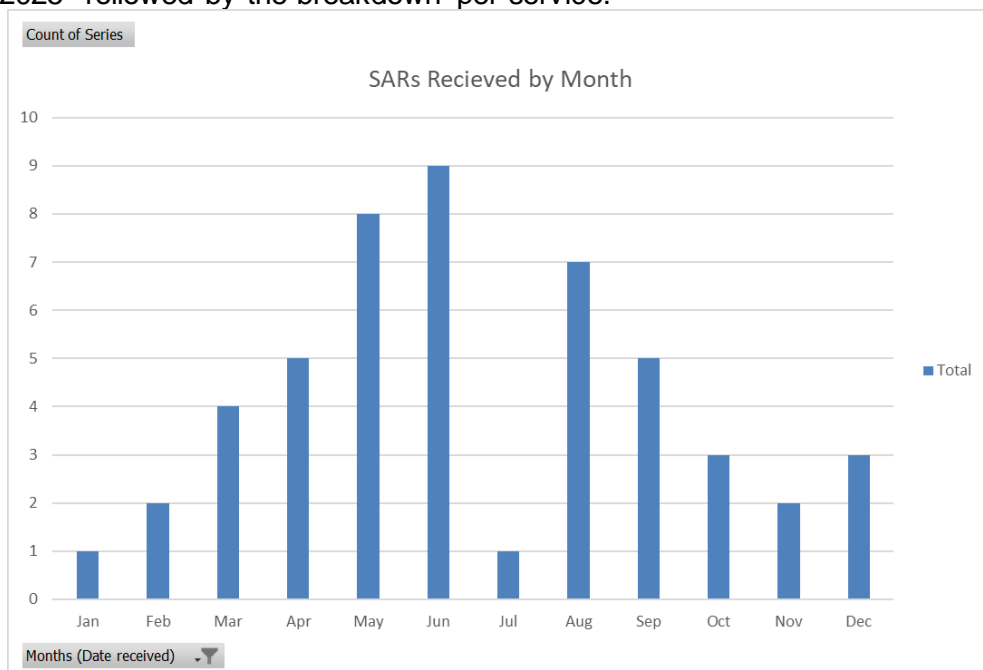
(a) Freedom of Information Requests

The number of Freedom of Information Requests have been increasing year on year and this is placing additional pressures on the team. The figure for 2025 is not yet complete. We are still logging the requests for January, February and March 2026. The current trajectory suggests that the number in total for 2025/26 will exceed the previous year's figure of 631. The following diagrams show the total numbers each year since 2021 and the breakdown per service.

Sum of Total FOIs

Total FOI by year

2021: 446
2022: 514
2023: 558
2024: 631
2025: 515

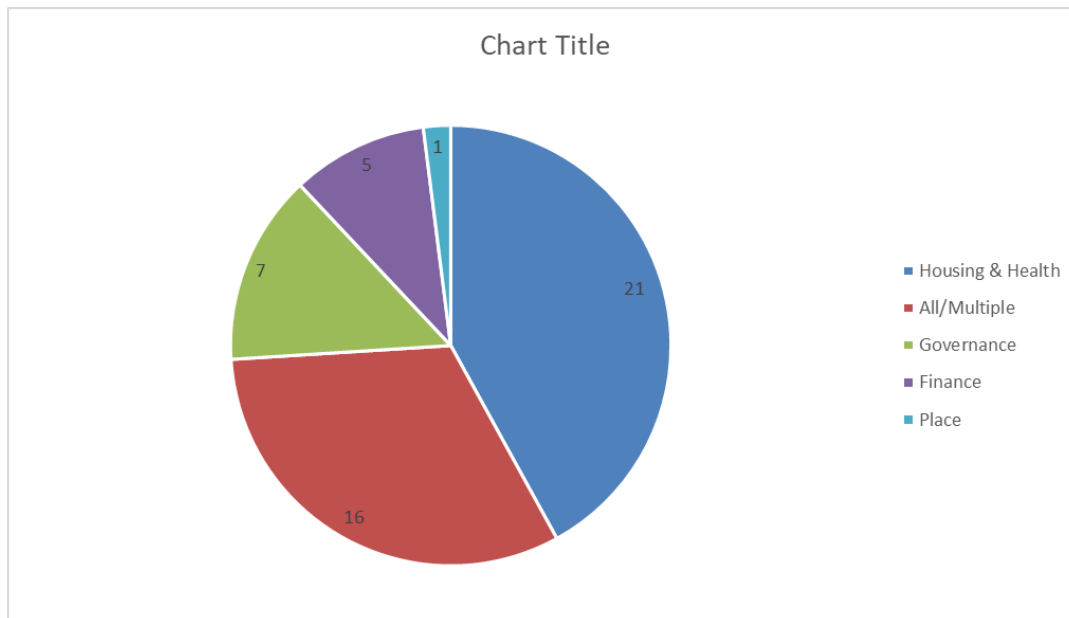Ye... ▼ 🔽

FOI By Service

(b) Subject Access Requests

Subject Access Requests (SARS) are now a well known route for individuals to try to obtain information which they believe is held by public authorities. It is unsurprising that the highest number of requests relate to housing and health, given that this service supports a large volume of individuals. The following charts show the number of subject access requests received through 2025 followed by the breakdown per service.


SARs Recieved by Month

Chart Title

- Housing & Health — 21
- All/Multiple — 16
- Governance — 7
- Finance — 5
- Place — 1

(c) Data Breaches

The majority of data breach incidents reported are low level, most often linked to human error whereby an email is sent to the wrong addressee or information is placed on the website (e.g. the public planning portal) where personal data has been overlooked in the redacting process. Officers are quick to reporting breaches and all are considered by the Information Governance Manager and Senior Information Risk Owner within 72 hours to determine whether they require reporting to the Information Commissioner. None of the breaches since the Board has been set up have been deemed to be reportable. In all cases lessons are learnt from breaches and any appropriate recommendations made e.g. further training/changes in processes etc.

It is difficult to compare breach figures with other public authorities as details of non reportable breaches are not generally publicised.

There is a planned increase in data protection awareness training for council officers in 2025 with the appointment of a new Information Governance Manager.

The following tables show the number of data breaches per service, followed by the data breaches by directorate.

EDDC Reported Data Breaches 2025
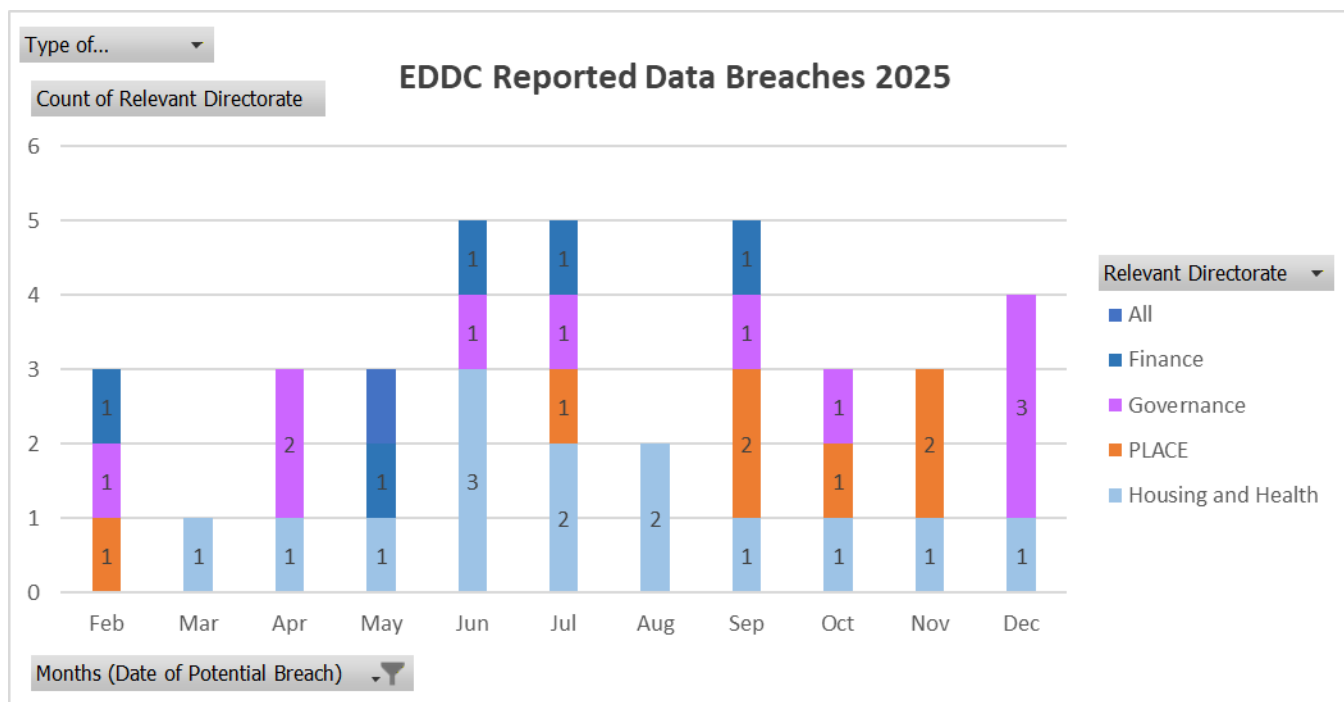
Note: There were no reported breaches in January 2025

Data Breaches by Directorate
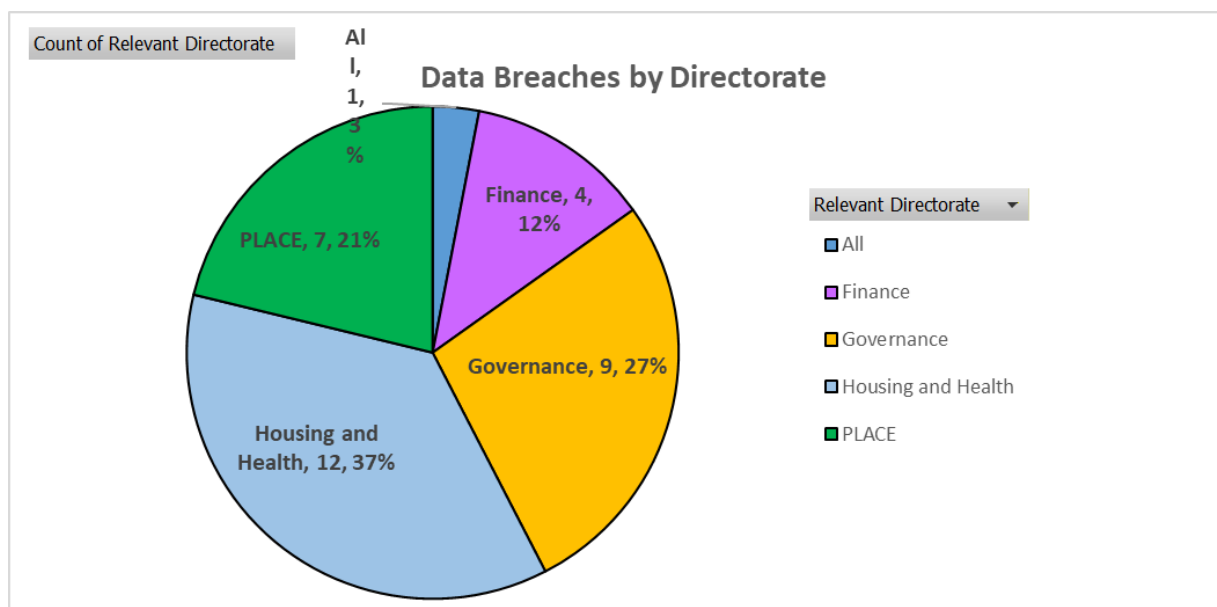
5. Committee Forward Plan for 2026.

5.1 In 2026 the Committee will be considering the following:-

- Data breaches and cyber security updates
- Dashboard updates in relation to FOI, SARS and data breaches
- Development of an Information Governance Strategy
- Information Asset Register Update
- Record of Processing Activity update
- Information Sharing Agreements
- Review of updated Information Governance policies including the Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Monitor Transparency Code Compliance
- Review Information Governance Audit reports
- Consider Information Risk Reviews

Financial implications:

The are no financial implications arising from this report

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues arising from this Annual report.