

Information Management Strategy

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1 BACKGROUND TO WHY CHANGES ARE REQUIRED

The introduction of the statutory requirements of Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) and modernising government have provided two key drivers on central, local government, agencies, education and health service authorities to review how they hold, manage and distribute information.

These two drivers have been key in motivating organisations to review internal practices and seek software solutions to automate processes such as records management.

The Freedom of Information Act imposes that organisations must be able to answer questions within a 20 working day period and provide the supporting materials as appropriate. The ability to answer questions in such a timely manner and accurately, could impose a significant burden on any organisation if existing information is not held in a structured and accessible format. The additional effort required to comply with Freedom of Information (FoI) enquiries is increased directly due to the lack of structure, control and accessibility of the information. The problem is further compounded by virtue of the fact that organisations are not over resourced and many are struggling to maintain high performance targets. No organisation can accurately predict the number of queries that will be presented at any one time but the extra load that the FoI enquires will produce may result in staff being diverted away from other core business critical activities.

The compliance against FoI is complicated by the introduction of computer systems and modern communication methods. In previous years, the paper files were the key information stores and held in registries with very precise records management procedures. Dedicated registry staff would enforce these procedures and the information was managed through it's lifecycle. The introduction of computer systems provided many advantages but in the majority of cases it has been implemented without the equivalent information management practices. High level issues that are now common are as follows:

- Information held on local drives/remote devices that are not accessible to the organisation.
- Duplicates of information exist resulting in capacity issues and lack of revision control.
- Lost information/inability to locate information in a timely manner.
- Poor decision-making because the relevant/accurate information was not available.
- Inefficiencies and a less effective organisation.

The problem is evident in the handling of e-mails where local e-mail file structures are built within the users mail application and this is utilised as a local information store. This information is not accessible to others, has no formal records management applied and is under local control and not a central policy. Business today relies on many different information stores and, with limited exceptions, they are all open to FoI enquiries.

The modernising government initiative will enforce that organisations move towards a mainly electronic information store with effective controls put into place. This will require a thorough and integrated approach being taken to how all information including paper, faxes, physical information (books, samples, etc) are handled.

The FoI and electronic records management compliance may be viewed as an onerous task but in fact they will ensure that key benefits in information management are delivered. Hence the organisation as a whole should benefit from putting into place the necessary mechanisms to ensure compliance. Generic benefits that organisations should evaluate are listed below but additional benefits may be identified which are specific to the organisation:

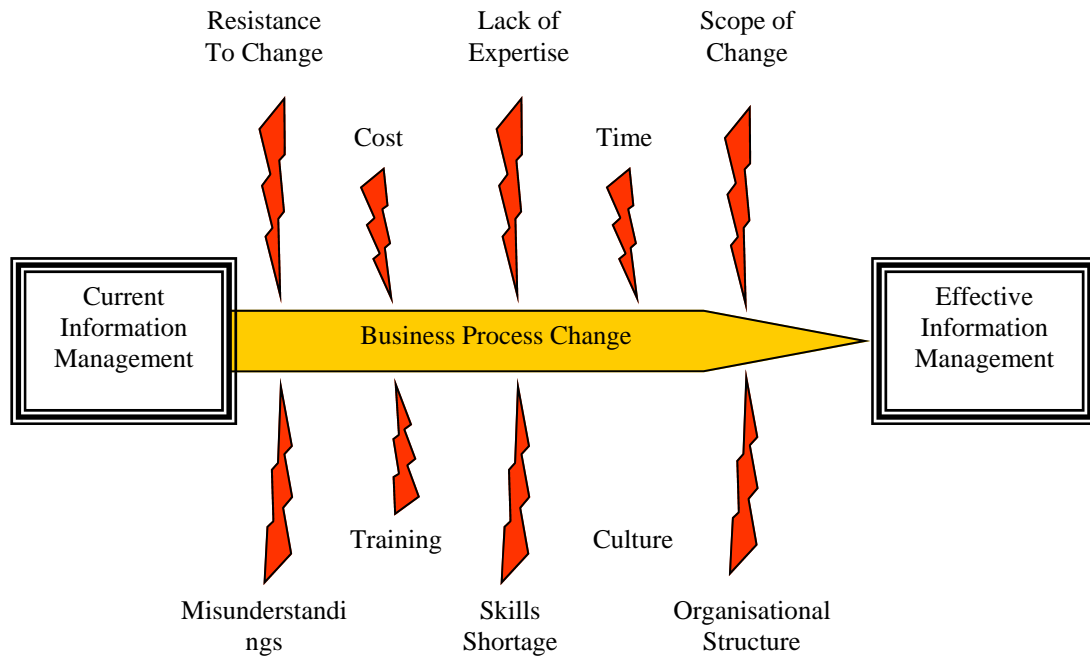
- Improved sharing of information.
- Better shared access to information.
- More effective collaborative working.
- Improved distributed team working.
- Better capture and quality control of information.
- More comprehensive and faster retrieval of relevant information.
- Better passage and transfer of information.
- Reduction in duplicate information.
- Improved consistency of common user data.
- Improved exploitation of information.
- Reduced time, effort and cost to retrieve information.
- More reliable and comprehensive information available to all.
- Improved capture and control of electronic documents.
- Standardised records management.
- Faster decision making processes.
- Increased confidence in decision making.
- Improved corporate memory for successive generations of staff.
- Improved registry/clerical productivity.
- Improved staff productivity.
- Reduction in document management overheads.
- Increased office space resulting from less paper storage.

The statutory drivers and benefits that will result from effective information management systems can provide the necessary motivation to encourage management and staff to undertake the initiative of implementation. However, the actual process is complex, fraught with risks and requires both extensive process and cultural changes. Many organisations have looked at Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) as being the panacea to all the issues and have focused mainly on the selection of a product to deliver core functionality. This approach alone is high risk and could result in a failed implementation, inappropriate costly software and staff unwilling to use the system.

The challenge is however achievable by drawing on partners expertise from similar solutions delivery. The success is dependant on the project's ability to define policies, logical procedures and working practices that the end users are able to perform in an efficient and consistent way. The soft issues within the organisation of roles, responsibilities, IT skills and communications are as much part of the project as

selecting and implementing a specific piece of software. Experience has even shown that compliance against FoI and electronic records management and delivery of benefits can be achieved via effective and efficient processes that are subsequently supported by an EDRMS application.

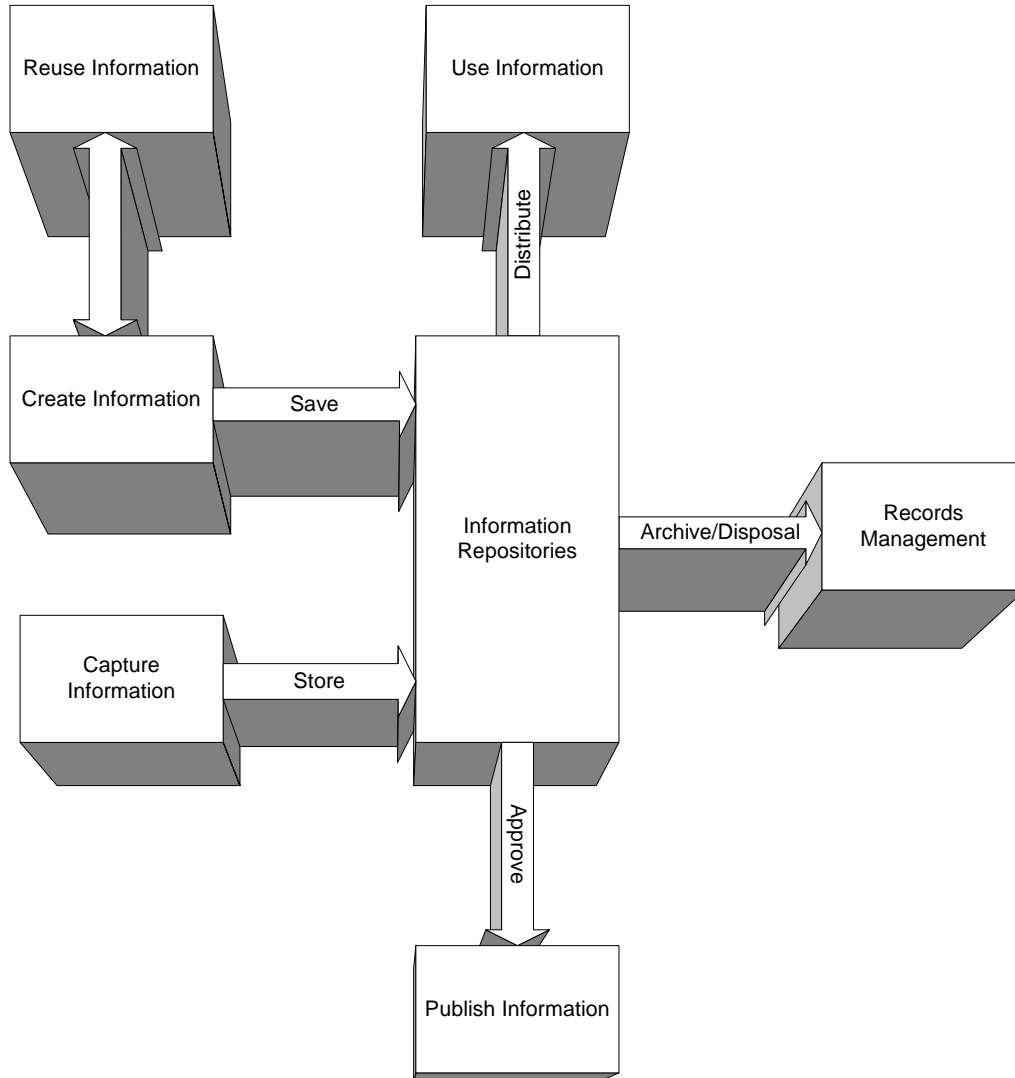
Focal Point Systems Ltd (FPS) are experts within the arena of information management, records management and large-scale business change management and implementation. We fully understand the issues facing government organisations and have developed a methodology that will fast track an organisation towards achieving statutory compliance and delivering significant benefits to the organisation.



Issues To Be Overcome During Change Process

2 THE INFORMATION LIFECYCLE

All organisations receive, create, store, distribute and dispose of information. The information lifecycle is shown below.



The information lifecycle applies to all information types and formats and a comprehensive solution is required to satisfy the full organisation's needs. The storage of a paper manual will be in a different location to an electronic document but the basic policies, procedures and controls are the same in all cases. The rules for each information type may vary but the core processes remain consistent.

Some EDRM systems are constrained to handling only electronic information and thus only solve part of the problem or force organisations to perform extensive scanning to convert the majority of information into electronic format. Scanning can be costly and resource intensive whilst also producing its own problems.

The FPS methodology results in an enterprise-wide information management solution.

3 THE FOCAL POINT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

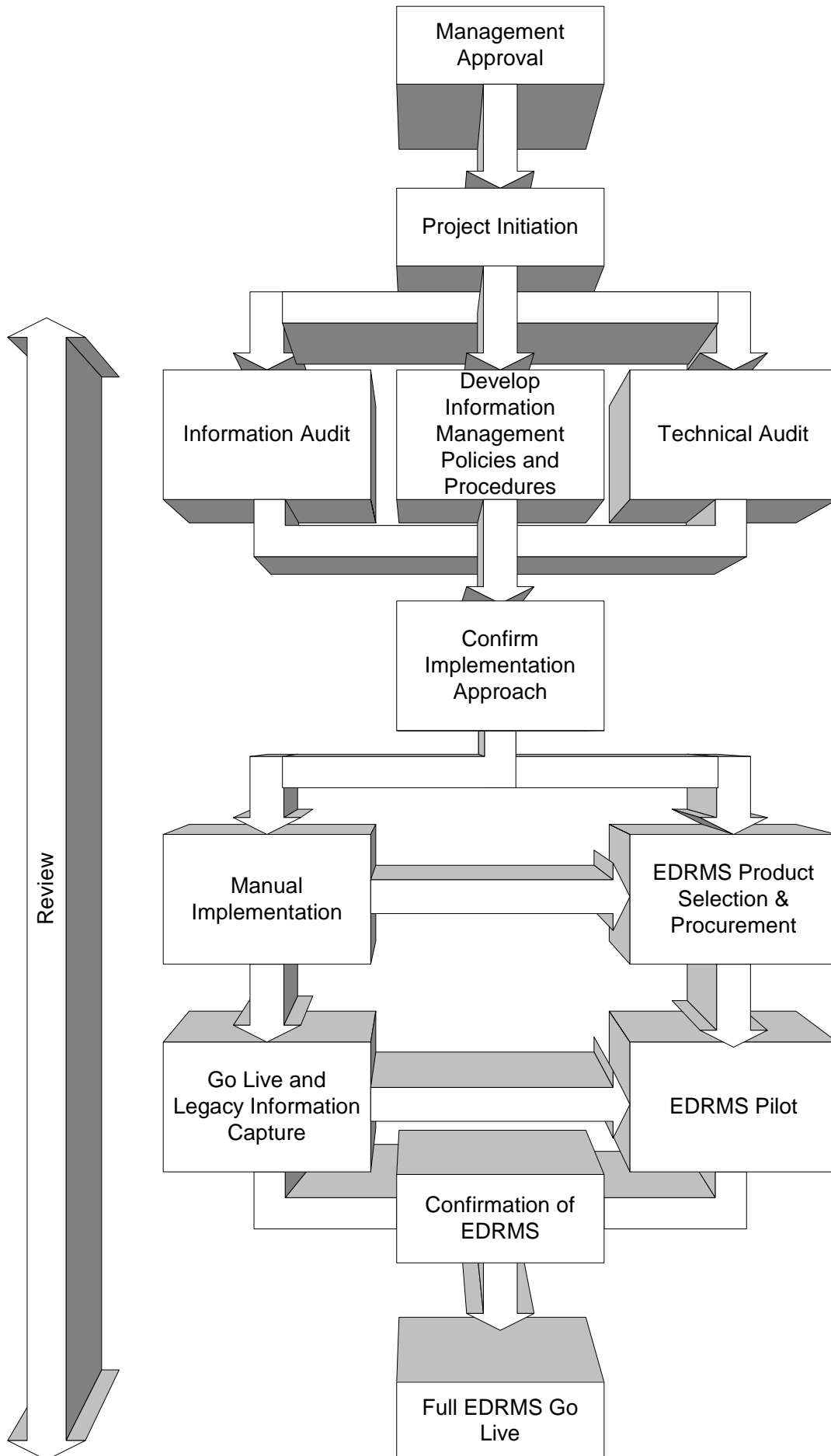
As previously highlighted, the provision of a pure software system will not provide a complete solution to the requirements of information management, records management and satisfying Freedom of Information. The Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) should be selected to complement the best practices of the organisation for the management, control and distribution of information. A successful project must therefore consider the business needs relating to information management policies, procedures, technical requirements, user skills, communication and training needs.

What FPS are able to provide is a complete solution that will accelerate an organisation to the position of satisfying both the requirements of Modernising Government and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 but also deliver key benefits relating to the management of information.

The approach that is proposed is based upon a proven methodology that has already been used to excellent effect and has been proven to deliver the required benefits in a cost effective manner.

The process incorporates parallel activities to complete the project as quickly as possible but also a dual implementation of the policies and procedures to reduce the amount of legacy information issues.

A graphical representation of the overall process is provided over and detailed in the following section.



3.1 Management Approval

A meeting is held with management to agree the project objectives, define the project board, terms of references, management controls and reporting methods. The outcome is a clear commitment from management to drive the project forward throughout the organisation, to steer the project through to delivery and steady state implementation.

3.2 Project Initiation

The project team of internal and external resources is built in the following weeks. The internal resources are essential to the success of the project objectives. Hence, the calibre and internal reputation of these staff needs to be high such that the project can move forward rapidly but also capture the confidence of all staff within the organisation.

The project staff will be built from internal and external resources to ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet the project timescales and such that the expertise required is distributed across the team. The mid to long term objective is that the external knowledge will transfer across to internal resources thus allowing the organisation to further refine the information management processes as part of a continual improvement process.

The project formation will include the Freedom of Information (FoI) co-ordinator(s) and additional FoI process staff.

An important part of the team is the person(s) who will be responsible for defining the policy relating to information management. This resource needs to have an in-depth knowledge of how information is utilised on a day to day basis within the organisation and will therefore be an internal member of staff.

The completion of the project initiation will culminate in the project team being fully established and the entire project controls being defined and put into place. The project controls can be either existing controls that FPS have developed based upon PRINCE2 and ISO 9000 or tailored to meet specific needs.

3.3 Communications

The project involves a major cultural change and will impact on the majority of staff within the organisation. The project thus requires clear, comprehensive and regular communications throughout the entire project lifecycle. A communication manager within the project team will be responsible for ensuring that the communications are maintained and of the highest standards. This is an area that projects often fail to carry out with severe consequences. To minimise this risk, the initial communications and briefings shall be based upon existing templates. Briefings, presentations, newsletters, posters, web site, progress reports and other suitable means shall be utilised.

3.4 Requirements Specification

The requirement specification for the EDRMS requires an independent partner who knows what is available, what the organisation requires and who will select what is most appropriate for the immediate and future needs. However, without a suitable period of working closely with an organisation all companies are at risk of promoting an inappropriate solution. Some companies will be suggesting a product purely

because of commercial arrangements that they have with the software vendors. FPS are totally independent of the PRO 2 compliant products and will thus give unbiased advice. The specification of the EDRMS will be based upon what is best suited to the current and future requirements of the organisation and will be derived from an information and technical audit along with the information management policies of the organisation. The audits gather the required information to allow the specification and configuration of the system to be produced thus reducing development and implementation timescales and costs.

3.5 Information Management Development

The information management development phase incorporates the business needs for best practice information management and satisfying the statutory requirements. The stage links into the information and technical audits but is responsible for defining the policies and procedures for the organisation. Work already undertaken as internal initiatives or following the National Archives model action plan for developing records management can be obtained and utilised during this phase. The decisions made at this stage are not irreversible but all attempts will be made to ensure that they are as accurate as possible.

The outcome of this stage is that all policy and information management procedures are fully defined. These can be divided into specific categories and will include:

- Records Management
 - Identification of shortfalls in current records management procedure against e-government and FoI requirements.
 - Business activity analysis to support records management policy.
 - Definition and availability of record management policy including definition of a record.
 - Define retention rules for all record types (Master Retention Schedule).
 - Produce records management procedures including archival and disposal of records.
 - Define roles and responsibilities for information management and folder management.
- Freedom of Information
 - Identify who is responsible for FoI implementation.
 - Define Freedom of Information enquiry processes.
 - Provision of advice and assistance to persons making requests.
 - Processing requests for information and monitoring progress.
 - Identifying and handling campaigns.
 - Charging fees for requests.
 - Transferring requests for information.
 - Consulting with third parties.
 - Information exclusions and non disclosures.
 - Processing information from third parties.
 - Consultation with other organisations.
 - Refusal of requests.
 - Complaints procedures.
 - Management reporting.
 - Produce publication schemes.

- Identify FoI coordinator resources or initiate recruitment.
- Information Management
 - Best practice procedures for all information processes including workflow, approval, release and up-issue.
 - Handling and retention rules for all non-records.
 - Non-electronic information management procedure.
 - Policy for document naming convention.
 - Policy for document referencing convention.
 - Metadata (document properties) requirement for all records.
 - Taxonomy definitions.
 - Organisational fileplan (folder structure with defined access rights and records management definitions).
 - E-mail management policy and procedures.
- Implementation and Training
 - Define core competencies for FoI coordinators, records management staff and general staff.
 - Identify records management staff or initiate recruitment.

With the increase over the last years in internal and external e-mail communications, the production of efficient e-mail management procedures is required to ensure that end users are not overwhelmed with administrative tasks that impact on their overall efficiency. FPS have a great deal of experience in this particular area.

Expertise available through FPS will fast track this stage of the project and ensure that the appropriate decisions are being made with advice to the organisation on the benefits/disadvantages of each option.

3.6 Information Audit

The information audit is a core step of the project to ensure the solution will apply to all types of information (paper files, physical items, electronic etc.). The audit will identify all the different information types. These could be broken into categories including the specific business functions and including personnel, finance, contracts, legal and administration. Each category could contain information types such as personnel records, financial information etc. and result in the identification of each separate information type. Against each information type (e.g. the finance balance sheet) the audit would identify:

- The format(s) of the information (electronic format, paper, manual),
- Where the information is currently stored (archives, paper files, network, personal drives, remote devices etc),
- Storage needs including typical file sizes and numbers,
- Predicted growth rate,
- Who needs access (groups of users or individuals) and the type of access (read, write, update etc.),
- Archive/retention requirements,
- Approval and release process for the information type,
- Existing technologies used to manage this information,

- Any workflow used to manage the information,
- Requirements to store different copies (e.g. different language translations),
- Revision processes for update and withdrawal of the information type.

The information audit does not concentrate on purely electronic information. All information is audited from paper files, books, non-scanable items, physical items and electronic information. The output will define the requirements to handle all the major information types within the organisation. The information audit can also produce a baseline measurement of the organisation's current capability to manage information of various types. Statistics can include details of duplicate documents being held, incorrect versions being available, local copies of information, incorrect storage, inappropriate records management and general information that is not accessible to the correct personnel within the organisation.

3.7 Technical Audit

The technical audit is more focused on the infrastructure that is already available to support information management and what would be required for future needs. The audit reviews the existing network drives, utilisation of local hard drives, removable devices (hand held and laptop), scanning, Computer Output to Laser Disk (COLD), web content management, records management, bandwidth, redundancy and security. The technical audit will result in a specification for infrastructure to support the organisation and be capable of hosting the necessary EDRMS, taking into account future requirements and expandability to provide a flexible solution.

3.8 Confirmation Checkpoint

The output from the audits and the definition of the information management policies and procedures are confirmed within this stage. It is the objective of the project to reach this point as quickly as possible to allow a realistic pilot to be performed with all new information within the organisation being created in a compliant manner. The decisions made at this stage can consider if a non-EDRMS solution is implemented ahead of the software solution. If the prior stages have identified that the step change to effective records management is small then the manual working instructions could be bypassed.

The method of managing the legacy information has to be defined. The scope of the tasks to identify, capture, cleanse and migrate the legacy information into the information management system will be available following the information audit. There are several approaches that can be taken ranging from transfer of information as and when it is accessed through to a directed review and transfer of specific information sets. FPS have access to specialist search engine tools that can automatically index legacy information and classify information against custom taxonomies. These tools could be utilised to resolve the legacy data issues for retrieval but a policy for records management of this legacy data would still have to be defined and implemented. The confirmation stage will agree the appropriate route forward relating to the legacy information management.

The stage will include consultation with management to confirm all the prior stages and outputs and agree the best option for proceeding. The stage confirms the needs of the organisation to achieve effective and efficient information management, the costs for the subsequent stages, constraints and the procurements strategy for the EDRMS.

The completion of this stage shall be a formal milestone within the project schedule.

3.9 Manual Implementation

Utilising the information obtained in the previous stages the project can undertake parallel activities of the EDRMS product selection and implementation of the information management policy and procedures. This milestone is the timeline from which all new information produced by the organisation or received will be compliant with the information management processes. The new fileplan¹ will allow all new information to be stored in a logical structure and thus support Freedom of Information enquiries.

The implementation of the information management policies and procedures is a major activity that includes a large business change, total compliance and impacts on the majority of staff. Our prior track record in implementing large-scale business critical changes shall be utilised to ensure that this process is performed as smoothly as possible. The implementation shall be supported by the communications plan and training targeted at the specific user roles. The training shall include group-training sessions, hands on training and post go-live floorwalker support. The floorwalker support comprises of trained staff visiting users at their desks to provide immediate support and further training. The process shall be based upon:

- Defining the local fileplan for a department within the organisation.
- Verifying the fileplan with key department users and management.
- Building the fileplan with associated access rights and any specific rules.
- Identify the staff who will undertake each role (folder management, records management, authors, reviewers and approvers) and advise on suitability.
- Identify base line IT competencies for each role and compare against the individual's skills.
- Provide training to each user to achieve core competencies and specific training to undertake the designated role. Training is targeted to the department's information types and local fileplan. Guides and aide memoirs will be utilised to support the end users.
- Go-live for the department as a whole with immediate floorwalker support phased over the next three weeks.
- Monitoring and supporting the users to ensure that the procedures are followed.

The manual implementation can be performed as an initial pilot with a lessons learnt period prior to a full rollout and go-live to all users.

3.10 Go-Live and Legacy Information Capture

The go-live of the procedures can include the data cleansing and migration of legacy information into the new fileplan. This exercise will be monitored closely to ensure that legacy information is not just cut and pasted en mass as this will only move the problem of legacy information and not resolve it. The process will be dependent on the organisation's current procedures and existence of effective records management. If effective paper records management is in place then these paper records can be used as the initial records set and complemented by new electronic records in the future.

¹ Fileplan - folder structure with defined access rights and records management definitions.

The monitoring of this implementation provides confirmation of the policy and procedures before they are implemented into an EDRMS. The rollout to all departments shall be programmed to complete as quickly as possible whilst allowing lessons learnt to be fed back into the project. Improvements in the management of information and benefits to the users can be assessed after a period to identify the advantages of the processes alone.

Specialist search and retrieval tools can also be utilised during this process to identify and index legacy information. The tool set can vary from analysing specific information stores through to the automatic generation of taxonomy data for the legacy information.

3.11 Product Selection and Implementation

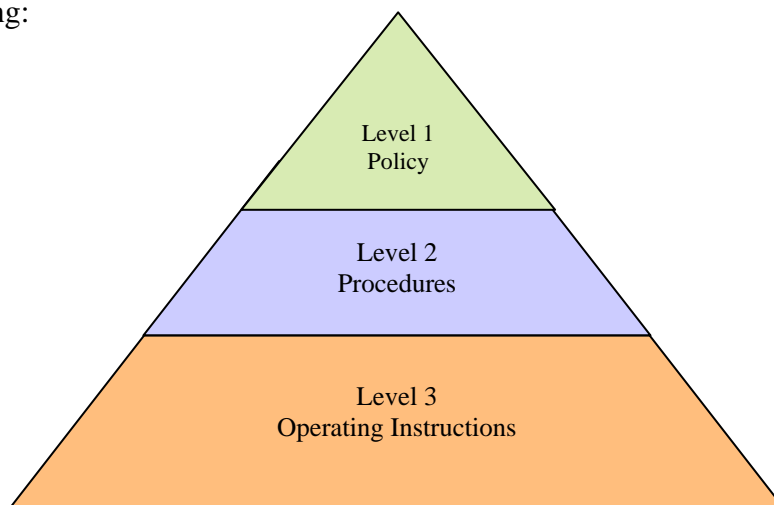
The product selection will be supported by extensive internal knowledge of the available PRO2 compliant EDRMS products, reference site visits and suitability against the organisation's specific needs. The project timescales will generally require that the EDRMS can be purchased from Government catalogues without the need to tender through OJEC. The factors of fit/gap against the organisations requirements, saleability, implementation effort, ability to tailor rather than customise and implementation partner's ability to support the system shall all be considered.

The experiences of Focal Point Systems with previous implementation projects and the various EDRMS products will greatly reduce the risks associated with the selection of the "wrong" product.

The hardware to host the EDRMS shall also be confirmed within this phase and the orders shall be raised to enable a pilot of the selected EDRMS to be undertaken.

3.12 EDRMS Pilot and Implementation

The EDRMS will be installed and configured against the policy and processes defined and implemented in the manual environment. The information management strategy that is proposed is based upon there being three levels relating to the processes, these being:



It is evident that the policies for information and records management are valid for either a manual or electronic solution. The procedures are also the same for both a

manual and electronic solution. It is only the operating instructions level that is changed between a manual process and an automated EDRMS. Given that the EDRMS will be configured to support the best practices, even these changes will be minimal. The process will remain the same but the actual buttons selected by the user will vary. The EDRMS will be an automation of the policy and procedures and not a different method of managing information. The effort and costs to configure the EDRMS will be greatly reduced as a detailed understanding of what is required and how well the processes perform will already be in-house. The manual procedures implementation followed by the EDRMS pilot enables the large business and cultural change to be broken into two manageable steps with only a small incremental training need to get staff fluent in the use of the EDRMS. The effectiveness of the pilot can also be better assessed as the EDRMS can be populated with existing structured and compliant information that has been put in place during the manual implementation. Without this, the EDRMS would not be representative of the live system.

The EDRMS pilot shall also confirm that non-electronic information can also be managed through the system and that any scanning solution is satisfactory for the organisation's needs.

3.13 Full EDRMS Go Live

After review of the EDRMS pilot, any necessary changes can be applied prior to the full implementation. The effort to support the full rollout can be confirmed from the experiences of the initial pilot and the necessary resources engaged. The training burden for the full rollout is minimal as all users will be applying the approved policies and procedures and personally aware of the benefits that this now delivers. Where the non-EDRMS operating instructions are tedious or manual the users will welcome the automation of the EDRMS. The full EDRMS rollout plan will be re-confirmed as whether a phased rollout or a big-bang rollout should take place.

By performing the manual implementation of the policies and procedures ahead of the full EDRMS rollout, the organisation will again have significant information ready to load into the system. The cut over from manual to full EDRMS can thus be performed in less time and provide a single primary system for the end users to store information. By removing the option of old working methods of storing information outside of the EDRMS the system will become the primary information source for the future. The EDRMS can quickly be populated with the information, associated metadata, structures and access rights. The time to perform the full rollout can thus be accelerated with minimal support requirements and reduced risks.

3.14 Continual Improvement

All business processes should be reviewed as a continuous improvement process. The project will seek to deliver procedures that are as appropriate as possible but they are still likely to require minor modification over time. The project will ensure that the information management processes are owned by a defined role within the organisation and that procedures are in place to allow the effectiveness of the procedures and the compliance of the procedures to be tangibly monitored. The findings of the effectiveness and compliance of the procedures shall allow trends to be identified and thus corrective action to be planned, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

4 Project Timelines

The methodology allows aggressive timescales to be declared which can still enable an organisation to become effective and efficient with its information management. Organisations should note that the National Archives model action plan for developing records management compliant with FoI identified that initial milestones should have been completed by 31 July 2003, with further stages in September 2003, January 2004, June 2004 and finally full compliance in Jan 2005. The methodology does not bypass required steps but provides expertise and templates from previous implementations to reduce the effort, time and cost. However, the clock is still running and early engagement to progress the project is highly recommended. For an organisation of 1,000 staff a typical implementation timescale would be 5 months. Note that this duration is not directly related to the number of staff within the organisation and mainly impact on the rollout stage.

The FPS methodology timetable offers considerable benefits to the organisation as it brings forward the time from which information is being produced and managed correctly to satisfy records management, FoI and best practice requirements. Given a typical timetable, this date can be a full three months ahead of the EDRMS system live date.