Request

Please may you provide me with:

Cloud computing technologies have become prevalent across various sectors, including the public sector, driven by the Government Cloud First Policy. This policy emphasizes the benefits of cloud technologies, such as scalability, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness, in modernizing government IT systems and delivering better services to citizens. The purpose of this FOI request is to understand the extent of cloud service utilization by councils and the challenges they encounter in adopting these technologies.

Section 1: Cloud Service Utilization

Please indicate whether your council currently utilizes cloud services for any of the following purposes.

•   Data Storage

•   Data Processing

•   Data Sharing

•   Software Application (SaaS (Software as a Service))

•   Platform Application (PaaS (Platform as a Service))

Additionally, please indicate the departments or equivalent services that use cloud services by ticking the relevant boxes below:

Complete the following table with the respective numbers or details.

•   Council Tax

•   Housing

•   Social Care

•   Education

•   Electoral Roll

•   Planning

•   Building Control

•   Waste Management

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• Streets, Roads, Pavements and maintenance parks, museums, and community

• Library Services

• Parking

Section 2: Cloud Adoption and Management

Question 1

Primary Reasons for Adoption of Cloud Services

1. What were the main motivations or driving factors behind your council's decision to adopt cloud services?

2. Please specify the key benefits or advantages that cloud services offer your council in comparison to traditional IT infrastructure.

Assessment of Reliability and Uptime:

1. How does your council evaluate the reliability of cloud services in terms of system uptime and availability?

2. Could you provide insights into the criteria or metrics used to assess the reliability and performance of cloud services?

3. What measures or mechanisms are in place to monitor and ensure uptime levels meet the council's requirements or service level agreements (SLAs)?

Question 2

Please provide detailed information regarding your council's compliance efforts, data protection measures, and challenges encountered in utilizing cloud services. Specifically, we are interested in the following:
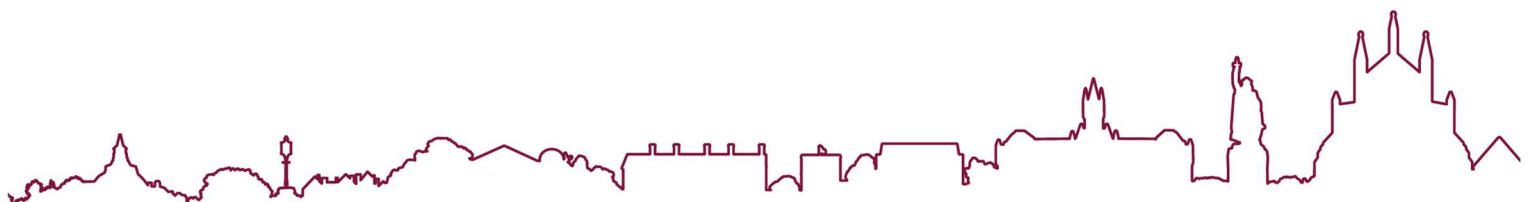
GDPR Compliance

Please outline the specific measures and processes implemented by your council to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), including any procedures for data handling, consent management, and data subject rights.

Data Encryption Practices

Please provide insights into the encryption methods and technologies utilized to secure data stored and transmitted through cloud services.

Data Residency Requirements

How does your council ensure compliance with data residency requirements, particularly concerning the storage and processing of sensitive data within specific geographic locations?

Backup and Recovery Policies

Please describe the backup and recovery policies implemented by your council to safeguard against data loss and ensure business continuity in the event of disruptions or incidents.

Challenges Related to Data Security

What are the primary challenges or concerns your council faces regarding data security in the context of cloud services? This could include issues such as unauthorized access, data breaches, or vulnerabilities in cloud infrastructure.

Integration Complexity

Are there any complexities or difficulties encountered when integrating cloud services with existing systems or workflows within your council?

Performance Issues

Have there been any performance-related challenges or limitations experienced with the use of cloud services, such as latency issues, resource constraints, or service disruptions?

Section 3: SLAs and Cloud Service Performance

Question 1: Please provide insights into the council's experience with Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) within the G-Cloud framework. Specifically, how have SLAs impacted the council's usage and satisfaction with cloud services procured through G-Cloud? Please include details on adherence to SLA terms and any notable successes or challenges encountered in ensuring reliable and satisfactory cloud service delivery.

Section 4: Cloud Service Models and Management

Question 1: Please provide insights into how cloud services are managed within your council. This could include details on how the services are controlled and customized, maintained and updated, as well as the types of agreements and support they come with. Additionally, can you elaborate on how these services are strategically aligned with the needs and goals of your different departments?

Question 2: Please share any notable experiences, challenges, or lessons learned in the process of migrating or managing applications on the identified cloud service models. This may include insights into compatibility issues, integration complexities, or successes achieved in optimizing application performance and resource utilization.

Response:

Section 1: Cloud Service Utilization

Please indicate whether your council currently utilizes cloud services for any of the following purposes.

- Data Storage - **Mixed**

- Data Processing - **No**

- Data Sharing - **Yes**

- Software Application (SaaS (Software as a Service)) - **Yes**

- Platform Application (PaaS (Platform as a Service)) – **Yes**

Additionally, please indicate the departments or equivalent services that use cloud services by ticking the relevant boxes below:

Complete the following table with the respective numbers or details.

- Council Tax - **Yes**

- Housing - **Yes**

- Social Care – **n/a**

- Education - **n/a**

- Electoral Roll - **No**

- Planning - **No**

- Building Control - **No**

- Waste Management - Yes

- Streets, Roads, Pavements and maintenance parks, museums, and community – **Hampshire County Council**

- Library Services – **Hampshire County Council**

- Parking – **No**

Section 2: Cloud Adoption and Management

Question 1

Primary Reasons for Adoption of Cloud Services

1.   What were the main motivations or driving factors behind your council's decision to adopt cloud services? **- Information not held**

2.   Please specify the key benefits or advantages that cloud services offer your council in comparison to traditional IT infrastructure. **- Information not held**

Assessment of Reliability and Uptime:

1.   How does your council evaluate the reliability of cloud services in terms of system uptime and availability? **- Information not held**

2.   Could you provide insights into the criteria or metrics used to assess the reliability and performance of cloud services? **- Information not held**

3.   What measures or mechanisms are in place to monitor and ensure uptime levels meet the council's requirements or service level agreements (SLAs)? **Ongoing monitoring**

Question 2

Please provide detailed information regarding your council's compliance efforts, data protection measures, and challenges encountered in utilizing cloud services. Specifically, we are interested in the following:

GDPR Compliance

Please outline the specific measures and processes implemented by your council to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), including any procedures for data handling, consent management, and data subject rights.

As a start point, please see the data protection pages on our website here:

https://www.winchester.gov.uk/strategies-and-policies/data-protection-privacy

If you require more than this, please be specific as to what information you require.

Data Encryption Practices

Please provide insights into the encryption methods and technologies utilized to secure data stored and transmitted through cloud services. **See below.**

Data Residency Requirements

How does your council ensure compliance with data residency requirements, particularly concerning the storage and processing of sensitive data within specific geographic locations? – **See below**

Backup and Recovery Policies

Please describe the backup and recovery policies implemented by your council to safeguard against data loss and ensure business continuity in the event of disruptions or incidents. – **See below**

Challenges Related to Data Security

What are the primary challenges or concerns your council faces regarding data security in the context of cloud services? This could include issues such as unauthorized access, data breaches, or vulnerabilities in cloud infrastructure. - **See below**

Integration Complexity

Are there any complexities or difficulties encountered when integrating cloud services with existing systems or workflows within your council? - See below

Performance Issues

Have there been any performance-related challenges or limitations experienced with the use of cloud services, such as latency issues, resource constraints, or service disruptions? - **Information not held**

In relation to Data Encryption Practices, Data Residency requirements, Backup and recovery Policies, Challenges relating to Data Security:

The Freedom of Information Act provides exemptions which allow a request to be refused. In this instance, the Council considers that Section 31(1) – the Prevention and Detection of Crime applies.

The Council must consider the prejudice test followed by the public interest test since Section 31 is a qualified exemption.

In considering the prejudice test, to provide the information sought in your remaining questions, would identify the type of systems used by Winchester City Council together with areas that the Council may have found to be problematic; provision of this information, effectively to the world at large, would prejudice the Council's ability to continue to ensure the security and safety of their systems and of the data contained therein by detailing areas of potential weakness with our storage of sensitive data, recovery systems, unauthorised access and other vulnerability.

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When considering the public interest test, the Council must consider whether the balance of public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs that of disclosing the information.

Arguments in favour of providing the requested information are that Winchester City Council promotes working in an open and transparent manner, which in turn enable the public to feel involved in the work of the Council and to enable scrutinisation of the way in which public monies are spent.

However, this must be balanced against the harm that may be caused by the Council; the Council has a duty to protect its information systems from unauthorised access, damage or destruction, which in turn protects the information and data it holds on behalf of its local residents.

In considering the arguments, Winchester City Council have carefully considered the factors for and against providing the requested information. In conclusion, whilst there may be public interest in the type of systems that Winchester City Council operate, the weight in protecting the Council's systems combined with the Council's duty to the local community to ensure that all information contained within those systems is secure, far outweighs provision of the information sought. Your request for this section of the information is therefore refused.

Section 3: SLAs and Cloud Service Performance

Question 1: - **Information not held**

Section 4: Cloud Service Models and Management

Question 1: **Information not held**

Question 2: **Information not held**

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled or dissatisfied with the outcome you can request a review by writing to the Service Lead: Legal at legal@winchester.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk