

Education Scotland: Inspection model and Digital Solutions review

Background

Key 2016/17 Objectives, specifically for the newly formed Digital Services Team, **is to initiate a corporate review of the formal Education *Inspection and Review* process.**

Purpose

Education Scotland's Digital landscape continues to evolve, as such, enterprise ICT and Web Channel Services have seen large scale strategic and technical changes of late, of which shall continue to mature over the course of 2016 and provide increasing business value.

The next logical step, across Education Scotland's digital framework and the wider Organisational Improvement Strategy, is to move beyond supporting services and consider which key Business Services can be transitioned to digital.

Future vision for Education Inspection

There is a view that the Inspection model should evolve towards the implementation of a centralised process and technical solution.

The benefits of a centralised digital inspection solution/process are (non exhaustive):

- Automation of manual administration of inspection;
- Digitally controlled workflow: managing all strands of the inspection process to ensure integrity and consistency;
- Real time data/information from any internet connected device;
- Secured data and auditable track of inspection/engagement;
- A central inspection solution would also harness inspection data and provide automated publication/sharing of data; (inspection reports for example) and provide wider business knowledge for key strategic decisions.

Dependency

To achieve the future Inspection model, the current operational framework needs to change significantly and move towards a simplified, generic start-to-end process model- one that every stakeholder follows in order to ensure the Inspection and Review cycle(s) is *efficient, controlled and secure*.

Review Scope (Business Analysis)

To understand how Education Scotland should re-engineer the inspection process, the following applies:

- Review current and future strategic objectives surrounding Inspection and Review programme(s);
- Undertake root-and-branch Business Analysis of the current process of the Inspection and Review model;
- Identify inefficiencies and risk within the current inspection around:
 - i) operations;
 - ii) resourcing, and;
 - iii) data handling.
- Identify the full data model surrounding inspection and wider business dependencies for associated data;
- Create a (future) streamlined/ generic operational and resource model for Inspection and Review;
- Prepare a robust business case for change- including series of options implementation options;
- Produce a fit for purpose statement of requirements- for future systems integration.

Consideration and risk

The strategic merit(s) of a centralised corporate Inspection model seems plausible, however the feasibility has yet to be fully fleshed out, therefore the following aspects are to be considered:

- Business commitment for operational self-service and digital change needs to be resolute
- Business Analysis will consume significant funding and business support within 2016
 - Current estimate of Business Analyst cost for engagement is circa £79k.
 - Plan of engagement and total resource support from within Education Scotland has not yet been realised
- Willingness (across the business) to support the Inspection review and adapt/ change current process to:
 - 1) become efficient;
 - 2) generic,
 - 3) resilient to change, and;
 - 4) Embrace Digital solutions;
- Recognition that BA costs will become redundant where the business do not engage and support operational and digital change over 2016
- Recognition that any inspection transition will have a significant impact on:
 - Organisational business model and resource time to support inspection, and;
 - Require (significant) corporate capital funding to support system development costs. ...from experience for solutions integration.

Indicative Timeline for review

May – October 2016

Request:

- Agree to the scope and aspiration of change surrounding inspection
- Discuss the short and long term impact across the business, including the tactical approach
- Commit to undertake and support the Business Analysis engagement
- Identify the scale of future technical solution(s) required

Section 33(1)(b) – commercial interests

An exemption under section 33(1)(b) of FOISA (commercial interests) applies to some of the information requested. This exemption applies because disclosure of this particular information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the commercial interests of Education Scotland. Disclosing this information would be likely to give competitors an advantage in future similar tendering exercises, which would substantially prejudice Education Scotland's ability to submit competitive tenders and so could significantly harm commercial business.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open and transparent government, and to help account for the expenditure of public money. However, there is a greater public interest in protecting the commercial interests of any future contract position for Education Scotland, to ensure that we are always able to obtain the best value for public money.