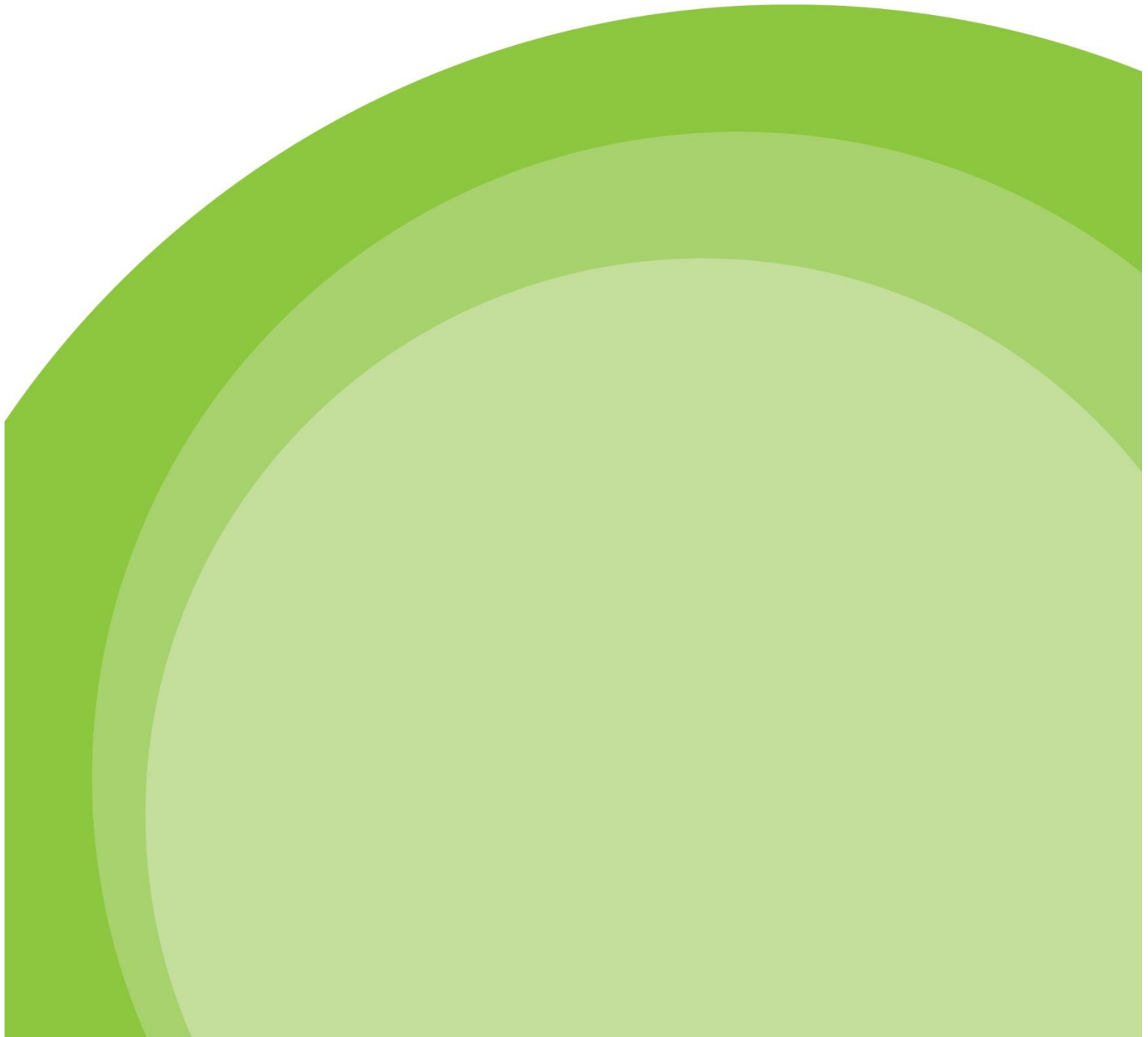


Identifying an Information Asset



Definition

An information asset is a body of information, defined and managed as a single unit so it can be understood, shared, protected and exploited effectively. Information Assets have recognisable and manageable value, risk, content and lifecycles.

Introduction

Within the Authority, if we are unable to understand the information we hold then we are not able to protect it against risks or exploit it.

In order to do this we first need to identify what an Information Asset is and how we can assess the risks related to it.

The key is to group together individual pieces of data or information into manageable sized portions. To assess every individual file, database entry or document that we hold within the authority is unrealistic therefore we need to group our information into more manageable portions. We must ensure that we group our data appropriately.

*'An information asset is defined at a level of granularity that allows its constituent parts to be managed usefully as a single unit: too broad and you will not have enough detail, too fine and you will have thousands of assets'*¹

Identifying An Information Asset

When thinking about what is an information asset ask the following questions:

- 1) **Does the information have a value to the organisation?** i.e. How useful is it? Will it cost money to reacquire? Would there be legal, reputational or financial repercussions if you couldn't produce it on request? Would it have an effect on operational efficiency if you could not access it? Would there be consequences for not having it?
- 2) **Is there a risk associated with the information?** i.e. Is there a risk of losing it? A risk that it is not accurate? A risk that someone may tamper with it? A risk arising from inappropriate disclosure?
- 3) **Does the group of information have a specific content?** i.e. Do you understand what it is and what it does? Does it include all the context associated with the information?
- 4) **Does the information have a manageable lifecycle?** i.e. Were all the components created for a common purpose? Will they be disposed of in the same way and according to the same rules?



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Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 5657

by email: Catherine-anne.gallacher@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ