

# ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rochford District Council's Data Quality Strategy has been developed to assist in improving the Council's performance in data collection, handling, storage, retrieval, use of information and communication. The document sets out how the Council will maintain and improve its ability to ensure that the data it uses to demonstrate its performance is of the highest quality consistent with the efficient and effective use of its resources.

1.2 The Council recognizes the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent customer services. Data Quality is crucial and the availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting customer care, corporate governance, service management and planning, service agreements and accountability.

1.3 Data Quality it is not a new concept, but from 2006 council's have been assessed as to their level of compliance with the Data Quality requirements of the Audit Commission. The Commission has moved from monitoring and auditing the performance information it receives, to auditing the systems and processes used to store, retrieve and calculate the performance information used and reported by the Council. Council's that fail to meet the Data Quality minimum requirements could have their performance information qualified as a result.

1.4 The 2006 External Audit of the Council's Data Quality Management Arrangements found the Council (in common with most neighbouring councils) to be at an overall performance level of 2, that is "Meeting minimum requirements – adequate performance" in accordance with the audit Commission's Data Quality rating scale below.

Level (Score)	Data Quality Management - Performance
1	Below minimum requirements – inadequate performance
2	Only at minimum requirements – adequate performance
3	Consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
4	Well above minimum requirements – performing strongly

## 2. DATA QUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Our vision for data quality is that we get things right first time, that is, we will have the right information at the right time at the right cost and thereby achieve a score of at least 3 "Consistently above minimum requirements – performing well" by April 2008.

2.2 The Council has extended its existing Records Management Policy include the Data Quality requirements and thereby provides the linkage from Data Quality to the following other information related Council documents:

- Information Strategy
- Freedom of Information policy
- Data Protection policy

- Electronic Records Management Policy (available at [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk))

2.2 Our objectives in relation to Data Quality are as follows:

- To ensure that the information we use is of high quality, consistent, timely, comprehensive and held securely and confidentially.
- To put in place arrangements at senior level to secure the quality of data we use to manage our service and demonstrate our performance.
- To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standards of data quality
- To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality, particularly where information is shared with partners.
- To ensure that we put in place the right resources, and have the right people with the right skills, to ensure that we have timely and accurate performance information.
- To ensure that we have the right controls in place to ensure we meet what is expected of us with respect to Data Quality Standards.
- To ensure that data is stored, used and shared in accordance with the law including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

**3. HOW WILL THE COUNCIL MEET THE DATA QUALITY REQUIREMENTS?**

3.1 In outline, the action required is as follows:

Action	Means of achievement
Develop, agree and gain approval for a Data Quality (DQ) Policy	Extension of our Records Management policies to DQ to be put to the Audit Committee for approval.
Develop, agree and gain approval for a DQ Strategy and Action Plan based on the Audit Commission’s Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOE) for Data Quality with a focus on achieving a level 3 assessment by April 2008	This and other DQ Documents approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and then put to the Audit Committee
Implement DQ Action Plan	Action to be taken by Managers as shown in DQ Action Plan
Monitor DQ Action Plan	Audit Team to monitor the DQ Action Plan and to conduct audits of Performance Indicators and the underlying records. Report to Audit Committee
Review whether DQ requirements are being met and take further action as required	Amend Action Plan as appropriate
Gain external approval of our Data Quality from the Audit Commission and achieve improved scores against the Audit Commission KLOE.	Annual External Auditors visit

Action	Means of achievement
Review DQ Policy, Strategy and Action Plan to determine whether achievement of the next level of assessment is feasible and viable.	Annual review to follow up External Audit and then revise Action Plan accordingly.

3.2 The Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan have been prepared with reference to Audit Commission Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOE) to ensure the achievement of the above objectives.

3.3 The detailed Data Quality Action Plan is associated as an appendix to this Strategy.

#### 4. MONITORING

4.1 The Council's Internal Audit and Process Review Team will monitor the implementation of the DQ Action Plan and will continue to audit the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs), local Performance Indicators and other reported information.

4.2 The Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan will be reported as follows in order to facilitate monitoring by the Audit Committee:

- Progress reported and reviewed at monthly Service Development & improvement Management Team (SDIMT)
- Reported into Senior Management Team (SMT) as required
- Progress Reports made to Audit Committee

#### 5. SHARING DATA WITH PARTNERS

5.1 The Council is committed to working with partners to achieve its objectives and is a signatory to the Essex Trust Charter, which provides a formal framework for sharing of data with partners, supplemented by specific protocols for various types of data.

5.2 Where data is received from partners or other external sources, appropriate and proportionate checks will be performed to ensure the Data Quality of such information.

#### 6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The council will ensure that it adequately manages risk associated with data quality.

6.2 The council recognizes the need to achieve a balance between the resources required to set and meet data quality standards and the relative benefits that flow. It will take this into account in developing its approach to data quality and its monitoring and review.

6.3 A Records Management and Data Quality awareness campaign will be undertaken in 2007 and then every third year to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the importance of accurate and timely data collection and recording

6.4 The Corporate Business Continuity Plan will include provisions to ensure the quality and integrity of data in the event of system failure or damage to records.

**7. RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1 The officer with overall responsibility for this strategy is the Corporate Director (Internal Services).

7.2 The Audit and Process Review Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the audits of Data Quality are undertaken and for reporting progress to the Audit Committee.

7.3 The Audit Committee will monitor and review progress with this Strategy and Action Plan.

**8. CONTACTS**

8.1 Enquiries about this Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan should be addressed to:

- Senior Performance Management Officer - Terry Harper x3212

8.2 Enquiries about the broader aspects of Records Management:

- Central Services Manager - Dawn Tribe x3828