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## **DATA QUALITY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRESS REPORT**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made to ensure that the data the Council uses to measure its performance and inform its decision making is of the highest quality, consistent with the efficient and effective use of its resources.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval of a revised data quality and records management policy (DQRMP) attached as appendix 1.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 A DQRMP was previously authorised in July 2007 and has been updated to reflect both the organisational changes and the progress made in implementation of the data quality strategy and action plan.
- 2.2 The data quality strategy and action plan produced in 2008 provided the impetus to improve data quality at that time and subsequent external inspections verified the improvement. There is no longer a need for a separate strategy as its provisions are now outlined in the DQRMP.
- 2.3 The DQRMP provides the framework through which effective records management can be achieved and audited. It also facilitates compliance with information related legislation and other appropriate legislation and regulations such as audit, equal opportunities and the Council's Constitution.
- 2.4 An internal audit check of the completeness and accuracy of our performance indicators is undertaken in May and June each year in respect of the previous financial year's data and this is supplemented by "in year" spot checks of key data items.
- 2.5 Data quality is no longer tested by our external auditors.

### **3 DATA QUALITY ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN IN RESPECT OF 2010/11 DATA**

- 3.1 The internal audit of the 2010/11 performance data covered 110 performance indicators and these were either found to be correct, or were corrected prior to submission to central Government or reporting to Members. The majority of corrections were of a trivial nature and all corrections were reported to the relevant managers and contained in the regular performance reports to Members.
- 3.2 The introduction of our CorVu performance management software in 2010/11, with its defined data inputs, embedded calculations and reminders to data suppliers and service managers, has enhanced our data quality and highlights missing or unusual data.

**4 ONGOING AND FUTURE DATA QUALITY ACTIVITY**

- 4.1 The data quality work programme will continue with those activities already in place to assure timeliness and accuracy, including:-
- year end internal audit of performance indicators;
  - in year spot checks of measures identified as being at higher risk of error
  - use of preformatted data capture software to ensure correct calculation of results
  - obtaining formal assurances from our third party contractors of the quality of data they provide to us,
  - identification of data quality responsibilities in staff performance reviews, and staff awareness training.
- 4.2 Data quality awareness training will be given to all staff as appropriate, either at induction or later to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the importance of accurate and timely data collection and recording.
- 4.3 As the data quality work programme is now embedded in the Council's activities, no further separate reports are proposed. Data quality will continue to be included in the corporate risk register and as part of the framework for the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, which is reported to the Audit Committee in June each year.

**5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The implementation of the data quality strategy and action plan minimised data quality errors and thus mitigated any potential strategic, operational, reputational or regulatory consequences.
- 5.2 Failure to continue with the procedures implemented under the data quality and records management policy could create the potential for inaccurate data in the future. It is therefore intended that these procedures will be continued.

**6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The data quality and records management policy assists the Council in meeting its obligations under the Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the results of the 2010/11 data quality work be noted.
- (2) That the ongoing data quality activity be approved.

- (3) That the revised data quality and records management policy be approved.

Yvonne Woodward

Head of Finance

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**Background Papers:-**

None.

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# **ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **DATA QUALITY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Rochford District Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary, to support its core functions to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the authority. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers

1. Scope of the policy
2. Responsibilities
3. Relationship with existing policies
4. Records management guidance
5. Data quality
6. Risk management
7. Contacts

### **1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by officers of the Council in the course of carrying out their duties including provision of services and corporate functions.
- 1.2 Records are defined as all those documents, which facilitate the business carried out by the Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities and / or to enable future activity. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.
- 1.3 Records management is defined as a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.
- 1.4 Some of the Council's records may be selected for permanent preservation as part of the County's archives for historical purposes and as an enduring record of the conduct of business.
- 1.5 The policy also applies to information (statistics and data) derived from the Council's records and the processes by which such information and data is produced.

### **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2.1 The Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record-keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment.
- 2.2 The Audit Committee will monitor and review this policy.
- 2.3 The officer with overall responsibility for this policy is the Head of Information and Customer Services who is responsible for drawing up guidance for good records

management practice and promoting compliance with this policy in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information.

- 2.4 All Heads of Service have responsibility for ensuring records management practice and procedures within their divisions comply with this policy and guidelines.
- 2.5 Individual employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Council's records management guidelines
- 2.6 All staff with responsibility for producing information derived from the Council records must ensure that the data produced is accurate and correctly calculated or summarised.
- 2.7 All staff have a responsibility to ensure that records under their control are held securely, with back up where necessary, and only released for authorised uses.
- 2.8 Where information and data are submitted to external bodies or publicly reported the accuracy and submission of such data must be approved by the appropriate Head of Service or Service Manager.
- 2.9 The Audit and Performance Manager is responsible for ensuring that periodic checks of data quality are undertaken, including an annual audit of nationally reported performance indicators and statistics.

### **3. RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING POLICIES**

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following Council documents which are available at [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)

- Corporate Information Security Policy
- Information & Communication Technology Strategy
- Freedom of Information policy
- Data Protection policy

Compliance with this policy will in turn facilitate compliance not only with information-related legislation but also with all other legislation or regulations (including audit, equal opportunities and the Council's Constitution) affecting the authority.

### **4. RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE**

Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this Policy is available at [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk) or from the Information and Support Services Manager. This guidance covers;

- records creation
- business classification (for filing schemes)
- retention periods for records
- storage options for records
- destruction options for records
- archival records: selection and management
- external codes of practice and relevant legislation

## 5. DATA QUALITY

- 5.1 The council recognises the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent customer services. The council needs reliable, accurate and timely information with which to manage services, inform users and account for our performance.
- 5.2 The council is committed to ensuring it maintains the highest standards of data quality and, as a result, getting its performance information right first time.
- 5.3 The council will collect and process data in accordance with the appropriate national and locally defined standards.
- 5.4 The council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to improving its management within the organisation and in partnership with others.
- 5.5 The council recognises that information should be published as soon as possible following production and where practical, should be published in real time. Data should be as accurate as possible at first publication, should errors occur, the publication of information should not be unduly delayed to rectify the mistakes. Where errors in data are discovered, or files are changed for other reasons (such as omissions), local authorities should publish revised information making it clear where and how there has been an amendment
- 5.6 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 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.
- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 Where data is received from partners or other external sources, an assurance of the quality of the data will normally be sought. Appropriate and proportionate checks will be performed to ensure the data quality of such information.
- 5.10 Data quality awareness training will be given to all staff as appropriate, either at induction or later in the form of an E-Learning module, to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the importance of accurate and timely data collection and recording.

5.11 A Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan produced in 2008 provided the impetus to improve Data Quality at that time and subsequent external inspection verified the improvement. There is no longer a need for separate strategy as its provisions are outlined above.

5.12 Ongoing action to maintain or improve data quality is now covered by individual Divisional Plan projects or My Performance Review objectives as appropriate.

## **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

6.2 The council recognises 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 Data Quality and Records Management awareness training, and, the Internal Audits of systems and data provide the primary means by which data quality is assured.

## **7. CONTACTS**

Enquiries about this policy should be addressed to:

### **Records Management**

Information and Support Services Manager

Dawn Tribe Tel: 3828

### **Data Quality**

Performance and Risk Manager

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