
DATA QUALITY 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.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the completion of our data quality action plan, the need to ensure that good quality data is available to the Council to manage its operations and take informed decisions is now embedded in the way we conduct our business.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 In addition to our internal audit of our data quality, our external auditors undertake sample testing of data to enable them to make an assessment of our data quality arrangements.

3 DATA QUALITY ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN IN RESPECT OF 2009/10 DATA

- 3.1 The internal audit of the 2009/10 performance data covered 88 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. The use of pre-prepared data capture spreadsheets ensured that correct calculations were used.
- 3.2 The external auditors' Annual Governance Statement, which was presented to the September 2010 Audit Committee includes within their Value for Money conclusion that "The organisation produces relevant and reliable data and information to support decision making and manage performance." This continues the auditors' 2008/09 overall assessment that our data quality arrangements were "consistently above minimum requirements" and we were "performing well" in this respect.
- 3.3 The action plan arising from the external auditors' 2008/9 Use of Resources Assessment contained two items related to data quality which were:-
- "Recommendation 19 - Review and update the suite of data security and IT user policies to reflect good practice standards and public sector policy guidance e.g. ISO27001 and Codes of Connection for Government Secure Intranet and Government Connect." This was done as reported to the December 2009 Audit Committee.

- “Recommendation 20 – Re-consider the status of the number of visits to Rayleigh Windmill as a reported key performance indicator in light of the inherent difficulties in ensuring a control environment that will secure accuracy of the data collected.” This was reviewed with the Portfolio Holder for Service Development, Improvement and Performance Management and removed from the quarterly performance reports for 2010/11.

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 pre-formatted 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 The introduction of our CorVu Performance Management software from 2010/11, with its defined data inputs, embedded calculations, and reminders to data suppliers and service managers will enhance our data quality and highlight missing or unusual data.

4.3 In view of the embedded nature of our data quality activity it is proposed that the next report to the Audit Committee on data quality be made in September 2011 in respect of data for 2010/11 and annually thereafter.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The implementation of the data quality strategy and action plan has 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 strategy and action plan 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 and the data quality strategy and action plan assist 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 2009/10 data quality work be noted.
- (2) That the ongoing data quality activity be approved.
- (2) That the next report on data quality activity and outcomes for 2010/11 be reported to the Audit Committee in September 2011 and that reports be presented annually thereafter.

Yvonne Woodward

Head of Finance

Background Papers: -

None.

For further information please contact Terry Harper on: -

Tel: - 01702 546366 extension 3212

E-Mail: - terry.harper@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.