
DATA QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress being made against the Data Quality Strategy and Data Quality Action Plan approved by this Committee in July 2007.
- 1.2 The annual External Audit of Data Quality Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2006/7 data was received in January 2008 and a summary of the findings is included in this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following approval by the Audit Committee of a revised Data Quality and Records Management Policy in July 2007, the complementary Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan was developed to assist in improving the Council's performance in data collection, handling, storage, retrieval, use of information and communication. Progress against the Action Plan is detailed at Appendix 1 to this report and key points are summarised at Section 3 below.
- 2.2 A Data Quality assessment is conducted annually by our external auditors, with the following possible outcomes:-
 - Below minimum requirements - Inadequate performance
 - Meeting minimum requirements - Adequate performance
 - Above minimum requirements - Performing well
 - Well above minimum requirements - Performing strongly
- 2.3 The external auditor's data quality assessment for 2006/7 was received in January 2008 and shows that we have maintained the adequate performance achieved for 2005/06, and acknowledges we are making progress towards performing well. It remains our aim to achieve this level in 2008. Key findings of the 2006/7 Data Quality Audit are summarised at Section 4 below.

3 PROGRESS AGAINST THE DATA QUALITY ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 The Data Quality Strategy sets out how the Council will maintain and improve its ability to ensure that the data it uses to measure and demonstrate its performance is of the highest quality, consistent with the efficient and effective use of its resources.
- 3.2 The detailed actions required to achieve the improvement in our data quality arrangements are laid out in the Data Quality Action Plan.
- 3.3 Progress against the Action Plan is broadly in line with the timetable set out in the plan, as is shown in Appendix 1 to this report.

- 3.4 The protection of records and performance data (Action Plan/KLOE reference 3.3.3) is achieved by the current IT and computer system back up arrangements. However, the Business Continuity Plans that formally state these arrangements have yet to be finalised and published.
- 3.5 Similarly, the proposed re-launch, in mid 2008, of the Essex Trust Charter, which is the county wide data sharing protocol, means that we will now review any Rochford specific protocols in the light of any revisions to the overarching framework. (Action Plan/KLOE References 3.4.3 and 3.4.4)
- 3.6 A further progress report will be made to the Audit Committee in September 2008, when any actions arising from the 2008 Data Quality Audit will also be reported.

4 KEY FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL 2007 DATA QUALITY AUDIT REPORT

- 4.1 For 2006/7, the External Auditors declared that, as at 31 March 2007, Rochford District Council's data quality management arrangements were again considered to be adequate. Improvements in the arrangements, made since April 2007, which resulted from the Council's Data Quality Action Plan, were acknowledged and will be taken into account in the 2008 audit.
- 4.2 The overall review of all the nationally reported Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) showed no significant variances beyond plausible or permissible values.
- 4.3 All of the 3 BVPIs selected for in depth audit were found to be fairly stated, albeit that BVPI 212, relating to the average time to re-let Council Dwellings, was amended on audit because the definition and guidance available to the Council's officers was unclear and led to a differing interpretation of the guidance from that used by the External Auditor.
- 4.4 A proposed action plan to address any issues arising from the 2007 Data Quality Report has been sent to the auditors and will be presented to the Audit Committee with the next Data Quality progress report.
- 4.5 Members have the option to review the full Data Quality Report from the External Auditors if they wish to do so.

5 INTERNAL AUDIT OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 5.1 The next annual Internal Audit of Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2007/8 data will be completed in June 2008 prior to publication of results or submission to the Audit Commission.
- 5.2 Additionally, those PI's that gave rise to errors in 2006/7 are being verified as they are submitted on a monthly or quarterly basis for 2007/8.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Accuracy of data is fundamental to sound decision making and the formulation of policy. Failure to assure our data quality could therefore have significant impact on the Council's ability to correctly define its policies and strategies or deliver against its objectives.
- 6.2 The continued implementation of the Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan will minimise data quality errors and thus mitigate any potential strategic, operational, reputational or regulatory consequences.
- 6.3 Failure to implement the Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan will mean that the Council's overall score in future Data Quality assessments will be at risk.
- 6.4 Results of external Data Quality reviews are used to support the reported performance data for the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPA) and thus a poor Data Quality review would have negative implications for our forthcoming CPA re-assessment.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
 - (1) To note the results of the External Data Quality Audit of 2006/7 Performance Indicators.
 - (2) To note the progress made against the Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan.
 - (3) To agree that a Data Quality progress report should next be reported for consideration by the Audit Committee in September 2008.

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Background Papers: -

None.

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