
DATA QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a further update on the progress being made against the Data Quality Strategy and Data Quality Action Plan approved by this Committee on 12 July 2007.
- 1.2 The Annual External Audit of Data Quality for 2007/8 is still underway at the time of preparation of this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In July 2007 the Audit Committee approved a revised Data Quality and Records Management Policy, together with a complementary Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan to improve the Council's 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 The Annual Data Quality assessment, conducted by our external auditors, has 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 auditors' data quality assessment for 2006/7, received in January 2008, had shown that we had maintained the "Adequate performance" achieved for 2005/06, and acknowledged our progress towards "Performing well". It was our aim to achieve the "Performing well" level in 2008 and early indications from the external auditors suggest we are on course to do so.

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 original Action Plan derived from the audit conducted in 2006 is substantially complete as is shown in appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.4 The actions arising from the 2007 Data Quality Audit are also largely completed as is shown at appendix 2 to this report.

- 3.5 The proposed re-launch, in 2008, of the Essex Trust Charter (the county wide data sharing protocol) is still awaited at the time of preparation of this report. We will review any Rochford specific protocols in the light of any revisions to the overarching framework. (See 2007 Action Plan Reference 12).

4 INTERNAL AUDIT OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 4.1 The annual Internal Audit of Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2007/8 data was completed in June 2008 and identified 22 instances (out of 97) where the data reported by departments required amendment prior to publication or submission to the Audit Commission. This was an improvement on last year when 41 (out of 126) amendments were required.
- 4.2 The introduction of a revised data capture process for 2007/8, together with a risk based approach to monitoring PIs that gave rise to errors in 2006/7, has meant that most errors were insignificant (of the order of tenths of 1 per cent) and resulted from manual miscounting or data entry errors.
- 4.3 A listing of the errata was supplied to the Performance Assessment Board on 24 July 2008 and has also been circulated to all relevant managers. Members have the option to review the list if they wish to do so.
- 4.4 A further round of data quality awareness training is included in the Data Quality Action Plan to reinforce the importance of accurate and quality data.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Results of external Data Quality reviews will be used to support the reported performance data for the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA) and thus a poor Data Quality review would have negative implications for our part in the future CAA process.

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 progress made against the Data Quality Action Plan be noted.
- (2) That a Data Quality progress report should next be reported for consideration by the Audit Committee, when the final report of the External Audit of Data Quality is received, which is expected to be in early 2009.

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Background Papers: -

None.

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