



Data Quality Audit 2006/07

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the findings of the data quality audit 2006/07 undertaken by the Council's External Auditors.
- 1.2 To approve the policy and action plan in place to address areas for improvement.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 2.1 The Council is subject to an annual assessment of its data quality arrangements by External Audit. The results of the audit inform the auditor's qualified / unqualified opinion on the Best Value Performance Plan - BVPP and contribute towards the use of resources and Comprehensive Performance Assessment - CPA - service assessments.

Audit findings

- 2.2 The report produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers - PwC - is shown in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.3 The audit consists of three parts. Stage one of the assessment focuses on data quality arrangements covering governance and leadership, policies and procedures, systems and processes, people and skills, and data use. PwC confirmed that the Council's overall arrangements for ensuring data quality standards are performing well, which is consistent with 2005/06.
- 2.4 Areas for improvement as highlighted by PwC include...
 - Formalising data quality arrangements within partnership arrangements.
 - Training for Members on the importance of data quality and awareness of the arrangements put in place to mitigate risks associated with data quality.
 - The need to embed data quality into departmental risk registers and divisional objectives.
 - Assessing relevant staff against data quality standards and targets.
 - Undertaking spot checks on quality of externally reported data, both departmentally and corporately.

- 2.5 The detailed Performance Indicator review work at stages two and three of the assessment resulted in only one amendment and that was to BV165 – pedestrian crossings, with no reservations. This is an improvement from last year and indicates the additional controls put in place are having a positive impact. We need to do further work to address the areas as highlighted by PwC to progress towards a 'performing strongly' judgement.
- 2.6 Specific responses by Accountable officers to the recommendations made by PwC are shown in **Appendix 3**.

Data quality standards

- 2.7 To assist public bodies with data quality arrangements, the Audit Commission has released a document entitled '*Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality of data*'. This provides a framework for data quality improvement across the public sector.
- 2.8 The guidance sets out the importance of data quality and defines the dimensions of data quality as...
- Accuracy.
 - Validity.
 - Reliability.
 - Timeliness.
 - Relevancy.
 - Completeness.
- 2.9 The guidance is based on the current 'key lines of enquiry' for data quality and covers governance and accountability, policies and procedures, systems and processes, people and skills and data use/reporting.
- 2.10 A review against the standards and existing key lines of enquiry for data quality revealed the need for a Council/Partnership wide data quality policy. PwC also highlighted the need to formalise data quality arrangements within the Partnership. A working group was established consisting of nominated members of the Council's Performance Coordinators Group and Derby City Partnership - DCP - Performance Group plus other relevant individuals e.g. Information Management and Internal Audit. This group explored current data quality requirements across partner organisations and discussed relevant issues that needed to be reflected in the policy. This is of particular importance in light of the new national performance framework and Local Area Agreement.
- 2.11 The policy is shown in **Appendix 4**. The policy includes a summary statement and detailed action plan.
- 2.12 The policy and action plan has been approved by Chief Officer Group and has been referred to the Local Area Agreement Steering Group for approval on behalf of DCP.

- 2.13 It is proposed that the DCP Performance Group takes responsibility for monitoring the policy and action plan going forward. Six monthly updates will be submitted to the group.

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Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – PricewaterhouseCoopers report on data quality 2006/07

Appendix 3 – Officer response to PwC recommendations

Appendix 4 – Data quality policy and action plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The results of the audit inform the Auditor's qualified / unqualified opinion on the BVPP and contribute towards the assessment of Use of Resources.

Legal

2. Councils are required under the Local Government Act 1999 to publish Best Value Performance Plans by 30 June each year, which is subject to external audit and opinion.

Personnel

3. None directly arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. None directly arising from this report.

Corporate priorities

5. Our data quality arrangements support the analysis and performance reporting on progress in delivering the Council's corporate priorities.