

Report

Body:	Scrutiny Committee
Date:	4 th February 2008
Subject:	Data Quality Strategy
Report Of:	Assistant Director Strategy and Democracy
Ward(s)	All
Purpose	To endorse the Data Quality for Eastbourne Borough Council and associated action plan
Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Members endorse the Data Quality Audit2. That Scrutiny Committee note their role in leading the monitoring of performance and data quality
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1.0 Background/Introduction (as desired)

- 1.1 The Council has undergone its second annual Data Quality Audit based primarily around the management Best Value Performance Indicators and other management information.
- 1.2 The judgement from the audit states that the Council has not made sufficient advances in its data quality management processes to reach Level 2 and 3 performance Indicators were qualified as a result of the testing.
- 1.3 The main areas of weakness have been identified as:
- Lack of visible corporate/strategic monitoring of Data Quality
 - Issues regarding systems and training in order to adequately provide and evidence data returns
 - Awareness and use of up-to-date guidance
 - Need for an overarching Data Quality Strategy to be in place

2.0 Data Quality Strategy

- 2.1 A copy of the proposed Strategy is attached for endorsement.
- 2.2 In order to develop a comprehensive Data Quality Strategy, three main areas of information were used:

- Data Quality Audit recommendations - the recommendations and action plan put forward as a result of the Data Quality Audit undertaken by PKF have been previously circulated to CMT. These have been incorporated into the strategy and form the foundation of the action plan.
- Existing Data Quality Strategies - Examples of existing Data Quality Strategies from other local authorities and public service providers (mainly Health Authorities) were studied to ascertain the key areas that needed to be covered within the strategy.
- Discussions with officers - Discussions with key officers within the Authority and examination of existing practices were used to formulate much of the specific content within the strategy. The action plan includes activities to build on areas that have been identified as weaknesses.

- 2.3 The Scope section of the strategy sets out the key areas of activity in which data quality needs to be applied and an overview of the minimum requirements. These are:
- Awareness
 - Calculation/Input
 - Guidance
 - Verification
 - Systems
 - Communication
- 2.4 The Roles and Responsibilities section clearly defines what is expected of members of staff, managers and Members as well as the central supporting role of the Policy and Performance Officer. A key area to note is the role of the Scrutiny Committee as the lead body for monitoring performance and data on behalf of the Council.
- 2.5 The strategy sets out the framework for ensuring data quality in the performance management framework adopted by the Council. This covers the current process for managing BVPIs as well as for the new Indicators to be managed next year and local/priority indicators. The diagram included in this section shows the purpose of each step in the process and the requirements of those involved.
- 2.6 The "Non-BVPI Data" section reaffirms the fact that data quality is not just about national performance indicators but should be an overarching theme applied to all areas of the Council's work that involves data in any form.
- 2.7 Risk forms a key factor in managing data quality and in particular prioritising the audit aspect of the quality assurance process laid out in the action plan. Risk covers not only the chances of data being inaccurate but also the impact of inaccurate information being used. Checks will be made on high risk/high impact areas first.
- 2.8 The Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure it is up-to-date and takes into account any best practice identified through the year and the next steps needed to achieve continuous improvement in our data quality work.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 This strategy was developed with input from the Audit Commission and officers responsible for calculating, handling and reporting data throughout the authority.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Financial – Improved quality of data should improve performance in audits and reduce the related audit fees.

4.2 Staffing – There will be an increased onus on existing staff to adhere to the Data Quality Strategy. This will however ensure improved efficiency and use of resources based on robust and reliable information and less onerous audit processes.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The Data Quality Strategy is just the first step in rationalising and improving the data quality processes across the Council. It is important that everyone signs up to the principles and is committed to working through the action plan and maintaining data quality as a priority for ensuring robust performance management across all services.

William Tompsett
Policy and Performance Officer

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

None

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.