Report to Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee

Date of meeting: 15 March 2016

SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

Portfolio: Governance and Development Management (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Data Quality Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee reviews the Data Quality Strategy for 2016/17 – 2018/19

Executive Summary:

The Council needs timely, accurate and reliable data in order to manage activities and meet internal and external requirements to demonstrate accountability through accurate reporting. Data is used for the assessment of the Council's performance, including the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Data Quality Strategy sets out the arrangements for the next 3 years to ensure key data meets the highest standards and is 'right first time'.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Committee has a role in monitoring KPI performance, and those monitoring activities require that the data used in calculations is accurate and can be relied upon.

Other Options for Action:

None. Arrangements to deliver the consistency of standards and awareness of data ownership are essential to ensure the high quality of data. Failure to secure and improve the quality of data could mean that evaluation of performance is inaccurate, opportunities for improvement lost, and might adversely affect the reputation of the authority.

Report:

1.   Good quality data is essential to support the Council's decision making especially decisions involving finance and performance. Additionally the Council's customers, partners and others interested in the Council's performance, need to be able to rely on the data we produce for evaluation purposes. The Council is also accountable for the money it spends and must manage competing claims on its resources. It therefore requires data which is accurate, reliable and timely in order to plan for the future and meet customer needs.

2.   The Council has identified principles and arrangements to ensure high standards of data quality and has for a number of years, formalized them within a strategy, to support

consistency and encourage high standards of practice of data quality management. This revised strategy continues to reflect the principles for data quality originally identified by the former Audit Commission in its publication, 'Improving information to support decision making: Standards for better data quality, and reflects best practice and improvements to systems and processes, including systems and arrangements for the production and submission of Key Performance Indicator data. The Council aims to ensure that all the data it uses is 'right first time'. Therefore data quality arrangements include ownership of data, systems, and ensuring staff have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver high standards of data and data management.

3. The Council also relies on data produced externally by third party organisations and therefore we need to be confident that that data is robust. This revised strategy includes the development of the mapping of third party data to understand the data quality processes to which third party data is subject, and to ensure that those processes are of a high standard and therefore that the data is reliable.

4. This revised strategy was considered by Corporate Governance Group in November 2015 and by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 21 January 2016.

Resource Implications: From existing resources.

Legal and Governance Implications: None. This report seeks to progress the duty to secure continuous improvement in the way the Council manages its functions.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: None

Consultation Undertaken: Corporate Governance Group in November 2015 and Finance and Performance Cabinet Committee in January 2016.

Background Papers: None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management - No issues.

Equality - This strategy sets out the requirements for all data the Council relies upon and therefore includes data relevant to services which specifically meet the needs of protected groups. Service provision which is based upon reliable, relevant and timely information is more likely to be effective and efficient.