

Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2009



Portfolio: Finance and Performance Management (Councillor C. Whitbread)

Subject: Data Quality Strategy - Review

Officer contact for further information: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Committee Secretary: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Scrutiny Panel note the review undertaken of the Council's Data Quality Strategy.

1. (Deputy Chief Executive) As the first stage of the annual performance indicator audit, the Council's external auditors undertake an assessment of the overall management arrangements of the authority to secure data quality. Although part of this assessment relates to the quality of performance information, the audit also looks in detail at corporate data quality arrangements, and is therefore a much wider issue than the than simply a performance indicator audit.

2. As a result of the initial Data Quality assessment undertaken in 2006, it was considered important for the Council to formalise its management arrangements in this area, through the development of a Data Quality Strategy. As performance information is increasingly being used for the external assessment of the authority's performance, the strategy set out a commitment to ensuring that arrangements for securing the quality of key data met the highest standards, as consistent, accurate, timely and comprehensive information is vital to support effective decision-making and enhanced service provision. The Data Quality Strategy was considered and agreed by the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 15 August 2006.

3. The Data Quality Strategy has not been formally reviewed since its adoption, although the Audit Commission has highlighted that such review should be an ongoing process and that the corporate commitment to data quality should be regularly reinforced. The Data Quality Strategy has therefore been reviewed, not only to satisfy the recommendation of the Audit Commission, but also to identify opportunities for changes and improvements to the strategy in order to also address other data quality issues. The revised version of the Data Quality Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. Whilst the Data Quality Strategy will continue to be reviewed annually in future to maintain its relevance, the corporate commitment to data quality will be reinforced through the following areas for improvement detailed in the revised version of the Strategy:

- the establishment of a formal timetable for the compilation and submission of relevant performance indicator (PI) data in a timely manner, to reduce gaps in

- completion rates and ensure that occurrences of incorrectly complete returns is reduced;
- regular analysis of PI returns to validate the existence of an effective audit trail and ensure the accuracy of each indicator and its supporting data;
 - the incorporation of quality assurance procedures relating to the compilation and submission of PI data into the Data Quality Strategy;
 - the sharing of data quality good practice throughout the Council;
 - the production of detailed guidance on the compilation and submission of PI data, tailored to the Council's own information systems, for issue to operational staff; and
 - the routine quarterly reporting of performance against PIs to the Corporate Executive Forum.

5. The Data Quality Strategy has been amended to include all of issues and proposals set out in this report and enable the changes and procedural implications to be more easily communicated to staff. The revised version of the Strategy has been considered and agreed by Management Board.

6. The Scrutiny Panel is requested to agree the revised version of the Council's Data Quality Strategy.

Resource Implications:

None. The review and implementation of the revised version of the Data Quality Strategy can be met from the existing budget provision of the Performance Improvement Unit.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal implications or Human Rights Act issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations in this report for the Council's commitment to the Nottingham Declaration for climate change, the corporate Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any Crime and Disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

The revised version of the Data Quality Strategy has been considered and agreed by Management Board (including the Leader of the Council).

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Performance information is increasingly being used for the external assessment of the authority's performance. The robustness of the Council's overall management arrangements to secure data quality are therefore of significant importance. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.