

Agenda item:

[No.]

Cabinet

On 24 March 2009

Report Title: **Data Quality Strategy 2009-12**

Report authorised by :



Sharon Kemp (Assistant Chief Executive, PPP & C)

Contact Officer :

Eve Pelekanos (020 8489 2508)

eve.pelekanos@haringey.gov.uk

Wards(s) affected:

All

Report for: **[Key / Non-Key Decision]**

Non-Key Decision

1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)

1.1 The purpose of this Data Quality strategy is to set out an approach that will ensure that the data we use is fit for purpose and represents an accurate and consistent picture of the council's activities.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

2.1 Implementation of this strategy will help the Council and our partners improve the quality and robustness of the data we use to plan and deliver our services.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:

3.1 Our aim is for high-quality data to be an integral part of the council's operational, performance management and governance arrangements so that it drives service improvement and informs policy to ensure that all the Council Plan and Community Strategy priorities are delivered.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Cabinet is recommended:

- That the Data Quality Strategy and action plan be approved.

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

5.1 The introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), from 2009, will re-enforce the importance of reliable information. Under the CAA data quality is a key theme within the Use of Resources assessment. Specifically the 'Governing the Business' theme recognises 'the vital importance of fit for purpose data and information to support decision making'. KLOE 2.2 of the Use of Resources focuses predominantly on arrangements for securing data quality and using fit for purpose information.

5.2 In addition, the approach set out in this Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 2), addresses recommendations made in the recent Joint Area Review by OFSTED and Council's 2008 Data Quality Audit by Grant Thornton.

5.3 Above all, we as a council recognise that the data we use for managing services and for making decisions needs to be robust, accurate and reliable.

6. Other options considered

6.1 Not applicable

7. Summary

7.1 In the 2008 Use of Resources and Data Quality assessment carried out by the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton, Haringey Council was judged as performing well in terms of data quality. However, the report noted the lack of a formal data quality strategy for the Council and this was one of the key recommendations from the assessment.

7.2 The draft Data Quality strategy covers a three year period and has been developed to address recommendations made following the Use of Resources assessment. The strategy sets out three desired outcomes:

- Data is accurate and reliable on which to base policies and decisions.
- There is clear accountability for good quality data – everyone recognises the need for good data quality and how they contribute to delivering it.
- Staff have the knowledge and competencies to produce, interpret and analyse good quality data

- 7.3 An action plan outlining the key activities required to implement the strategy and achieve these outcomes is attached at Appendix 2. The data quality action plan will be updated every year to reflect findings of the annual Data Quality audit and any data quality issues that may arise during the year.
- 7.4 The Strategy proposes a rolling year programme of performance data audits. – The proposed programme of audits is attached at Appendix 3. Their purpose is to ensure that data is fit-for-purpose by assessing representative samples of data. As data quality audits are resource intensive, prioritisation will be risk based and informed by:
- concerns around service outcomes
 - the data source
 - previous audits/inspections
 - previous year's Use of Resources assessment
 - analysis of national and local indicator data
 - management concerns
- 7.5 The robustness of data used by the Haringey Strategic Partnership or other partnerships is equally crucial to the Council and as from April 2009 will be tested by the Area Assessment. For this reason this strategy and action plan proposes joint data quality audits of key partnership indicators.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 8.1 Any costs arising from the implementation of this strategy will be met from within the Policy & Performance Team's budget.
- 8.2 Ensuring that the Council uses fit for purpose data in managing services and in decision making is essential in achieving value for money. For this reason, under the CAA, data quality is a key theme within the Use of Resources assessment.

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 9.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced a new performance assessment regime for public Services, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). Under the CAA data quality is a key theme within the Use of Resources assessment. Specifically, the 'Governing the Business' theme recognises 'the vital importance of fit for purpose data and information to support decision making'.

10. Head of Procurement Comments –[Required for Procurement Committee]

- 10.1 Not applicable

11. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

11.1 The use of good quality data to inform decision making around service delivery is key in ensuring vulnerable groups are not discriminated against in any way. It is essential in the monitoring of the national and local priorities and in ensuring that the Council meets its obligations under Equalities Public Duties Scheme.

12. Consultation

12.1 The views of senior managers, performance managers and partnership thematic lead officers have been sought in preparing this strategy.

13. Service Financial Comments

13.1 The implementation of the action plan and in particular carrying out the data quality audits will require a dedicated resource. Resources will be identified from within the council's Policy & Performance Team and any financial expenditure will be met from within the Team's budget.

14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

14.1 Appendix 1 - Outcomes and Objectives
Appendix 2 – Data Quality Action Plan
Appendix 3 - Data Quality Audits Timetable

15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- Use of Resources and Data Quality 2008 - Grant Thornton report (December 2008)
- The Audit Commission's [Improving Information to Support Decision Making: Standards for Better Quality Data \(external link\)](#) is a useful guide to the subject of data quality



Haringey Council

Draft Data Quality Strategy 2009-12

Introduction

- 1 Data is one of the Council's most important assets - it is increasingly being used by external bodies to assess our performance. Data quality is extremely important in Haringey as we want to be sure that information on which we base decisions and inform our planning is robust.
- 2 The Audit Commission now assesses councils on the quality of their performance data under the Use of Resources element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment This means that at every stage we need to ensure that records are accurate and that management information - especially that used for performance indicators - is accurate so that performance information is correct.

Purpose and aim

- 3 The purpose of this Data Quality strategy is **to set out an approach that will ensure that the data we use is fit for purpose and represents an accurate and consistent picture of the council's and joint partnership activities.**
- 4 Our aim is **for high-quality data to be an integral part of the council's operational, performance management and governance arrangements so that it drives service improvement and informs policy.**
- 5 For the purposes of this strategy the following definitions will be used:¹
 - **Data:** Numbers, words or images that have yet to be organised or analysed to answer a specific question.
 - **Information:** Produced through processing, manipulating and organising data to answer questions, adding to the knowledge of the receiver.
 - **Knowledge:** What is known by a person or persons. This involves interpreting information received, adding relevance and context to clarify the insights the information contains.

Scope

- 6 The scope of this strategy applies to:
 - all council employees who need to provide, use or access data
 - all information that is entered onto a manual or computerised system within the Council, whether centrally or locally maintained
 - all partners and contractors with whom the Council provides services

¹ *Definitions from The Audit Commission's [Improving Information to Support Decision Making: Standards for Better Quality Data](#) (external link)*

The National Context

- 7 The 2006 Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 have set a new performance framework for local services, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The CAA will rely greatly on data quality as performance information will be used to inform ratings of the local authority. The expectation will also be for public services to use information to reshape services and to account to local people for performance (Duty to Involve).
- 8 The introduction of the **Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)**, from 2009, will re-enforce the importance of reliable information. Under the CAA data quality is a key theme within the Use of Resources assessment. Specifically the 'Governing the Business' theme recognises '*the vital importance of fit for purpose data and information to support decision making*'. KLOE 2.2 of the Use of Resources focuses predominantly on arrangements for securing data quality and using fit for purpose information.
- 9 In November 2007, the Audit Commission published "Standards for Better Data Quality", for adoption on a voluntary basis by public bodies.² In summary, the six key characteristics of good quality data detailed in this report were:

- **Accuracy** – data should be sufficiently accurate for their intended purposes
- **Validity** – data should be recorded and used in compliance with relevant requirements, including the correct application of any rules or definitions
- **Reliability** – data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes across collection points and over time
- **Timeliness** - data should be captured as quickly as possible after the event or activity and be available for the intended use quickly and frequently enough to support information needs and to influence service or management decisions.
- **Relevance** – data should be relevant to the purposes for which they are used. This entails periodic review of requirements to reflect changing needs.
- **Completeness** – data requirements should be clearly specified based on the information needs of the body and data collection processes matched to these requirements

- 10 The approach set out in this strategy aims to use these standards, which are based on good practice, flexibly and proportionately.

² The Audit Commission's [Improving Information to Support Decision Making: Standards for Better Quality Data \(external link\)](#) is a useful guide to the subject of data quality.

The Haringey Context

- 11 In the **2008 Use of Resources and Data Quality assessment** the council was judged as performing well in terms of data quality. The report states that *'corporate systems for collecting, recording, analysing and reporting performance data are robust and well designed. Processes for collecting and reporting this data are clearly aligned to the Council's priorities and objectives.'* The report makes a number of recommendations which are taken forward in this strategy.
- 12 This strategy will help us deliver effective services and manage the delivery of our targets.

Outcomes and Objectives

- 13 The outcomes we are aiming to achieve through this strategy are:

Outcome 1:

Data is accurate and reliable on which to base policies and decisions.

Outcome 2:

There is clear accountability for good quality data – everyone recognises the need for good data quality and how they contribute to delivering it.

Outcome 3:

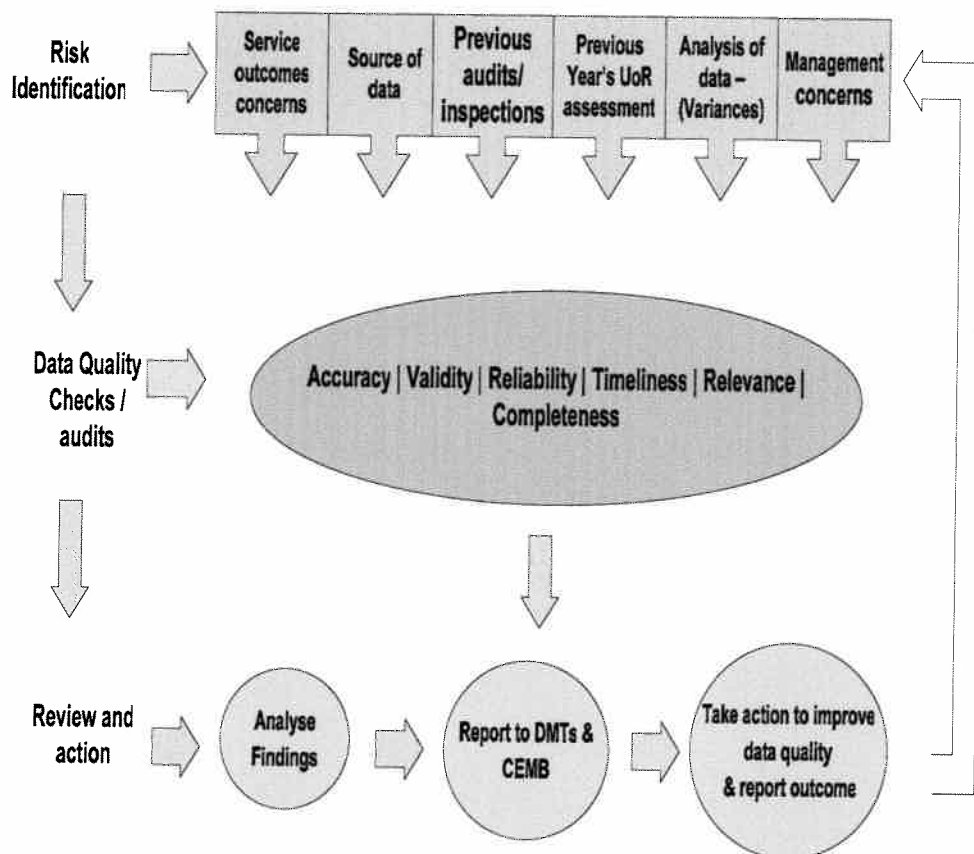
Staff have the knowledge and competencies to produce, interpret and analyse good quality data

- 14 The table in Appendix 1:
- outlines the 13 objectives under each of these key outcomes
 - assesses what is already in place – based on our independent annual data quality audit
 - Sets out what needs to be done to achieve our desired outcomes in delivering this Data Quality Strategy.
- 15 An action plan, shown in Appendix 2 lists the activities we will undertake in the coming year to achieve each objective.

Our Approach to Data Quality

- 16 Our approach to Data Quality is based on the six key characteristics of good quality data identified by the Audit Commission (see paragraph 9).
- 17 The diagram below outlines how we will manage data quality in Haringey from the identification of risk areas through to reporting processes to senior management and then implementation of actions to address any issues raised.

Data Quality Audit Approach



Note: Joint indicator audits will be reported to the HSP Performance Management Group.

Data Quality Audits

- 18 Data quality audits are a key element of this strategy. Their purpose is to ensure that data is fit-for-purpose by assessing representative samples of data against the six data quality dimensions defined by the Audit Commission (see paragraph 9).
- 19 We have developed a methodology for carrying out these audits based on Audit Commission guidance. The audits will be carried out by experienced performance analysts with a good knowledge of the performance indicators and the council. The Council's Policy and Performance Team has responsibility for the completion of the programme of audits.
- 20 Appendix 3 shows a timetable of audits to be undertaken in the coming year. As data quality audits are resource intensive, prioritisation will be risk based and informed by:
- concerns around service outcomes
 - the data source
 - previous audits/inspections
 - previous year's Use of Resources assessment
 - analysis of national and local indicator data
 - management concerns
- 21 Responsibility for the signing off of performance indicators will sit the appropriate Director for the service.
- 22 Directors will be accountable for ensuring actions resulting from data quality audits are addressed in a timely fashion.
- 23 The robustness of data used by the Haringey Strategic Partnership or other partnerships is equally crucial to the Council and as from April 2009 will be tested by the Area Assessment. For this reason this strategy and action plan proposes joint data quality audits of key partnership indicators.

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Data Quality Responsibilities

Responsibility for data quality does not lie with any one single individual but with each and every member of staff at all levels within the council. The following table outlines the specific key responsibilities and accountabilities for all employees around data quality.

Role	Responsibilities
All employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate and timely recording of data on appropriate systems ▪ Performance appraisals to set out individual specific responsibilities regarding data quality
Directorate Performance Officers/ Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of relevant Performance Indicator definitions and guidance ▪ Ensure compliance with indicator definitions and guidance. ▪ Input accurate information onto Covalent ▪ Up-to-date record keeping (not entered in a block) ▪ Maintain a robust control environment ▪ Identify and rectify gaps in control environment ▪ Training/guidance
Corporate Performance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and update Data Quality Strategy action plan. ▪ Co-ordinate risk assessment of systems and PI Audits, liaising with internal and external auditors and performance leads ▪ Ensuring improvements have been implemented ▪ Communicating the commitment to Data Quality ▪ Reporting progress on Data Quality to monthly performance review meetings and CEMB
Head of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring the data is accurate for their service for presentation to Director for sign-off ▪ Ensuring that actions arising from data quality audits are satisfactorily addressed
Departments (Directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall responsibility for sign off of data and the reliability of performance information presented at CEMB and completion of actions arising from data quality audits.

Performance Management Framework and System

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The Council has in place a performance management framework which was refreshed in 2008/09. Our auditors have judged this as meeting level 4 requirements, stating that '*it sets out a clear policy framework and establishes clear expectations and requirements for officers and members*'. This Data Quality Strategy complements the Performance Management Framework.

26

In 2008, the Council procured the Covalent Performance Management Information System to capture, monitor and report performance data at several levels in the local authority and our partners. The system will go live in early 2009 and will increase the sophistication and efficiency of our data collection and contribute greatly to the quality of data across the Council.

Ensuring Value for Money

- 27 The cost of collection, storing and collating data can be very high and there is often a trade-off between cost, accuracy and timeliness. Our aim is to be clear about the purpose of the data collected and its use. Where possible we will ensure data is collected using the **COUNT** principle – **C**aptured **O**nce and **U**sed **N**umerous **T**imes.

Information Governance

- 28 This Data Quality Strategy has been developed to ensure that the way we use data complies with the principles of effective information governance as embodied in the Data Protection Act.
- 29 The Data Protection Act is the legal framework that ensures personal information held by all organisations, including councils, is used fairly and lawfully. Under the Act, councils are required to ensure that only information for which use has been specified is held and that the information is held securely and only for an appropriate amount of time.

Equalities Impact

- 30 The use of good data quality to inform decision making and service delivery is key in ensuring vulnerable groups are not discriminated against in any way. It is essential in the monitoring of the national and local priorities and in ensuring that the Council meets its obligations under Equalities Public Duties Scheme.

Monitoring and Review

- 31 This strategy covers a three period from 2009 to 2012. The data quality action plan (Appendix 2) will be updated every year to reflect findings of the annual Data Quality audit and any data quality issues that may arise during the year.

Next steps

- 32 The development of this Data Quality Strategy is the first stage in developing an overarching information management framework for the Council. This is already underway as part of the work of the Information and Knowledge Management Stream Board within the Achieving Excellence Programme. Work is also underway to develop area based data and the data quality strategy will apply to that.
- 33 In addition, links need to be made with the development of the corporate Geographical Information Systems and the development and implementation of Council-wide policies and procedures for records management, in particular with regard to data storage.