


Haringey Council

Agenda item:

Audit Committee		01 February 2010
Report Title. Data Quality Update		
Report of: Wayne Longshaw – Asst Chief Exec. PPP&C		
Signed : 		
Contact Officer : Eve Pelekanos – Head of Policy and Performance Telephone Number 020 8489 2508		
Wards(s) affected: All	Report for: Information	
1. Purpose of the report 1.1.To provide an update on work being done to improve data quality across the council.		
2. State links with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies: 2.1.The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) considers how the council is delivering its priorities for local people and how well we are delivering outcomes with partners for the area. Data Quality is assessed as part of the Use of Resources and part of the managing performance judgement under the Organisational Assessment. It feeds into the Council priority <i>Driving Change Improving Quality</i> .		
3. Recommendations 3.1.To note the report and the progress being made in respect of data quality.		

4. Summary

- 4.1. The OFSTED review of Children's Services in December 2008 highlighted data quality weakness linked to operational practice within the service. These weaknesses were subsequently reflected in the Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009. In addition the data quality audit undertaken by Grant Thornton last summer identified further data quality issues in Benefits and Local Taxation.
- 4.2. Since then a number of steps have been taken to improve data quality in these two areas in particular, but also across the Council. These include:
- A rolling programme of ongoing performance data audits across services.
 - The development of a Data Quality Strategy clearly setting out roles and responsibilities of officers in ensuring the robustness of data.
 - A series of workshops in the autumn of this year aiming to get across to managers and relevant staff the importance of high quality data. These workshops were attended by 150 managers.
 - Focused work in Children's Services and Benefits and Local Taxation see paragraph 15.
 - Appendix A sets in more detail the work undertaken last year and Appendix B shows what will be done in 2010/11 to improve the robustness of the Council's data.

5. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 5.1. Costs associated with data quality will be contained within existing budget resources.

6. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 6.1. There are no specific legal implications in this report, however it is in the interests of the Council to present an accurate and robust picture of its work and to monitor improvements specifically in areas identified for improvement.

7. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 7.1. Equalities are a central thread throughout the Council's performance framework and many of the performance indicators have equalities implications. Ensuring data is robust and accurate is in the interest of all groups as is producing reliable information, fit for purpose and used to support decision making.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. The preparation of the Data Quality Strategy and action plan was undertaken in

conjunction with services and performance staff within the Council. Cabinet approved these documents in March 2009 and they have now been updated to incorporate feedback from the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

9. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

- 9.1. **Appendix A: 2009 Data Quality Strategy and Action Plan** showing achievements and outputs over the last year.
- 9.2. **Appendix B: 2010/11 Data Quality Action Plan**

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1. Grant Thornton Use of Resources Report 2009
- 10.2. Data Quality Strategy

13. Background

- 13.1 The Use of Resources Report 2009 assessed the council as performing adequately in all areas of the “governing the business” theme, with the exception of a score of 1 (inadequate) for “use of data”. This reflects the findings of the joint area review, the Ofsted review of safeguarding children and mixed results from the auditors spot-checking work.
- 13.2 The report identified weaknesses in data quality management and reporting in relation to child protection, in particular reducing the need for manual checking and manipulation in performance reporting. It also made recommendations around developing data quality checking mechanisms to minimise the high level of errors associated with housing and council tax benefit claims, both of these areas were classed as high priority actions.
- 13.3 This report details an update on the Council’s work in respect of data quality over the past year and highlights key actions that have been taken.
- 13.4 The Data Quality Strategy is published on Harinet along with the 2009 action plan and an action plan for 2010/11 based on the recommendations from the Use of resources report 2009.

14. Actions taken in 2009

- 14.1 Appendix A sets out the data quality strategy and what has been done last year in respect of data quality:
 - A new web based performance management system (Covalent) was implemented to ensure compliance with indicator definitions, the correctness of performance calculations, ownership of information by services and robust audit trails.

- Roles and responsibilities for ensuring high quality data were set out and communicated in the Council's Data Quality Strategy and action plan.
- A programme of performance data audits was put in place. 52 audits were completed in the year to December 2009. Outcome of the audits are reported to the monthly Finance and Performance review meetings attended by Directors and the Chief Executive.
- A series of Data Quality Workshops were organised last autumn to emphasise the importance data quality and to ensure that officers are aware of their responsibilities. These were attended by 150 managers.
- Adult Social Services and Children's Services have put in place Quality Assurance frameworks and operational practices to ensure data is robust with sample audits and selected case file checking.
- Overall good progress has been made across the areas identified as weak and this will be reflected in the Use of Resources assessment next year.

15. Action for 2010/11

- On-going use of Covalent as the Council's performance management system with officers trained and Thematic Board risk registers set up on the system and used to record key risks and actions including any associated with data quality.
- An updated Data Quality Policy
- A continued programme of performance data audits including cross-cutting indicators to ensure that the organisation is working with reliable data and working with partners to ensure the quality of partnership data.
- A training programme established to ensure that staff understand their role in delivering high quality data.
- **Adult Social Services and Children's Services** have put in place Quality Assurance frameworks and operational practices to ensure data is robust with sample audits and selected case file checking.
- A monthly programme of quality practice audits in Children's Services.
- The Framework I support team are driving forward changes that will significantly improve practice, process and recording for all staff in Children and Young People.
- Monthly 'performance clinic' meetings with services in **Adults**
- **Benefits and local taxation** have established a Data Quality board and a dedicated Quality Assurance Team.
- Extensive work supported by the corporate Policy and Performance team including a mapping exercise being carried out for the benefit assessment processes with staff, to identify any issues and address these.
- Implementation of a Performance Management and Quality Assurance System to reduce errors and improve accuracy.