

Stevenage Borough Council  
Data Quality Action Plan 2009/10

Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Data Quality Objective	Action	Comments	Deadline and / or Completed
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Audit Commission Recommendations following audit of 2007/08 data quality							
R1	Ensure new Partnership Toolkit clearly outlines data quality objectives for partnership organisations.	<b>3</b>	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	To ensure that there are clear protocols in place where information is shared with partners.	The Partnership Toolkit is being refreshed in May 2009. The Toolkit will outline the Council's data quality objectives as an example of standards.  A data quality agreement for partners to sign up to will be developed and included in the toolkit. LSP partners will be asked to sign following the annual forum and election of new Board and Executive.	<i>The Audit Commission note in the report that the Partnership toolkit will meet this criterion for 2008/09 data year</i> The Toolkit has been drafted to include our DQ objectives.  A DQ Protocol has been drafted for all LSP partners to sign following the annual forum on 8 July.	May 2009 COMPLETED June 2009  July 2009 COMPLETED June 2009
R2	Ensure lead members and officers are fully aware of the need for data quality when sharing information through partners.	<b>2</b>	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standards of data quality, and communicate these expectations.  To ensure that there are clear protocols in place where information is shared with partners.	Roles and responsibilities of lead members have been set out as part of the ongoing development of an LSP Governance Handbook. This will include the data quality and information sharing agreement for partners to sign up to.	The LSP Governance Handbook, A Guide to SoStevenage is designed to support members of SoStevenage to carry out their role effectively. It is also a good source of information for those working with SoStevenage and those wishing to find out more about it.	July 2009 COMPLETED December 2009
R3	Develop a comprehensive training session for members to allow learning about the importance of data quality and the arrangements already in place.	<b>2</b>	Corporate Governance Group	To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standard of data quality, and communicate these expectations.	A training session on Corporate Governance is currently being developed that will include learning about the importance of data quality.	Research into methods of Member training has been completed to develop an appropriate method.  Member training on data quality was included in a workshop held on 1 October.	August 2009 COMPLETED October 2009
R4	Ensure that the Partnership Toolkit incorporates a mechanism for dealing with any non-compliance with the Council's data quality policy so it can be pursued and rectified.	<b>2</b>	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	To put in place arrangements council-wide to secure the quality of data we use to manage our services and demonstrate our performance.  To ensure that we have the right controls in place so that we achieve what is expected of us.	The refreshed Partnership Toolkit will set out how the Council is taking a lead in identifying methods to deal with non-compliance. The toolkit will provide guidance on how partnerships can address non-compliance through their performance management process.	A DQ insert for the Partnership Toolkit has now been incorporated into the Toolkit.	May 2009 COMPLETED June 2009

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R5	Establish full co-ordination with partners to ensure systems used to provide data are secure.	2	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	To ensure that there are clear protocols in place where information is shared with partners.	The Partnership Toolkit is being refreshed in May 2009. The Toolkit will outline the Council's data quality objectives as an example of standards.  A data quality agreement for partners to sign up to will be developed and included in the toolkit. LSP partners will be asked to sign following the annual forum and election of new Board and Executive.	<i>The Audit Commission note in the report that the Partnership toolkit will meet this criterion for 2008/09 data year</i> The Toolkit has been drafted to include our DQ objectives.  A DQ Protocol has been developed for all LSP partners to sign following the annual forum on 7 September.	May 2009 COMPLETED June 2009  July 2009 COMPLETED August 2009
R6	Establish links with partners for data quality champions to provide feedback loops to identify potential data quality problems.	3	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality.  To ensure that we have the right controls in place so that we achieve what is expected of us.	A process will be established through the refresh of the Partnership Toolkit.  Awareness-raising will take place with LSP link officers.  The process will be reflected in the Governance Handbook. The process will include link officers providing feedback from LSP theme partnerships to Stevenage Borough Council's SoStevenage Partnership officers and Performance & Improvement Team. Feedback will be shared with data quality champions and actioned as appropriate.	The Toolkit has been drafted to include our DQ objectives.  A link officers meeting was held on 17 September. Awareness-raising of the importance of data quality in partnership organisations was discussed. Partners were advised that support can be provided by the Partnership Officer and Performance & Improvement team at the Council, and further information on data quality in partnerships has been included in our Partnership Toolkit.  The LSP Governance Handbook, A Guide to SoStevenage is designed to support members of SoStevenage to carry out their role effectively. It is also a good source of information for those working with SoStevenage and those wishing to find out more about it.	May 2009 COMPLETED June 2009  June 2009 COMPLETED September 2009  July 2009 COMPLETED December 2009
R7	In respect of housing benefit performance indicators, some general recommendations to consider are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor reports on a regular basis to ensure results are in line with expectations; and</li> <li>- Investigate anomalies to ensure they are correct and not a system error.</li> </ul>	2	Head of Revenues	To ensure that we have the right controls in place so that we achieve what is expected of us.  To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality.	The finance performance dashboard allows us to monitor performance on a monthly basis. Combined with daily monitoring of workload through the Anite@Work document management system, this provides an effective 'early warning system' to performance dips.  The replacing of Pericles Benefits during 2009/10 will resolve current issues with data quality and remove the need for 100% data cleansing of the performance outcome figures.	The new Revenues and Benefits system went 'live' in December 2009.	In place COMPLETED June 2009  October 2009 COMPLETED December 2009

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R8	<p>In respect of void re-let times, some general recommendations for collection of data are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retain all work orders for major works projects to be used as an audit trail; and</li> <li>- Record all information about major works and other work carried out on the Northgate system.</li> </ul>	1	Head of Strategic Housing	<p>To ensure that our data quality arrangements are in line with the Council's policy on records management.</p> <p>To ensure that we have the right controls in place so that we achieve what is expected of us.</p>	<p>The following actions have been taken to address this recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarification of the major works definition to ensure consistency across Stevenage Homes staff - building on the CLG guidance.</li> <li>- A template has been devised for recording and verifying the use of the major works code</li> <li>- All evidence is now centrally collated for use of the major works code – including all the works orders raised.</li> </ul> <p>Stevenage Homes is due to have a further audit on BVPI 212 as agreed by Stevenage Borough Council on 2009/10 data, which should evidence that the record keeping is now robust.</p>	<p>It has been agreed with Stevenage Homes that the Council's internal audit service will audit the National Indicators that they calculate on the Council's behalf.</p>	<p>In place COMPLETED June 2009</p> <p>August 2010</p>

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Outstanding actions carried forward following audit of 2006/07 data quality							
R9	Retain evidence of verification of SHL data.	2	Head of Strategic Housing	To ensure that there are clear protocols in place where information is shared with partners	Maintain audit trail of quarterly verification checks to validate	<p>Officers are currently in discussion with SHL to develop and implement a new data quality and verification process to update the audit trail in relation to Landlord Service PIs that are reported through the Council's Balanced Scorecard.</p> <p>SHL has completed data quality assurance checklists for the Landlord Services KPIs that are reported through the Council's Balanced Scorecard.</p> <p>The Stevenage Homes Director of Finance and Compliance approved access for the Council's Internal Audit team to audit Stevenage Homes National Indicator arrangements and therefore an annual assurance statement from Stevenage Homes for National Indicator purposes is not required.</p> <p>As the Internal Audit Team now has access to audit SHL's National Indicator Set the Council will be assessing all three housing landlord related National Indicators over a 3 year cycle. In addition SHL are now required to provide quarterly verification and annual assurance statements (signed off by the SHL Compliance Manager) for all SHL related performance indicators reported through the Council's Balance Scorecard.</p>	June 2009 COMPLETED August 2009
R10	Develop a data quality training programme and roll out training to relevant staff.	2	CPU/HR	To ensure that we put in place the right resources, and in particular have the right people with the right skills, so that we have accurate and timely performance information	Develop Member training	<p>Member training is being developed as part of the planned activity to raise awareness of all elements of Corporate Governance. See Recommendation 3.</p> <p>Member training on data quality was included in a workshop held on 1 October.</p>	August 2009 COMPLETED October 2009

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R11	Consider the number and skills of staff in respect of data quality when undertaking workforce planning.	1	Head of Human Resources	To ensure that we put in place the right resources, and in particular have the right people with the right skills, so that we have accurate and timely performance information	The Council's adopted Workforce Development Plan will be reviewed following the revision of the Council's People Strategy. The updated Workforce Development Plan will incorporate generic data quality requirements, based on identified skill levels.	SMB have restructured the SMT and implemented new Job Descriptions. SMT have reviewed the PO graded management structure. The newly appointed Training and Development Manager is undertaking a revised management development programme. The revision of the People Strategy started in January 2010 and on completion will lead to updating the Workforce Development Plan.  The current Workforce Development Plan is in place through 2010.	December 2009 To be completed January 2011
R12	BV82a (i) Ensure accurate audit trail provided	1	Contracts Manager	To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality.	Set up a formal procedure to ensure that Weighbridge tickets support recycling weekly summary. Managers confirmation of reasonableness of variance between waste collected and waste sent for recycling needs to be noted  Information to support adjustment to county figure needs to be available	SBC are required to use County weighbridge ticket detail for Waste Data Flow.  Recycling Officer (RO) compares the figures for collected waste and waste sent for recycling and speaks to Contracts Manager regarding any discrepancies to ensure that they are valid and reasonable. RO has evidence of discussion but may need some further formalising.  A formal procedure is now in place to ensure that the weighbridge tickets (which the Environmental Services Manager gets), support the weekly summary data initially produced by the Recycling & Waste Officer. This data is cross referenced and then used for updating Waste Data Flow which supports stats around NI 192.	September 2009 COMPLETED August 2009

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Recommendations from Stevenage Borough Council Internal Audit of 2007/08 data							
R13	It is recommended that completed Data Quality Assurance Checklists should be submitted to the Corporate team by a pre-determined date and non submissions be chased up.	2	Performance & Improvement Manager		Agreed. Data Quality Checklists drafted for all indicators in the Balanced Scorecard. Checklists will be verified accurate by Heads of Service and collected by Performance and Improvement Team following end of data year.	The Council's network of Data Quality Champions are assisting with the final completion and collection of Checklists for 2008/09 data.  The few remaining checklists outstanding are now being collected via the Champions and Responsible Officers. A deadline has been agreed of December 2009.	September 2009 COMPLETED December 2009
R14	It is recommended that there may be potential to improve performance for National Indicator 192 by applying the Audit Commission definition of excluding fly tipping and investigating the inclusion of recycled tyres, wood & metal.	2	Street Scene and Open Spaces Manager		Agreed.	NI 192 is now calculated through the waste data flow system, which calculates information surrounding fly-tipping, recycled tyres, wood and metal.  The Audit commission's definition of these activities is fully complied with.	COMPLETED August 2009
R15	It is recommended that for National Indicator 192 spot checks of prime documents are undertaken; this may help to reduce the risk of errors.	2	Street Scene and Open Spaces Manager		Agreed.	Two dates have been set during 2009/10 to undertake spot checks on the data that contributes to the NI 192 stats. The implementation of this will be confirmed during the 2009/10 National Indicator audit which Internal Audit will carry out in 2010.	July 2009 (Expect to be completed in September 2009) COMPLETED January 2010
R16	It is recommended that for National Indicator 192 a second person should check the arithmetic on the recycling spreadsheet, this may help reduce the risk of errors.	2	Street Scene and Open Spaces Manager		Agreed.	The recycling spreadsheet is no longer used; calculations are made through the DEFRA waste data flow system, which has an in-built managerial review and verification process.	COMPLETED August 2009

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R17	It is recommended that for National Indicator 192, some figures on the recycling spreadsheet are reliant on third party figures (e.g. Herts CC and private recycling companies), there should be a reasonableness check to ensure that these figures are accurate. In particular where the Council are paid for recycling materials.	1	Street Scene and Open Spaces Manager		Agreed.	Information entered into the DEFRA system has been tested and audit trails are in place back to the source data weighbridge tickets	COMPLETED August 2009
<b>Additional Actions identified by Corporate Performance and Improvement Team</b>							
R18	Improve Data Quality Status where there are issues of concern.	2	Heads of Service and Performance and Improvement Team	To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality.	Work with Heads of Service to increase performance indicators that are not subjective and have a one star status data quality (more than one issue to address) to a two star status (one issue to address)	<p>A schedule of meetings has been developed to resolve issues in relation to performance indicators with one star status for data quality.</p> <p>The Performance &amp; Improvement Officer has carried out initial meetings with Responsible Officers of ICT and CSC related indicators. Status for these indicators is currently under review.</p> <p>Following review of 24 measures with a one star status, that are not subjective, 14 were upgraded to at least a two star status. Future review dates have been set for all measures, and actions identified, where possible, to enhance the data quality of the remaining one star measures.</p>	March 2010 COMPLETED March 2010

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Recommended actions from Internal Audit of National Indicators 2009/10							
R19	It is recommended the Performance and Improvement Manager should continue to monitor responsible officers for each indicator through the Balanced Scorecard submission and verification process. Any issues identified with the assignment of responsible officers should be reported and minuted at the Performance Review Meetings. <b>(Auditee identified control)</b>	1	Performance & Improvement Manager		<b>Already in place at time of audit.</b> Monitoring of responsible officers and verification process has been in place since the introduction of the Balanced Scorecard in April 2008. Performance reviews are currently carried out by Directors at their Management Team meetings. An evaluation of the performance review process is scheduled to be carried out by January 2010.	Incorporated into Performance Review process.	January 2010 COMPLETED January 2010
R20	It is recommended data quality checklists that have not been signed off by a responsible officer by the set deadline, should be reported and minuted at the Performance Review. <b>(Auditee identified control)</b> .	1	Performance & Improvement Manager		Reported to SMB and discussed at performance Reviews for quarter 1 2009. This recommendation will be considered as part of the evaluation of the performance review process.	Incorporated into Performance review process.	January 2010 COMPLETED January 2010
R21	It is recommended after the Performance and Improvement team review the data quality checklists, any issues they identify and raise should be reported and minuted at the Performance Review on a periodic basis.	1	Performance & Improvement Manager		Already in place		October 2009 COMPLETED October 2009



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R22	<p>It is recommended the Performance and Improvement Officer signs and dates each data quality checklist after it has been received and reviewed.</p> <p>Performance &amp; Improvement Manager Comment: Due to the numbers of checklists, it is not feasible for the Performance and Improvement Officer to sign individual checklists.</p>	1	Performance & Improvement Officer		A schedule of review is being compiled and a review date added to the checklist template. 2008/09 checklists will be reviewed by December 2009, 2009/10 will be reviewed by September 2010. A record of review will be maintained.		September 2010
R23	<p>It is recommended that training needs are identified by the indicators that have red or amber scores or a low data quality score. This should be reported and minuted at the quarterly Performance Review Group meetings, and actions agreed to improve performance which may include additional support and training.</p>	1	Performance & Improvement Manager		This recommendation will be considered as part of the evaluation of the performance review process.	Incorporated into the Performance Review process. (If SMB consider a red/amber performance score can be influenced by organisational intervention and are not solely subject to external factors) However, this is unlikely to be a training issue and far more likely to be a resource issue.	January 2010 COMPLETED January 2010