

**Meeting: AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item: 5**

Portfolio Area: Resources

**Date: 7 March 2011**

## **DATA QUALITY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

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### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To advise Members of progress made over the last year against the actions set out in the Data Quality Action Plan 2010/11 as appended to this report.
- 1.2. To advise Members of the process for ongoing monitoring of data quality.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That Members of the Audit Committee note the progress made against the actions set out in the Data Quality Action Plan 2010/11.
- 2.2. That Members of the Audit Committee support the revised arrangements for officer monitoring of data quality.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Audit Commission developed a new joint inspectorate method of assessing local public services from 2008/09 – Comprehensive Area Assessment. This comprised:
  - An Area Assessment – County-wide assessment of delivery of quality of life for the area
  - An Organisational Assessment – comprising two scored assessments of individual councils; Managing Performance and Use of Resources.
- 3.2. The new approach removed the discrete assessment of data quality and replaced it as a Key Line of Enquiry within the Use of Resources assessment.
- 3.3. In May 2010, the new Central Government abandoned the Comprehensive Area Assessment and advised all local authorities that discussions are underway to determine the future approach to inspection.

- 3.4. The final audit feedback was received in December 2010 and no recommendations were made relating to the data quality KLoE.
- 3.5. At the Audit Committee meeting on 17 March 2010, officers agreed to monitor the Data Quality Action Plan on a quarterly basis and report progress to the Committee annually.
- 3.6. Progress against the Data Quality Action Plan to February 2010 was reported to the Audit Committee on 17 March 2010.
- 3.7. In order to efficiently monitor and record the quality of data reported quarterly to the Balanced Scorecard, the Performance & Improvement Team have set up a Data Quality Checklist for each measure in the Scorecard. The Checklists capture definition and calculation information and are regularly reviewed via the schedule of review set up in March 2010, as detailed at Appendix A (Recommendation 22).
- 3.8. Where the reviews of Data Quality Checklists have identified weaknesses in data quality for particular measures, the Performance & Improvement Team has worked with the relevant officers to improve the mechanisms used for collection and recording of information.

#### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS**

##### **4.1. Progress against actions identified in the Data Quality Action Plan**

- 4.1.1. The action plan at Appendix A reports progress to the end of February 2011 and includes the actions carried forward from the 2009/10 action plan with completion deadlines during 2010/11.
- 4.1.2. The actions were identified as a result of external audit and assessment activity and the internal audit of National Indicators in 2009/10.
- 4.1.3. For effective monitoring of each recommendation the action plan sets out:
  - A reference to the appropriate Data Quality Objective of the Council
  - Actions agreed to address the recommendation, with responsible officer assigned
  - Milestone for completion and progress to end February 2011.
- 4.1.4. All actions in the attached Data Quality Action Plan 2010/11 have now been completed.

##### **4.2. Data Quality monitoring from 2011/12**

- 4.2.1. No significant weaknesses in data quality have been identified as a result of external audits, internal audit activity or scheduled performance monitoring to inform actions for 2011/12.

- 4.2.2. Following 2010/11 internal audit of performance measures, actions are being drafted with responsible officers in relation to National Indicators:
- 157a: % of major planning applications determined in thirteen weeks
  - 170: previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than five years
  - 179: total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the financial year
  - 181: time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.
- 4.2.3. The need for statutory reporting of some National Indicators will be removed from April 2011. However, it is likely that some will be retained as local measures. Implementation of actions identified by Internal Audit in relation to the National Indicators will be followed up, subject to the outcome of the review of the Internal Audit function currently taking place.
- 4.2.4. As the Internal Audit service delivery model is currently under review, the continuation of the assurance Internal Audit provides on the accuracy of the National Indicator calculations has not been confirmed for 2011/12 onwards.
- 4.2.5. The Council's Performance & Improvement Team will continue to promote data quality and maintain the scheduled review of Data Quality Checklists as per the process set up in March 2010, to ensure that ongoing data quality monitoring of the Council's performance measures is efficient and effective.
- 4.2.6. Any significant concerns regarding the data quality of performance measures will be highlighted to Audit Committee through Internal Audit reports.
- 4.2.7. As no actions have been identified to necessitate a Data Quality Action Plan for 2011/12 and processes are in place to continually monitor data quality, it is proposed that there is no longer a need for an annual feedback of progress to Audit Committee.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications within the recommendations of this report.

### **5.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications to the report recommendations.

### **5.3. Policy Implications**

It is anticipated that consideration of Data Quality will continue to contribute to the Audit Commission conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money and will inform the Use of Resources assessment.

### **5.4. Other Implications**

Ensuring robust methods are in place for reporting performance and maintaining high standards of data quality across the organisation will require the commitment of all services.

## **6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Stevenage Borough Council Data Quality Policy
- Audit Commission Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2009/10

## **7. APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Data Quality Action Plan 2010/11 (attached)