

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.	<p>The Partnership Toolkit is being refreshed in May 2009. The Toolkit will outline the Council's data quality objectives as an example of standards.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>The Audit Commission note in the report that the Partnership toolkit will meet this criterion for 2008/09 data year</i></p> <p>The Toolkit has been drafted to include our DQ objectives.</p> <p>A DQ Protocol has been drafted for all LSP partners to sign following the annual forum on 8 July.</p>	<p>May 2009</p> <p>COMPLETED June 2009</p> <p>July 2009</p> <p>COMPLETED June 2009</p>
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	<p>To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standards of data quality, and communicate these expectations.</p> <p>To ensure that there are clear protocols in place where information is shared with partners.</p>	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.	<p>A draft of the LSP Governance Handbook has been prepared and will be presented to all new board members in September.</p> <p>In order to encourage more involvement with our partners, instead of taking a document to be agreed we will ask for volunteers to help shape the document. This will now be agreed by the LSP in December.</p>	<p>July 2009</p> <p>PARTIALLY COMPLETED</p>
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.	<p>Research into methods of Member training has been completed to develop an appropriate method.</p> <p>Member training is being developed for a workshop taking place in October.</p>	<p>August 2009</p> <p>PARTIALLY COMPLETED</p>

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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.	2	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
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 So Stevenage 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.  The last link officer meeting did not take place due to staff absence. There will be a discussion at Strategic Management Board on 15 September on refreshing the role of Link Officers – a meeting will be set after this where awareness-raising will take place.  A draft of the LSP Governance Handbook has been prepared and will be shaped by LSP partners. The final document will be agreed by the LSP in December.	May 2009 COMPLETED June 2009  June 2009  July 2009 PARTIALLY COMPLETED

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R7	<p>In respect of housing benefit performance indicators, some general recommendations to consider are:</p> <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	<p>To ensure that we have the right controls in place so that we achieve what is expected of us.</p> <p>To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The new Revenues and Benefits system is scheduled to 'go live' at the end of November.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>COMPLETED June 2009</p> <p>October 2009 PARTIALLY COMPLETED</p>
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>Assurance is to be provided by Stevenage Homes on the arrangements i.e. whether this is conducted by SBC internal audit or external provider of internal audit, or a management statement from Stevenage Homes.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>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>	<p>June 2009</p> <p>COMPLETED August 2009</p>

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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	Member training is being developed as part of the planned activity to raise awareness of all elements of Corporate Governance. See Recommendation 3.  Member training is being developed for a workshop taking place in October.	August 2009  PARTIALLY COMPLETED
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	The Workforce Development Plan is in place until 2010.	December 2009
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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<b>Recommendations from Stevenage Borough Council Internal Audit of 2007/08 data</b>							
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.	September 2009  PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED
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.	This control has yet to be implemented, it has been raised again in the 09/10 National Indicator audit	July 2009 (Expect to be completed in September 2009)
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

**Additional Actions identified by Corporate Performance and Improvement Team**

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)	A schedule of meetings has been developed to resolve issues in relation to performance indicators with one star status for data quality.  The Performance & Improvement Officer has carried out initial meetings with Responsible Officers of ICT and CSC related indicators. Status for these indicators is currently under review.	March 2010
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