

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Director of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER: **J45**

TO: **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE**

DATE OF MEETING: 23 June 2009

DATA QUALITY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 As requested by Members of this Committee at its 24 March meeting, this report provides details of the progress made to date in implementing the Data Quality Action Plan 2009/10.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the progress made on implementing the Data Quality Action Plan as at 1 June 2009 be noted.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 This report links to Corporate Business Risk No.7 – Finance, Performance & Risk Management. Key risks are seen as:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
Data produced is not relevant or reliable	Low	Marginal	An action plan has been developed to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to secure data quality

5. KEY INFORMATION

5.1 On 24 March 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee approved the Data Quality Action Plan attached in Appendix A.

5.2 Progress has already been made on many of the actions. For example:

- A Data Quality Policy has been produced and was approved by Strategy Committee on 7 April 2009. A copy is attached as Appendix B. The policy is available to all staff and can be viewed on the Council's intranet BEN.

- Divisional representatives on the Performance Improvement Co-ordinator Group (PIC Group) have been fully briefed on their data quality roles and responsibilities. They have liaised with colleagues in their divisions to ensure that audit trails are in place for the end of year performance indicator calculations. PIC Group members act as the data quality champions for their division and have the opportunity to report any concerns about data quality at the quarterly PIC Group meetings.
- A presentation about data quality will be given to the Managers and Team Leaders Forum on 15 and 19 June. Any additional data quality training requirements will be identified through discussion with those groups.
- Risks associated with the quality of specific data sets, returns and performance indicators are managed through the divisional risk register which covers all Babergh service teams. These are currently under review. Managers and Team Leaders have attended service risk assessment workshops facilitated by Zurich Municipal Risk Management and good progress is being made. Any key risks will be incorporated into the 2009/10 Service Plans.
- Data Sharing protocols and procedures are already in place for Suffolk's Local Area Agreement and the national Data Interchange Hub.

Further details are given in Appendix A.

5.3 The Data Quality Action Plan will be incorporated into the External Inspection Improvement Plan and future progress will be managed and monitored through that.

6. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Data Quality Action Plan 2009-10

Appendix B – Data Quality Policy

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO**

None.

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Data Quality Action Plan

Source of actions:

AC 0708 = External Audit Data Quality Report (1 April 2008)

IA = Internal Audit Data Quality Report (September 2008)

AC 0809 = External Audit Data Quality Report (January 2009)

Ref	Report Recommendation	Proposed action	Who	By	Progress made
Governance and Leadership					
AC 0708 R1	For staff involved in data quality and the management of information, accountability should be further defined with targets set through performance review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action proposed. This action was identified in the 07/08 audit, but not in the 08/09 audit. Data quality cannot be forced in to targets. Targets are limited to 6 or 7 and are focused on particular issues and development needs relating to the individual – these may or may not include a target on data quality. 	N/A	N/A	No further action required.
Policies					
AC 0708 R2 PKF 0809 R1	Data quality should be embedded into corporate risk management arrangements, with regular assessments of the risks associated with unreliable and inaccurate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how Data Quality can be more fully embedded into the strategic business risks and service/operational risk registers. Ask PIC Group members to identify potential data quality risks for national indicators and statutory returns. 	Policy Team Internal Audit Service Managers PIC Group	July 09 April 09	<p>Data Quality is captured in the Council's significant business risk register under risk 7- Financial, Performance and Risk Management. However, this will be developed further as part of the next annual revision of the risks and risk ratings by management.</p> <p>Risks associated with the quality of specific data sets, returns and performance indicators are managed through the divisional risk register which covers all Babergh service teams. These are currently under review. Managers and Team Leaders have attended service risk assessment workshops facilitated by Zurich Municipal Risk Management. Currently on track to meet the July deadline.</p> <p>Data Quality has also been embedded within the 2009/10 Service Plans.</p>
IA 1.2	Consideration should be given to using the PIC group meetings as a forum for reviewing risks associated with BVPIs. Members of the PIC group should identify risks associated with the PIs they are responsible for. An action plan should be drawn up to deal with the risks. Each PIC should then feed back to the group on progress made on dealing with the risk				Members of the Performance Improvement Co-ordinator Group were asked to identify potential data quality risks at their meeting on 1 April 2009. No significant risks were identified at that time. This issue will remain on the agenda for future quarterly PICG meetings.

Ref	Report Recommendation	Proposed action	Who	By	Progress made
AC 0708 R3 IA 2.1 PKF 0809 R2	Produce a Data Quality Policy. The Data Quality policy should be supported by a comprehensive and current set of operational procedures and guidance notes that meet user needs and are fit for purpose. Take corrective action where there are instances of failure to comply with the data quality policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a Data Quality Policy, approved by Management Team, and publish it on the Council's website / link on BEN. Ensure that NI definitions are published on BEN. Remind all staff involved in the production of statutory returns, including NIs, that they should have local procedures and guidance in place. Encourage divisions to ensure they have definitions and procedures in place for Local PIs. Internal Audit to carry out a series of checks to ensure compliance with data quality policies and procedures. 	<p>Policy Team</p> <p>Policy Team</p> <p>PIC Group and relevant staff in each division</p> <p>Internal Audit Policy Team</p>	<p>31 March 09</p> <p>31 March 09</p> <p>April 09</p> <p>June 09 onwards</p>	<p>A Data Quality Policy has been produced (please see Appendix B). This was approved by Strategy Committee on 7 April (Committee paper H230 published on the website). The Policy can also be viewed by staff on BEN (Contents > Managing Performance > Data Quality).</p> <p>The National Indicator definitions have been published on BEN (Contents > Managing Performance).</p> <p>During the 1st April 2009 meeting of the PIC Group, PI co-ordinators were asked to liaise with the relevant colleagues in their divisions to ensure that appropriate local procedures and guidance are in place for statutory returns and PIs (including definitions for local performance indicators). A template for Local Performance Indicator definitions can be downloaded from BEN (Contents > Managing Performance > Local PIs) and a directory has been set up on the shared performance indicator drive where definitions can be saved.</p> <p>During June 2009, Internal Audit is undertaking an assessment of the council's arrangements to secure data quality. The focus of this work is to examine compliance in each division against the data quality policy and procedures. For this purpose a sample of indicators has been selected from across the council's six divisions. All recommendations from the internal audit will be incorporated into this action plan.</p>
Systems and processes					
AC 0708 R4 IA 3.1	Regularly review arrangements and plans in place to ensure systems and processes are embedded and operate to the principle of 'right first time'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the next Performance Improvement Officers Group meeting (1 Apr 09) ask officers for feedback on how well their existing local systems and procedures meet the 'first right time' principle. Find out what verification checks are made prior to PI and statutory return data being submitted For any areas of concern, identify any issues that can be resolved during 2009/10. Significant areas of concern to be reported to SMG / MT 	<p>Policy Team PIC Group</p> <p>Policy Team PIC Group</p> <p>Policy Team SMG / MT</p>	<p>1 April 09</p> <p>Ongoing during 09/10</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The 'right first time' principle was discussed at the PICG meeting on 1 April 2009. No concerns were raised at the meeting. However this topic will remain on the agenda for all future quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Links between performance and information management will be enhanced through closer working between the two teams.</p> <p>Details of who checks and verifies PI calculations are included with each quarterly return. PI co-ordinators are asked to liaise with colleagues to ensure that these are kept up to date for their division. The effectiveness of these arrangements is being examined as part of the Internal Audit assessment. Recommendations from the IA assessment will be incorporated into this action plan.</p>
AC 0708 R5 PKF 0809 R5	Map and test controls across all performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact PKF for clarification of the mapping required Produce an example map Agree which processes need to be mapped Provide training to relevant staff on how to map systems and controls Internal audit to test controls 	<p>Policy Team Internal Audit PIC Group PI Contacts</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PKF, our appointed auditors, have been contacted for clarification on this issue. Actions as set out opposite will then be prioritised and implemented from June onwards.</p>

Ref	Report Recommendation	Proposed action	Who	By	Progress made
AC 0809 R4	Formally identify data received from third parties, establish data sharing protocols and validate the data received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a data sharing protocol Identify those PIs / returns that require third party data and ask PI contacts to start to establish local data sharing protocols with data providers Establish what verification checks are already in placed and explore how these can be developed. 	Policy Team PIC Group PI contacts PIC Group	31 March 09 From April 09 From April 09	Data Sharing protocols and procedures are already in place for the Suffolk Strategic Partnership (incorporating the Local Area Agreement) and the national Data Interchange Hub. Work on these actions is being delivered by the PIC group. Progress will be discussed at the next meeting of that group.
People and skills					
AC 0708 R6 IA 4.1	Extend assessment of roles and responsibilities for data quality to all staff involved in data quality and the management of information ensuring requirements are clearly written into job descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action proposed. This action was identified in the 07/08 audit, but not in the 08/09 audit. Data quality cannot be forced in to existing job profiles, but it can be included in new job profiles where relevant. 	N/A	N/A	No further action required.
AC 0708 R7 IA 4.2 AC 0809 R3, R6	Consider implementation of a structured training programme on data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what Data Quality information needs to be disseminated to staff. Agree the most appropriate method to do this e.g. via Managers and Team Leaders Forum, Performance Improvement Officers Group, PI Contacts and Induction Training. 	Policy Team Policy Team HR	31 March 09 April 09	Members of the Performance Improvement Officers Group have been given a copy of the Data Quality Action Plan and the Data Quality Policy. A Data Quality presentation has been developed for discussion at the Managers and Team Leaders Forum meetings on 15 and 19 June. Managers and Team Leaders have already received refresher training on data security and on risk from Zurich Municipal. Ideas for any additional training required will be identified through those forums. Specific training needs (e.g. advanced training in systems use/information management) will continue to be identified and managed through individual staff appraisals

Ref	Report Recommendation	Proposed action	Who	By	Progress made
Data use					
AC 0708 R8 IA 5.1 AC 0809 R7	Prepare audit trails for and review the output of all data reported to external bodies to ensure consistency of data. Ensure data is validated on an on-going basis through the use of internal data verification checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind the Performance Improvement Co-ordinator Group and the PI contacts of the need to maintain audit trails for all national indicators and statutory returns. Where possible, the end of year audit trail information for National PIs should be saved in the shared PI directory. Find out the data validation arrangements for each national PI / statutory returns e.g. who calculates the figures, who checks them, is the raw data checked? Consider introducing a "sign-off" template for end of year PI returns / prior to statutory returns being submitted Review arrangements following feedback from Internal Audit checks 	<p>Policy Team PIC Group</p> <p>Policy Team PIC Group</p> <p>Policy Team PIC Group PI Contacts</p> <p>Internal Audit PI Contacts</p>	<p>1 April 09</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 09</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PIC Group members were reminded of the need to maintain audit trails for all PIs at their meeting on 1 April 2009. PI contacts have used the audit trail directory on the shared drive to save their PI calculations where appropriate. Additional procedures have been put in place for all data returns that are submitted directly to the Data Interchange Hub or, in the case of National Indicator 14, esd-toolkit.</p> <p>Details of who checks and verifies PI calculations have been updated and are now included with each quarterly return. PI co-ordinators are asked to liaise with colleagues to ensure that these are kept up to date for their division. The effectiveness of these arrangements is being examined as part of the Internal Audit assessment.</p> <p>Data sign-off sheets have been introduced for all PIs that have been submitted via the Data Interchange Hub.</p> <p>Recommendations from the IA assessment of data quality will be incorporated into this action plan.</p>

Babergh District Council

Data Quality Policy

Policy Statement

Babergh District Council recognises the importance of having reliable information to support the delivery of excellent services to its customers. The Council is committed to ensuring that it maintains the highest standards of data quality to provide information at the right time and at the right cost. This is essential for effective decision making, customer care, service planning, corporate governance, and financial and performance management.

Scope of the policy

Babergh District Council collects and uses data from a wide variety of sources including customers, stakeholders, partners, other local authorities and government bodies. The purpose of this policy is to set out clear objectives for maintaining and improving the quality of this data, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that robust systems are in place for making statutory returns and to measure, manage and report performance.

Data Quality Definitions

The following definitions explain what is meant by data quality:

Data – any information held by the Council in either manual or computerised records. It includes financial and non financial data, which can either originate from within the Council or be provided by third parties.

Quality – means ‘fit for purpose’ taking account of the importance of the use of the data, and the cost and effort of collection. The Audit Commission recommends that data should be:

- **Accurate** - consistent, correct and collected only once.
- **Valid** - reported according to the relevant definitions, rules and requirements.
- **Reliable** – collected using stable and consistent processes over time.
- **Timely** – captured as soon as possible after the event and available for use within a reasonable time.
- **Relevant** – fit for the purposes for which it is used.
- **Complete** – comprehensive i.e. no missing, incomplete or invalid data.

Data Quality Objectives

The Council will work towards achieving the following data quality objectives.

Governance and Leadership:

- We will ensure that responsibility for data quality is clearly defined and communicated to all staff.
- We will monitor and review data quality through our risk management arrangements and performance management framework.

Policies:

- We will implement this Data Quality Policy by ensuring that all staff have access to it and that a comprehensive and current set of operational procedures and guidance notes are in place.
- We will take corrective action when there are instances of failure to comply with data quality policies and procedures. Significant concerns will be reported to Management Team.

Systems and Processes:

- We will regularly review arrangements to ensure that systems and processes operate to the principles of 'right first time'.
- We will develop and implement a data sharing protocol with organisations that share data with us.
- We will record existing performance information controls and develop a programme of work to ensure that these are effective.

People and Skills:

- We will develop a data quality training programme for staff.

Data Use and Reporting:

- We will ensure that full audit trails are kept to support all data returns to government departments, their agencies and regulators. These will be subject to appropriate verification checks prior to reporting.

Roles and responsibilities

This policy applies to all employees of Babergh District Council and every officer needs to be aware of their responsibilities. Full details are given in the attached Appendix.

Data Quality Action Plan

The Data Quality Action Plan for 2009/10 shows how we intend to deliver the data quality objectives. The initial focus will be to review the systems that are already in place to secure data quality for statutory returns, including performance indicators. The actions will be monitored through the Council's Improvement Plan. The Managing Improvement Group will report progress to senior management and the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee. The action plan will be reviewed annually and will take account of feedback from internal and external audits.

Data Quality - Roles and Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Director of Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic responsibility for data quality across the Council
Management Team / Strategic Management Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to address any significant concerns raised about data quality
Managing Improvement Group (MIG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress of the Data Quality Action Plan • Report any significant concerns about data quality to senior management
Heads of Service and Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and operational responsibility for the quality of data submitted by their division • Strategic and operational responsibility for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to address any significant data quality risks identified by their division • Strategic and operational responsibility for ensuring that data used for statutory returns (including performance indicators) is checked regularly • Sign off quarterly performance returns to confirm that they are an accurate reflection of performance and that they comply with national and legislative requirements • Sign off the annual review of performance indicators and targets for their services • Sign off any statutory returns made by their services to confirm that they are accurate and comply with relevant guidance, or arrange for the relevant service manager to do so
Policy and Performance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Data Quality Policy and Action Plan to improve data quality across the organisation • Ensure that all staff are aware of the Data Quality Policy and Action Plan and of their roles and responsibilities • Report progress on the Data Quality Action Plan to MIG • Co-ordinate the quarterly collection and reporting of performance information and ensure that this complies with national and legislative requirements • Co-ordinate the annual review of performance indicators and targets. • Ensure that the current guidance for all national indicators is available to all relevant staff • Submit the annual return of the Council's performance indicators via the Data Hub
Performance Improvement Co-ordinator Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Quality Champions for their division • Co-ordinate the return of quarterly performance information for their Division and arrange for this to be signed off by their Head of Service • Co-ordinate the return for the annual review of performance indicators and targets for their division and arrange for this to be signed off by their Head of Service • Arrange for any statutory returns made by their Division to be signed off by their Head of Service or the relevant service manager • Raise any significant concerns about data quality at the quarterly Performance Improvement Coordinator Group meetings

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Service Managers / Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that appropriate systems and controls are in place to collect, store and provide information used for PI calculations for their service areas • Ensure that appropriate systems and controls are in place to collect, store and provide information used to make statutory returns for their service areas • Ensure that these systems are documented • Ensure that regular quality checks are carried out on data used for statutory returns, including performance indicators • Ensure that their staff receive appropriate training to use the above systems and are aware of the importance of data quality • Ensure that data provided to other sections within the Council or to external organisations for statutory returns (including performance indicators) is 'fit for purpose' • Check the calculations for any performance indicators returned for their service area, or arrange for the calculations to be checked • Sign off any statutory returns made by their service to confirm they are accurate and comply with guidance (where relevant) • Provide a quarterly commentary for their performance indicators and take appropriate action to address any significant variances • Contribute to the annual review of performance indicators and targets • Ensure any data quality risks are identified and addressed in their service plans and risk registers
PI contacts – any staff responsible for calculating performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate the performance indicators for their service area making sure that they comply with national and legislative requirements • Produce definitions for any local performance indicators used by their service and ensuring that their PI calculations comply with these • Review the local performance indicator definitions on an annual basis • Keep an audit trail for their PI calculations
Statutory Return Co-ordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete statutory returns for their service area making sure that they comply with any guidance provided, and national and legislative requirements • Arrange for statutory returns to be signed off by their Head of Service or the relevant Service Manager before submission
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend any relevant training on data quality • Personally responsible for the data quality of their work, including the entering, storage and reporting of any information used for statutory returns, including performance indicators
Internal audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a check of systems and controls used for statutory returns, including performance indicators, to ensure compliance with data quality policies and procedures • Audit the significant business risk register and operational risk registers