



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Council

DATE OF MEETING: 27th March 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Revised Data Quality Policy and Data Quality Strategy Action Plan

ITEM NUMBER:

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has invested significantly in improving data quality since 2006. This report seeks to gain members approval to a revised policy and strategy action plan which have been brought up to date as a result of organisational learning.
- 1.2 The Data Quality Policy (appendix 1) has been amended largely to bring the policy in line with Audit Commission guidance published during 2007. This guidance introduced six dimensions of Data Quality in terms of accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance and completeness of information. The Data Quality Strategy Action Plan (Appendix 2) has been changed to align with the Audit Commission's revised Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) and the implications of local government re-organisation.
- 1.3 Members are recommended to:
- 1) approve the revised Data Quality Policy in Appendix 1
 - 2) approve the revised Data Quality Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 2

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Chief Executive, Directors, and Service Team Managers have been consulted on the revised documents through the Performance Clinics and Extended Management Team. Employees have been invited to comment on the documents through the intranet
- 2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The performance management framework is a principle part of the Council's Corporate Plan as amended by the Transition Plan. This framework includes the reporting of performance to Executive and subsequently all Scrutiny panels on a quarterly basis. This report is part of the embedding of the performance management framework as data quality is a vitally important part of the process.
- 3.2 Keeping Data Quality practices relevant and up to date is vitally important to achieving the '**People and Place**' priority as well as measuring and reporting performance in the coming year.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

There are specific additional costs to implementing the revised policy and strategy action plan. It is important that information we use to base decisions upon and measure performance is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. The revised documents will assist the council in ensuring that this is the case over the next year. The original Strategy approved in November 2006 identified that by March 2008 a value for money decision would be taken as to whether it was appropriate for the council to seek to achieve Level 4 in an Audit Commission Audit of our Data Quality arrangements. This has been undertaken as part of the review of the Strategy Action Plan. In view of Local Government Re-organisation the view is taken that putting in place arrangements to achieve level 4 within the next year would be unrealistic. The revised action plan therefore seeks to continue to achieve a Level 3 by March 2009. It is considered that the implementation of the Policy and the Strategy Action Plan will assist the council's achievement of value for money in terms of how it goes about storing, retrieving analysing and reporting information.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

It is not considered that the County Council need to be consulted on the subject matter of this report. The policy document itself involves no significant material change from current policy. It is a matter of bringing the policy more up to date. It is felt that the implementation of the policy will assist the council in responding to information requests as a result of work during the transition year. Indeed the Policy and Strategy Action Plan is considered to be an example of best practice which can be shared in the development of the new unitary council.

4.3 Legal

There are considered to be no direct legal issues of significance arising out of this report.

4.4 Personnel

There are no specific human resource implications to this report. Data Quality responsibilities across the organisation are well defined and documented in existing practices.

4.5 Other Services

Data Quality is a responsibility for all services and Service Team Managers have lead responsibilities as Data Quality champions in their service areas.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the policy and strategy action plan. The documents are about ensuring accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete whoever the recipient may be.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to use s accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete information to case its decisions upon. The policy and strategy are about 'getting it right first time'. The policy and strategy aim to assist the council in doing this.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder.

4.9 Data Quality

This report is about improving Data Quality in the organisation. Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The Council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information can be communicated to the community by inclusion on the web – site. The report raises no key issues in respect of procurement, service planning, sustainability, human rights or social inclusion.

5. **BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL**

5.1 The council adopted the existing Data Quality Policy and Strategy in November 2006. A Data Quality Policy had previously been agreed by Corporate Management Team in June 2006. Since that time, both the Policy and Strategy Action Plan have been kept under review. During the course of the last year and a half there have been two documents published by the Audit Commission which have contributed to the need to review the council's policies and procedures:

- Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality data- March 2007
- Management arrangements for data quality; Key Lines of Enquiry- March 2007

5.2 The first document introduced the six dimensions of data Quality as:

- accuracy;
- validity;
- reliability;
- timeliness;
- relevance; and
- completeness.

5.3 The second document updated and improved the previous key lines of enquiry (KLOE). These key lines of enquiry are what the Audit Commission use to judge how good council's arrangements for achieving Data Quality are. The commission used these KLOE's to assess the council during their audit of data quality arrangements last year. They published their findings last month. This was a positive report which indicated that 'arrangements for data quality are effective and improving'.

5.5 The council has worked hard to buildup effective arrangements for data quality and to continue to do so there is a need to update the Policy and the strategy action plan. In terms of the Policy this has been updated to ensure that the council addresses the six dimensions detailed above (Appendix 1). The Strategy (Appendix 2) has been reviewed in the light of Local Government Reorganisation and the revised Key lines of enquiry. It is considered unrealistic for the council to put in place the full scale of measures required to meet performance Level 4 in terms of data quality. In view of this

the strategy looks to ensure the achievement of level 3 by March 2009. It has been restructured to take account of the new KLOE and actions have been built in to achieve the revised strategy focus. Actions also address the recommendations of the Audit Commission audit report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) approve the revised Data Quality Policy in Appendix 1
- 2) approve the revised Data Quality Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 2

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

- 7.1 Data Quality Policy – November 2006
- 7.2 Data Quality Strategy – November 2006
- 7.3 Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality data - Audit Commission March 2007.
- 7.4 Management arrangements for Data Quality – Audit Commission March 2007
- 7.5 Chester-le-Street Data Quality Arrangements Audit 2007/2008 – Audit Commission March 20077.6

Ian Forster
Director of Corporate Services
11th March 2008
Version 1.0

Ian Forster Tel 0191 3872130 e mail IanForster@chester-le-street.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank