

Data Quality Action Plan: Audit Commission Recommendations

Recommendation
<p>R1 Strengthen arrangements for providing leadership and governance on data quality by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of the CIG and PMG specifically for championing data quality; • developing an action plan which addresses common themes from service based reviews of data quality and includes measurable targets for improvement, and keeping progress against the plans and targets under regular review within the forum of the PMG; • producing regular reports for the CIG on progress against the action plan and targets, and ensuring that key messages are being communicated back to departmental management teams through both the CIG and PMG; and • producing an annual report on progress against the action plan and targets for the Audit and Risk Management Committee. <p>Implementing this recommendation will help the Council to further develop its corporate approach to ensuring the quality of its data. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.</p>
<p>R2 Refine the corporate data quality policy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documenting the respective roles and responsibilities of CIG and PMG for championing data quality (see also recommendation 1); • clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of internal audit and of PMG in reviewing data quality at service level; and • defining the requirements for validating third party data and arrangements for data sharing to support partnership working. <p>Implementing this recommendation will help the Council realise the full potential of the data quality policy in supporting and facilitating improvements. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.</p>
<p>R3 Within each service area, evaluate how information systems are being used to calculate performance indicators and take appropriate action to address any opportunities for improvement identified by this review.</p> <p>Implementing this recommendation will help the Council ensure that performance indicators are being calculated in the most efficient and effective way. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.</p>
<p>R4 Put arrangements in place to ensure that performance against data quality standards and targets is consistently covered in appraisals for staff with specific responsibilities for data quality, and that action is taken to address any development needs identified by these appraisals.</p>
<p>R5 Put arrangements in place to ensure that common issues and opportunities for improvement arising from data quality reviews undertaken by internal audit and PMG are communicated to all relevant staff.</p> <p>Implementing these recommendations will help the Council ensure that all relevant staff are sufficiently skilled and appropriately supported to deliver the requirements of the corporate data quality policy. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.</p>

R6 Investigate the factors which impact on the timeliness of performance reports to Cabinet and the overview and scrutiny committees, and take action to address any issues identified by this review.

Implementing this recommendation will help the Council to improve the capacity of its members for providing effective scrutiny and challenge to performance. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.

R7 The Council should review its compliance testing arrangements to ensure that data collected and reported for Housing Benefits PIs is robust.

R8 The Council have improved in their reporting of HIP HSSA - Private sector homes vacant; however they are continuing to experience considerable difficulties in compiling the indicator which could be easily remedied by setting up queries (SQLs) to interrogate the Council Tax system (Academy). More effective use could also be made of officer time in validating the data on empty properties, again through improved working with staff within the Council Tax section.

R9 Our spot check testing found HIP HSSA repeat homelessness indicator was fairly stated. However, we found that the corporate DQ policy has not yet been fully implemented. Guidance/procedures for calculating the indicator are not yet documented in all service areas.

There is further scope to make more effective use of IT in the calculation of indicators. Data has required some manual manipulation which has demanded officer time and increased the risk of error.

In addition there is scope to extend corporate training/briefing on common DQ issues.

R10 The Council should carry out a review of its management arrangements in order to ensure that they are correctly collecting and reporting data in line with the new requirements of the NIS.

R11 We would urge Corporate Services to revisit the recommendations made in the internal audit report to ensure that they are equipped to report on the new national indicators.