WIRRAL COUNCIL

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

24th MARCH 2010

DATA QUALITY ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS REPORT
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1.   Executive summary

1.1   The purpose of this report is to provide Audit and Risk Management Committee with Wirral's Data Quality Action Plan and completion dates for those actions which have now been completed.

2.   Background

2.1   In 2008 the Audit Commission carried out an assessment of the Authority's data quality arrangements for 2007/2008. These findings were reported to Audit and Risk Management Committee on January 26th 2009. It was agreed by Cabinet on April 9th 2009 that a comprehensive Data Quality Action plan would be developed and reported to Corporate Improvement Group and Audit and Risk Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

2.2   Progress has been regularly reported, and at its meeting on 25th November, the Committee requested an update be brought back to the next meeting detailing any further actions which had been completed, and revised completion dates for any still outstanding. Since that date, all actions within the action plan have been completed.

2.3   When the action plan was presented to the Audit & Risk Management Committee on 18th January, it was reported that all actions had now been completed. The Committee requested information detailing the dates that each of the actions had actually been completed. This information is now included in the Data Quality Action Plan.

3.   Data Quality Action Plan

3.1   The Data Quality Action Plan has been developed to address the Audit Commission's recommendations. This action plan also includes recommendations made by the council's own internal audit function during 2007/08 and any outstanding recommendations made by the Audit Commission in 2006/07 where appropriate.

4.   Action plan progress at the Third Quarter

4.1   The following table shows the Audit Commission recommendations and progress against the actions in place to address them as at 5th January 2010. The table also shows completion dates for all actions detailed.

Pg.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsible Officer / Group	Agreed	Comments	Date	Actions	Status / Completion Date
7	R1 Strengthen arrangements for providing leadership and governance on data quality by: - clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of Corporate Improvement Group (CIG) and Performance Management Group (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 PMG; • producing regular reports for 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; • producing an annual report on progress against the action plan and targets for the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Implementing this recommendation will help the Council to further develop its	3	Head of Policy Corporate Performance Manager	Yes	To be developed by Performance Management Group and Corporate Improvement Group	By 31 March 2009	Refresh Performance Management Group (PMG) & Corporate Improvement Group (CIG)Terms of Reference & include in refreshed Data Quality Policy Develop Data Quality Action Plan to address Audit Commission's findings / recommendations & report progress through PMG, CIG and Audit & Risk Management Committee Complete Performance Indicator reviews for all National Indicators able to be reviewed at this stage Develop data collection database for Performance	Completed May 2009 Completed – reported to A&RM Committee: 26th Jan 29th June 23rd Sept 25th Nov 18th Jan Completed for those which could be done at 2008/09 year end in June 2009. Remaining PIs will be reviewed by June 2010 Completed Sept 2009

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	corporate approach to ensuring the quality of its data. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.						Indicator reviews

Analyse common themes from reviews, escalating to Internal Audit as appropriate.

Reflect revised Performance Indicator review procedure in Data Quality Policy. | Completed Nov 2009

Completed – Data Quality Policy refreshed July 2009. |
| 8 | R2 Refine the corporate data quality policy by:
• documenting the respective roles and responsibilities of Corporate Improvement Group and Performance Management Group for championing data quality (see also recommendation 1);
• clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of internal audit and of Performance Management Group 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.

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. | 3 | Head of Policy / Corporate Performance Manager | Yes in part | The third bullet will require a significant amount of effort to establish all requirements for data sharing between partners. This may well bring a significant cost implication and individual partners have their own regulatory frameworks regarding data sharing and audit. It is not practical to assume that the authority's data quality policy will define all requirements for | By 31 March 2009 | Refresh Performance Management Group & Corporate Improvement Group Terms of Reference & include in refreshed Data Quality Policy

Include information regarding role of Internal Audit and others in Data Quality Policy

Agree partnership Data Quality requirements and develop Partnership Data Quality Agreement. | Completed May 2009

Completed July 2009

Completed – reported to LSP Executive July 2009. Issues raised regarding alignment with others' Data Quality |

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					partners. We would look for the Commission to agree with the combined inspectorates how it wishes to tackle auditing data quality and provide further guidance on this to the local authority.			Arrangements which required further discussion. Revised agreement issued Jan 2010.
8	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. 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.	2	Head of Policy for overall process. Relevant heads of service for all indicators.	Yes	Any system changes must be cost effective and it is not clear that they will not incur significant cost.	By 31 March 2009	Adapt Performance Indicator Review process to include consideration of systems.	Completed May 2009
9	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.			No as worded	The Key Issues Exchange framework is currently under review and this will provide an opportunity to incorporate a council policy to address this recommendation.		Agree with Corporate Improvement Group for Data Quality to be covered in Key Issues Exchange process for relevant staff to identify any development needs. Reflect this in Data Quality Policy.	Completed March 2009 Completed - DQ Policy refresh

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					Ultimate responsibility will be for the chief officer of the relevant department to ensure this is implemented. Auditing this to ensure it happens would be prohibitively expensive and would not generate sufficient benefit to justify the cost.			embarked in March and completed July 2009. Issued for consultation with PMG and Audit Commission. Final version incorporating implemented actions from Data Quality Action Plan reported to CIG 3rd Feb and will be made available on Council's Intranet.
9	R5 Put arrangements in place to ensure that common issues and opportunities for improvement arising from data quality reviews undertaken by internal audit and Performance Management Group are communicated to all relevant staff. Implementing these recommendations will help the Council ensure that all relevant staff are sufficiently skilled and appropriately supported to deliver the	2	Corporate Performance Manager	Yes	Performance management group will lead on circulating information within their departments.	By 31 March 2009	Develop a data quality workshop to provide guidance/support to relevant staff. Communicate feedback from Performance Indicator reviews to Performance Management Group and Corporate Improvement Group.	Completed February 2009 and June 2009. Completed Jan 2009.

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	requirements of the corporate data quality policy. We do not anticipate that implementing this recommendation will incur significant cost.							
10	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.	2	Head of Policy / Corporate Performance Manager	Yes	This has already been improved during 2008/9, particularly for chief officers and cabinet. The number of meetings contained within the Council timetable makes it difficult to provide timely reports to Overview & Scrutiny committees. However, in the light of the adoption of the new Corporate Plan, Cabinet is minded therefore to consider recommending to Council a system where five Overview and Scrutiny Committees mirror instead the five agreed Corporate Objectives in order	By 31 March 2009	From April 2009 performance reports will be placed on the electronic members' library 2 weeks after the quarter end and a report will be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting. Produce one performance report for each of the 5 revised Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	Completed May 2009. Completed from June / July 2009.

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					to allow those committees to play a real part in delivering the Council's agreed agenda. However, Cabinet realises that this is an issue that will need substantial consultation and debate with all those concerned and therefore agrees to review the position with the object of taking new proposals, with detailed terms of reference, to the appropriate Council to take effect from the next Council AGM.			
17	R7 The Council should review its compliance testing arrangements to ensure that data collected and reported for Housing Benefits Performance Indicator is robust.	2	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service / Housing benefit section	Yes	Performance indicators have been replaced by just 2 National Indicators for 2008/09 and specific tests are in place to identify errors in recording of data which may	By 31 March 2009	Ensure controls are in place to identify errors in recording of data which may impact on those indicators.	Completed November 2008.

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					impact on those indicators.			
17	R8 The Council have improved in their reporting of Housing Investment Programme Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix - 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 (Structured Query Language, 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.	2	Head of Housing/ Head of Benefits, Revenues and Customer Services	Yes	Communication has been established between the relevant sections to address this recommendation. Work is also underway to reference other best practice authorities to address this recommendation	July 2009	Establish effective communication processes between teams involved.

Effective communication processes between teams involved has been established culminating in an Interdepartmental meeting held between Revenues & Benefits and Housing in response to the Audit Commission Recommendations with a view to exploring the necessary corporate actions. The meeting was attended by the relevant PI responsible officers, Council Tax Manager, the Head of Housing and Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services. The current April 2008 SQL was amended thus removing the error in the data set.

As a result of the meeting Council Tax have provided the Empty Property Team with remote access to their | Completed

Completed January 2009.

Completed – SQL amended Aug 2008

Completed April/May 2009 |

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							Document Management System and Business Rates System coupled with training in navigating these systems; which assisted with PI Data Quality checks and reduced the amount of officer time used in delivering this PI. Thus allowing remote interrogation of CT Enforcement Officer Vacant Property checks which provided a Data Quality check for Audit purposes. Access to the DMS also allowed the EPT to provide screen prints of "Prime Notification Records" thus assisting with checking data quality for Audit purposes.	
							With the assistance of colleagues in Council Tax contact made with Chorley Council who have provided the queries (SQL's) recommended as best practice by the auditor; unfortunately we did not receive them in time for the April 2009 calculation, however Council Tax have given an undertaking to set up this SQL. Once set up	Completed – contact made Nov 2008, SQL's received March 2009

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							we can ascertain if it is suitable for calculating the PI on Wirral. If suitable it may reduce the need for manual manipulation of data to a minimum which was another auditor recommendation.	
17	R9 Our spot check testing found Housing Investment Programme Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix repeat homelessness indicator was fairly stated. However, we found that the corporate Data Quality 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 Data Quality issues.	3	Corporate Performance Manager / Head of Housing	Yes	Data collection will now be fully aided the recent installation of a homelessness IT system. Wirral's data quality policy was circulated by the Chief Executive to all relevant staff. Further training will be provided regarding data quality and Wirral's data quality policy to ensure full implementation. Guidance and procedure notes for calculation will be documented in all areas and will be checked through spot checks coordinated by the corporate	By March 2009	The new IT system to manage homelessness data went live on 1 April 2008 and this enables the electronic calculation of all PIs. Since the procedures for the calculation have been automated within the IT system this has obviated the need for written instructions. Specific staff members have been delegated and trained to run the appropriate reports.	Completed April 2008

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					performance team.			
17	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 National Indicator Set.	2	Head of Policy	Yes	This is already underway, however many of the arrangements are either set by central government or have not yet been clarified by government departments.	By 31 March 09	Complete Performance Indicator reviews for all National Indicators able to be reviewed at this stage	Completed for those which could be done at 2008/09 year end in June 2009. Remaining PIs will be reviewed by June 2010
17	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.	2	Head of Policy	Yes	We have already reviewed the National Indicator Set and refer to R7 above.	By 31 March 09	Include any relevant actions in the Data Quality Action Plan	Completed March 2009

6.   Financial implications

6.1   There are no immediate financial implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

7.   Staffing implications

7.1   There are no staffing implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

8.   Equal Opportunities implications

8.1   There are no equal opportunities implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

9.   Community Safety implications

9.1   There are no community safety implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

10.   Local Agenda 21

10.1   There are no environmental implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

11.   Planning implications

11.1   There are no planning, land use etc. implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

12.   Anti-poverty implications

12.1   There are no implications for people from deprived communities in Wirral resulting from this report.

13.   Social inclusion implications

13.1   There are no implications that will potentially exclude individuals or groups from accessing services resulting from this report.

14.   Local Member Support implications

14.1   There are no local member support implications arising from this report.

15.   Background Papers

15.1   The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
   - Data Quality Report – Audit 2007/2008 - Audit Commission January 2009
   - Data Quality Report – Audit and Risk Management Committee 26th January 2009
   - Data Quality Report – Cabinet 9th April 2009

- Data Quality Action Plan and Progress Report 29th June 2009.
- Data Quality Action Plan and Progress Report 23rd September 2009.
- Data Quality Action Plan and Progress Report 25th November 2009.
- Data Quality Action Plan and Progress Report 18th January 2010.

16. Recommendations

16.1 Audit and Risk Management Committee note the completion dates for actions within the Data Quality Action Plan.

J. WILKIE
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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