

## Data quality review 2007 - action plan progress

Recommendation	Priority 1 = low 2 = med 3 = high	Progress to date
<b>Governance</b>		
R1 Ensure data quality objectives are clear and linked to performance management	3	Wirral council has in place a corporate framework for management and accountability of data quality through the implementation of the data quality policy which sets out the roles and responsibilities of every member of staff with specific data quality obligations. The data quality policy was written by corporate policy in consultation with corporate improvement group (CIG) and performance management group (PMG). The data quality policy is a formal council policy and wilful disregarding of data quality responsibilities are treated extremely. In order to provide clear leadership from the top of the organisation, the Deputy Chief Executive has overall strategic responsibility for the approach to data quality, and leads on this agenda within the chief officers' management team (COMT).
R2 Ensure roles and responsibilities of individuals specific to data quality are prepared, clearly defined and embedded within the performance framework	3	
R3 Monitor and enhance the role of data quality champions as necessary	3	
<p>Performance is a standing item on the COMT agenda. Implementation of the data quality policy began with chief officers and a direct communication from the Chief Executive to all staff with data quality responsibilities. In addition, the cabinet portfolio holder for corporate services also has responsibilities in relation to performance management, which includes data quality. This ensures that the importance of maintaining data quality retains a high profile.</p> <p>Corporate improvement group (CIG) exists to drive forward the council's improvement and efficiency agendas. This includes strategic responsibility for ensuring the culture of data quality is embedded throughout the organisation. Corporate improvement group members act as data quality champions for their department.</p> <p>Operational responsibility for measuring effectiveness of data quality throughout the organisation lies with performance management group (PMG). This group performs a range of activities to ensure the quality of information and data used</p>		

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		<p>in performance information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PI audits and spot checks on high risk and outlier performance indicators. This is now a formal process built in as part of the performance reporting cycle to automatically query any anomalous data.</li> <li>• Coordination of departmental performance reporting, quality assuring reports for chief officers and scrutiny committees</li> </ul> <p>Members of performance management group are responsible for the operational implementation of data quality.</p> <p>The data quality policy states that members of these two corporate groups have specific responsibility for data quality and the members of these groups act as data quality champions within the authority. Their role is to contribute to the preparation of corporate data quality policy and procedures and to ensure that these policies are applied within all departments.</p> <p>The departmental representatives within these two corporate groups ensure data collection and validation procedures are applied consistently within departments. They are tasked with ensuring arrangements are in place for data to be collected on a 'right first time' basis.</p> <p>Further evidence that the approach to ensuring data quality across the authority has been embedded is that this topic has been considered by corporate risk management group. In future data quality checks will be undertaken annually and findings reported to performance managers. Data quality is formally embedded within the council's corporate risk management strategy that was reported to cabinet in 2007. This defines information / technological risks that relate to the loss of or inaccuracy of data and the use of / reliance on technology.</p>

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<b>Policies</b>		
R4 Prepare corporate data quality procedures and policies. Ensure they are consistently applied by all departments	3	<p>Wirral's data quality policy has been rolled out across the authority to all staff with responsibilities around ensuring the quality of performance information and data. This was initially in the form of a bulletin from the chief executive, which reiterated the importance of 'right first time' when collecting performance information, included a copy of the data quality policy and an explanatory briefing note and asked recipients to sign and return a form confirming that the information had been read and understood.</p> <p>Partner agencies with shared responsibility for performance reporting have also received the data quality policy and have received training on an as needed basis.</p> <p>In addition, each performance indicator has its own audit file containing records of the data and notes on how that data is obtained and used to calculate the outturn. These are usually a combination of hard copy files and information contained on the PIMs website. As part of the PMG spot check programme, audit files are examined to ensure that latest guidance is being used and interpreted correctly and that calculations are performed in accordance with this guidance. Where problems are identified, these are addressed quickly through the departmental data quality champions. Since the introduction of the spot check programme, the number of errors found has reduced, demonstrating that the 'right first time' approach is becoming more embedded throughout the authority.</p> <p>The council's corporate data quality policy was implemented in 2007. It already contains the standards set out in the Audit Commission's <i>Standards for better data quality</i> and this document was used in its preparation. The policy is due for review in 2010 and will take account of data quality standards expected at that time, however, the new local performance framework including national</p>

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		indicators will necessitate a more timely review of this policy.
<b>Systems and processes</b>		
R5 Ensure data collection and validation procedures are applied across all departments	3	<p>The process for accurately reporting PI outturns on a 'right first time' basis ensures that separation of duties is evident and includes the calculation being checked by the calculating officer before being re-checked and signed off by the responsible officer. Each PI is then also checked and signed off by an independent verifying officer from that department.</p> <p>A new approach to the auditing of performance indicators (PIs) was undertaken in response to R7. Members of the performance management group and other colleagues undertook validation work each quarter on those indicators that could be reported.</p> <p>The following criteria were used in making this assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those PIs likely to be on the Audit Commission's list</li> <li>• Those having a variance of +/- 15% on previous year</li> <li>• PIs that had issues the previous year</li> <li>• PIs that are in the bottom quartile</li> <li>• PIs that are rule based</li> <li>• PIs that have had definition changes</li> </ul> <p>Findings were reported to the performance management team. A meeting was then held between internal audit and the performance management team to discuss these findings. As a result, it was agreed that internal audit would review any high risk PIs.</p> <p>The objective was to ensure that the systems and processes for the production of the performance indicator were operating effectively and could be relied upon and that the PI had been correctly compiled.</p>
R6 Introduce arrangements to ensure data is collected on the 'right first time' basis	3	
R7 Review Internal Audit's role and involvement with regard to performance indicators	2	

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<b>People and skills</b>		
R8 Complete an assessment of data quality skills across the Council	2	The corporate data quality policy is clear that data quality is the responsibility of every member of staff entering, extracting or analysing data from any of the authority's information systems. In addition, a range of groups and individuals have specific responsibilities to promote and ensure data quality, from the deputy chief executive to provide clear leadership from the top of the organisation, to the calculating officer responsible for ensuring that the PI is calculated according to the latest PI manual and its accompanying checklist. Any training needs arising in relation to data quality assurance and are identified and dealt with through the councils key issues exchange (appraisal) programme.  The cascading and communication of the data quality policy throughout the organisation began with a direct communication from the chief executive to all staff with responsibilities around data quality. These individuals are identified in PIMs as the calculating and responsible officers for performance indicators. In order to maintain the integrity of data within the performance system, only staff who have understood, signed and returned the data quality confirmation sheet are authorised to enter data into the PIMs system.
R9 Define roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the data quality process. Consider incorporating data quality roles and responsibilities into staff job descriptions	2	
R10 Set data quality standards for staff and introduce arrangements to monitor	2	
R11 Introduce data quality training as required	2	
<b>Data use</b>		
R12 Introduce arrangements to ensure consistency of data use between departments	2	All performance information is stored and displayed on the council's web based performance information system. This system has the facility to generate reports for a variety of different purposes (departmental reports and corporate performance reports for the relevant overview and scrutiny committees, reports for LAA programme board and internal management reports for use at team meetings). All of these data returns are supported by complete audit trails within the responsible departments.  In order to maintain the integrity of performance information and data, the PIMs system is administered centrally by corporate policy's performance team. This

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		<p>means that figures entered into PIMs cannot be changed without genuine reason and corporate policy authorisation. This applies to both local authority performance figures and data entered from partner agencies.</p> <p>The council's performance management processes ensure that these reports are seen by the relevant officers at the right times. Performance reports are prepared by corporate policy's performance management team, shared with PMG and then sent to CIG. This group reviews the information before reporting takes place to COMT. Cabinet receives performance reports on a quarterly basis, six weeks after each quarter end. Performance reports are also considered by their appropriate overview and scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Performance reports are exception based and therefore risk based, highlighting areas of concern and prompting scrutiny of whether resources are being directed effectively. For example, attention will be drawn to under performance and corrective actions put in place to address this. Over performance will prompt consideration of whether resources are being used effectively, or can be redistributed to target areas of poor performance at risk of not delivering intended outcomes for local people.</p>
<b>Performance indicators</b>		
R13 Ensure systems are in place for collecting and validating cultural services performance information	2	<p>Cultural Services performance information is presented to meet the requirements of the corporate Data Quality Policy (April 2007) and the data is input onto the performance indicator management system (PIMS)</p> <p>All officers involved in performance data collection are aware of their responsibilities. For each individual performance indicator there is a nominated calculating officer, responsible officer and verifying officer.</p> <p>Data is collected as regularly as possible, quarterly being the recommendation if possible, depending on the nature of the individual indicator.</p>

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		<p>For each performance indicator there is a specific departmental performance indicator manual. The manual specifies how the indicator is calculated and the checks that are made to ensure the accuracy of the data. This document is signed off by both the responsible officer the calculating officer as an agreement to the process for collecting and validating the indicator. An annual verification is carried out by performance management group</p> <p>In addition, officers now attend a departmental performance group so that good practice in each individual section can be shared and common problems can be addressed prior to data submission deadlines.</p>
<p>R14 Ensure correct definitions are followed when collecting pedestrian crossing performance information</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Calculating and Responsible Officers work to the latest DfT news letter and guidance on BVPI 165. The information is contained in a controlled file within which we hold the Data Quality Policy created April 07 and reviewable in April 2010. Calculation, checking, verification and responsible Officer sign off the final figures at year end.</p>
<p>R15 Introduce validation procedures to ensure speed in fixing street lights source information agrees with supporting (prime) records</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>It would not be possible to actually introduce validation procedures at this stage of the current contract (which expires in March 2009) as the repair records and the initial scouting records which generate the instruction to repair are all paper based and there is currently no staff resource available to interrogate these operational records to produce evidence to support the prime records.</p> <p>From April 2009 when the new Highway and Engineering Services contract commences, a performance management framework has been built into the contract documentation and it will be easier to measure the contractor's performance in relation to street lighting repairs and as a consequence the performance figures will be easier to produce. Validation procedures can also be set up at this time.</p>

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R16 Ensure data returns to government departments agrees with information used to calculate speed of planning performance information (BVPI 109)	2	The Best Value Indicators (BV109) are run each quarter and we always run the quarterly PS2 (submitted to government department) at the same time to ensure that the information submitted to government department agrees with the information reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny.