

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATA QUALITY UPDATE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To provide the Audit Committee with a position statement on the current status of data quality audits of the council's priority performance indicators.
- 1.2. To provide the Audit Committee with an overview of wider developments that are now underway or planned to improve data quality across the council.
- 1.3. Key points are:
 - The target of auditing 75% of the current priority performance indicators has been achieved
 - Findings from the audits indicate that overall data quality is generally robust.
 - A plan is currently being developed to measure and improve the **council's** data quality across key systems, processes and functions.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1. Public bodies are accountable for the money they spend and the data they capture. The financial and performance information they use to account for their activities, both internally and externally to their citizens, partners, commissioners, and to government departments and regulators, must be based on reliable data that is 'fit for purpose'.
- 2.2. Historically, the council was subject to an audit of its data quality arrangements by the Audit Commission. From May 2010, under the new coalition government, there has been a reduction in demand by central government for data and a re-emphasis on local performance and regulation, coupled with less external inspection of key systems, processes and functions.
- 2.3. The council is committed to data quality and continues to support the fundamental standards set out by the Audit Commission. The data quality framework is reviewed annually to ensure that the council does not allow the focus on the quality of local data to decline. Well managed authorities continue to place an emphasis on ensuring that the data they capture for their decision making and for external accountability is of high quality and 'fit for purpose'.

- 2.4. We have continued to carry out a significant amount of work over the last 12 months to ensure that our data quality arrangements are robust. Improvements have been made to supporting policy and protocol ensuring that they align with new legislation and internal priorities. A draft Data Quality Framework has been produced. This framework covers data quality across all areas and is presently under consultation with services. Data quality has been included in workforce competencies and training sessions have been carried out. Currently under development is a new e-learning module on data quality that will be piloted in the New Year with roll out scheduled for February/March 2014.
- 2.5. A key element ensuring data quality arrangements are robust is to carry out audits and reviews on our systems, processes, functions and priority key performance indicators. Priority key performance indicators undergo regular audit. Indicators scoring a maximum 5 stars are re-audited after 18 months. Those priority performance indicators not receiving a 5 star rating would have an action plan and be reviewed 6 months later with regular checks to ensure that the action plan is being implemented.
- 2.6. It was agreed at the corporate Information, Improvement and Value for Money group and reported to the Audit Committee that the council would aim to carry out a Data Quality audit on at least 75% of the priority Indicators by the 31 December 2013.
- 2.7. As at 23 December 2013, 78% of the 106 priority performance indicators have been audited, as detailed below:

Directorate	Total Priority Performance Indicators	Audited	
		Number	Percentage
Policy and Resources	31	29	94%
Places	40	34	85%
People	24	19	79%
Public Health	11	1	9%
	106	83	78%

- 2.8. Public Health joined the council in April 2013 and we are currently determining the relevant indicators and targets to include in the council's performance framework. This piece of work is now nearing completion and following this we will be carrying out data quality audits to ensure that the data being reported is robust.
- 2.9. Audits are awarded a rating based on the number of recommendations identified with in each of the 5 sections of the audit checklist. A maximum of 5 stars is awarded where no recommendations are identified and all expected data quality controls are in place.

- 2.10. Based on the audits of the priority indicators where a data quality rating has been allocated, the current average rating is 4.2 out of 5. This indicates that robust data quality arrangements are generally in place. This figure has remained consistently above 4 stars since this method of rating data quality audits was introduced.
- 2.11. Currently there is an Internal Audit review underway of our data quality arrangements, and although not yet completed, there have been no material issues identified so far. Findings from this review will be presented at the next meeting.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1. As detailed below.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1. **Option 1** – That the Audit Committee considers that the current progress and recommended developments provide sufficient assurance of the adequacy of the council’s data quality arrangements.
- 4.2. **Option 2** – That the Audit Committee considers the current progress and further recommended developments are not sufficient and requests additional work be undertaken.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1. The risk in not identifying and addressing weaknesses in data quality is the consequences of decisions based on inaccurate data that relate to resource allocation.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 6.1. An integrated impact assessment is not required for this report.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 7.1. There are not consultations or conflicts of interests to report for this meeting.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. The Audit Committee should consider whether the report provides sufficient assurance of the adequacy of the council’s data quality arrangements.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB

Author: Tony Holder
Date: 15 January 2013