

By: Roger Gough – Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services
and Performance Management

To: Governance and Audit Committee – 16th September

Subject: DATA QUALITY

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

KCC is required by the Audit Commission to have a Data Quality Policy in place covering management arrangements for the production of strategic performance indicators. Following the Data Quality Audit for 2007/08 the Policy has been updated and approval for the revised policy is now being sought. A summary of progress on the recommendations of the Audit report are also provided for information.

FOR DECISION

1. Introduction

1 Data quality and the strength of management arrangements to secure it within public bodies have been subject to increasing concern and focus by government, the Audit Commission and other regulators.

2 As part of the Audit Commission's annual Use of Resources, Local Authorities are subject to an annual audit of the strength of management arrangements for securing data quality.

3 As a result of the audit report on data quality for 2007/08, received earlier this year, the KCC Data Quality Policy has been updated and approval for the revised policy is now being sought.

4 An update on progress against other recommendations of the audit report is also provided below for information.

2. The 2007/08 Data Quality Audit

5 Earlier this year the Audit Commission provided KCC with a report on the audit of the council's management arrangements to secure data quality 2007/08.

6 The overall finding was that the council's arrangements are consistently above minimum standards, which is a good rating.

7 Areas where the council should consider improvements were provided through a series of five recommendations. Some of the recommendations required revisions to the KCC Data Quality Policy.

8 Progress against the five recommendations is as follows :

Recommendation	Progress Report
The role of all councillors should be specified in the data quality strategy.	Data Quality Policy updated.
Councillors should have data quality training provided commensurate with their role in data quality.	Awareness has been raised by providing all POC's with a copy of the Data Quality audit report. Copy of new Policy to be circulated to all members. Performance reports to POC's to include relevant information on Data Quality processes in relation to information provided.
That the Council at a strategic level formalises protocols and standards on data quality received from outside bodies to ensure that all data used by the Council is sound.	An extensive framework is already in place through the Kent & Medway Three-Tier Model for Information Sharing. Standards are also being put in place within Kent Partnership working groups with the Multi-agency Data Group of the Kent Children's Trust leading the way. Data Quality Policy updated.
The Council should report on the effectiveness of the various levels of data quality training provided so that it can assure itself that any data quality gaps in staff are being met.	Directorates reviewing training provided.
Ensure that the profile of data quality is raised by reporting the results of spot-checks of data systems to councillors.	Improvement in reporting of Data Quality and integrating this into relevant performance reports to POCs is in hand.

9 The specific items where updates have been made to the Kent County Council Data Quality policy as a result of the audit report are :

- The role of councillors
- Information and guidance on training
- Further guidance on reporting of data quality issues
- Additional standards in relation to data quality received from outside bodies

10 It was the council's expressed intention to review the Data Quality Policy on a regular basis and a number of other minor changes in wording and emphasis have also been made at this time, which were not specific recommendations from the Audit Commission.

4. Recommendation

11 Members are asked to APPROVE the revised Data Quality Policy.

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