

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Data Quality Policy

Date September 2009
Corporate Performance Team

INTRODUCTION

Arrangements for data quality form part of corporate performance management and governance which focus upon achieving the Council's aims and objectives. Accurate, timely and readily available information allows managers to make informed decisions to improve service delivery.

Middlesbrough Council aspires to the highest quality data and achieving 100% accuracy, 100% of the time. A philosophy of continuous improvement is adopted, to produce accurate information that reflects actual performance.

There is an emphasis on the 'right first time' approach, rather than spending time amending errors later in the process.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Middlesbrough Council will have high quality, accurate and timely information, by establishing working practices which:

- ensure that the information used is consistent, timely, comprehensive and held securely and confidentially when appropriate;
- make Middlesbrough Council a high performing authority in the reporting of accurate, reliable and consistent data;
- ensure confidence in the data used to manage services and demonstrate performance;
- meet external best practice guidance and audit standards;
- facilitate processes to ensure the sharing of high quality data with partners.

SCOPE OF DATA QUALITY POLICY

This data quality policy uses nationally recognised principles as a foundation and applies them to the collection, recording and analysis of all data across the Council, in all business areas.

Diverse activities, across different departments, produce many forms of data. Specific data sets may be subject to different regulations (for example, financial data is managed in accordance with CIPFA rules). However, all data output recognises the overarching data quality principles. Where no specific separate regulations operate, the Council's minimum standard for Data Quality is applied to the relevant data processes. This includes any information regularly reported, either internally or externally, upon which decisions are made. For example:

- National Performance Indicators
- Local Performance indicators
- Planned Actions data
- LAA performance reporting
- All performance information stored within the electronic performance and risk management system

There is a need to achieve a balance between the resources required to set and meet data quality standards and the relative benefits that are released. This will be taken into account,

by focusing resources on data that is key to achieving the Council's overall objectives. This approach is proportionate to achieve the balance between accuracy and timeliness.

DATA QUALITY MINIMUM STANDARD

Middlesbrough Council's Minimum Standard for Data Quality focuses on ensuring that the components to achieve high quality data are in place across all services. This approach recognises the differing circumstances that apply between services, but sets out the minimum data quality standards which must be present across all processes whatever their different applications may be. These standards are relevant to staff at all levels and the document includes a detailed roles and responsibilities section setting out expectations to ensure high data quality.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND THIRD PARTY DATA

The Council is committed to working with partners to achieve the objectives of the Local Area Agreement and to deliver joined-up public services. A formal set of quality requirements is applied to all data used by the Council which is shared or which is provided by partner organisations. Ongoing dialogue with partners ensures that information-sharing arrangements continue to be strengthened to ensure continually improving arrangements.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The approach to data quality will be monitored by the Corporate Performance Team. This will include:

- Reporting of issues to Corporate Performance Management Group meetings for discussion and resolution.
- Quarterly reporting of appropriate issues to senior management via the Performance Clinics.
- Ad hoc reporting to the Audit Committee, for relevant issues

Procedures for data capture, processing and storage will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are applied consistently.

Data quality is considered within the corporate risk management arrangements. Risks relating to data quality are subject to the established monitoring and reporting processes.

COMMUNICATION

This Data Quality Policy is readily available to staff and Members via the Lotus Notes Tile system. Policy revisions and updates will be subject to a formal communication process to Members, staff, and partners to ensure all stakeholders are fully aware.

The Minimum Standard for Data Quality is also available via Lotus Notes, Performance Management Tile.