

**FINAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**28 JUNE 2007**

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**DATA QUALITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**

**Purpose of Report**

The Committee is asked to consider and approve the Data Quality Policy and Action Plan.

**Background**

This Policy and Action Plan takes into account the report on the Data Quality Inspection undertaken by the Audit Commission in 2006 and reported in their Annual Governance Report. The County Council's management arrangements for data quality were assessed as adequate (scoring in 2006 was either adequate or inadequate) with some elements of good practice in place, but room for improvement. This equated to a pass in terms of the VFM conclusion criteria for data quality. The Audit Commission recommended that the authority develop a detailed policy for data quality with clearly defined actions, timescales and roles and responsibilities for both officers and those charged with governance.

The Audit Commission view is that good quality data *"is the essential ingredient for reliable performance and financial information. The data must be fit for purpose, representing in an accurate and timely manner the organisation's activity. At the same time, a balance must be achieved between the importance of the information requirement and the cost of collecting the supporting data with the necessary accuracy, detail and timeliness. To achieve this balance, public bodies need to determine their information priorities and put in place appropriate arrangements to secure the quality of their data."* The formulation of a Corporate Data Quality Policy is an important step in achieving data quality practices and is part of good Information Management.

Implementation of the major developmental aspects of the Data Quality Strategy is through the programme and project areas listed in the associated Action Plan. The scope of the Action Plan includes major developments only, given the very wide ranging, pervasive and detailed nature of data handling across the authority. These developments have substantive impacts across a range of service functions or generically across the authority. The programmed developments are costed within existing Departmental budgets.

The main anticipated outcomes of delivering the Data Quality Action Plan overall are:

- Improved accountability for data quality issues.
- An increased awareness of data quality and its importance.
- An increased commitment to data quality by the Council.
- A strengthened performance management framework.

The future review, updating and delivery of this Data Quality Policy will be carried out through the function of the Information Management Team.

### **Reason for Proposal**

To improve the County Council's management arrangements for data quality with clearly defined actions, timescales and roles and responsibilities and to respond to the recommendation of the Audit Commission.

### **Proposal**

The Committee is asked to approve the Data Quality Policy and Action Plan and to note that the future review, updating and delivery of the Policy would be undertaken through the function of the Information Management Team.

**TIM GREGORY**  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PROCUREMENT & IT**

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