

# RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER SCHEME OF DELEGATION BY MEMBER OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM IN CONSULTATION WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER/COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



<b>SMT Member:</b>	Gary Hall
<b>Service Group:</b>	Policy, Performance and Partnerships
<b>Portfolio Holder/Chairman:</b>	Councillor Paul Foster
<b>Portfolio/Committee:</b>	Leader

<b>Subject:</b>	Data Quality Policy – Review and Refresh 2019
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<b>Decision:</b>	To note and adopt the revised Data Quality Policy pertaining to performance and reporting by the Council.
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<b>Details and Reasoning:</b>	<p>The significance of data quality should be understood in terms of the need for reliable information to provide the Council with the data it needs to deliver and manage services, inform users and improve performance.</p> <p>Good quality, accurate and timely data is essential in the provision of reliable performance and financial information to support decision-making at all levels.</p> <p>A concern over data quality prompted a review of the current data quality policy and to revise existing performance measures against the context of the revision of the Corporate Plan. The concern over data quality was highlighted following an internal audit review in 2019 and subsequently a further review within the same year which confirmed a series of issues with the reliability, calculation and definition of a range of performance measures.</p> <p><b>Review of Current Policy</b></p> <p>The existing Data Quality Policy was published in April 2014 and relates to all the information and the quality of data that is managed through processes and systems within the council. Since the adoption of this policy in 2014 there has been a number of changes to the Council in terms of its structures and processes internally. These changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ organisation restructures,</li> <li>▶ changes to policies and strategies</li> <li>▶ external legislation, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</li> </ul> <p><b>Data Quality Issues</b></p> <p>Internal audit undertook a summary of testing of Performance Indicators for the period 18/19 &amp; 19/20. The findings demonstrate significant concern and need for immediate action to improve overall data quality.</p> <p>Amongst the findings the areas that cause concern are focused around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Poor data definitions and collection procedures;</li> </ul>
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- ▶ A number of reported figures/performance measures have found to be incorrect;
- ▶ There is an overall lack of compliance with the Data quality Policy.

### **Revised Draft Data Quality Policy**

The revised Data Quality Policy aims to address the issues found by Internal Audit and shape the policy to reflect the change in structures and processes that have been implemented in the organisation over the past few years.

The Data Quality Policy 2019 draws on best practise from other local authorities and the former Audit Commissions 'Standards for better performance'.

As part of the reviewing process, various authorities' policies were scrutinised including Durham and Wigan Councils. Both councils have received a number of external awards for good practice, innovation and achievement in the last 5 years.

### **Key Elements of the Revised Policy**

To drive forward improvements required the revised policy sets out:

- ▶ Clear roles and responsibilities across the organisation for both members and officers
- ▶ A revised Data Definition and Procedure template
- ▶ Glossary to set out clear definitions for key terms
- ▶ An Action Plan that defines a series of actions to be undertaken as part of improvement;
  - Data Quality to be incorporated in performance development objectives and team briefs
  - Development of step by step guidance notes for officers
  - Training workshops for officers to develop performance measures and reporting
  - Regime of data quality assurance checks each quarter by the Policy, Performance and Partnerships team

### **Wider Implications (including Financial, Legal, Equality and Risk):**

There are a number of significant risks associated with not addressing the issues of Data quality and a poor performance framework. These risks can be legal, financial and reputational. They include:

- ▶ An absence of reliable performance information;
- ▶ Ineffectual and poor decision making;
- ▶ Non-compliance with legislation and increased risk of legal action being taken out against the Council;
- ▶ Unsatisfactory service delivery;
- ▶ Financial losses and penalties imposed on the Council;
- ▶ Negative impact on the South Ribble Councils' business and service delivery.

The revised policy seeks to address and mitigate these risks.

Report attached?  
Exempt from publication?  
If exempt, give reason(s):

Data Quality Policy

No

Signed:

J. Blundell

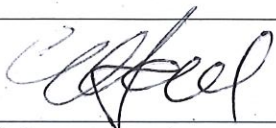
Date: 12/2/20

Financial  
Management



Date: 12/2/20

Legal  
Services



Date: 12/2/20

SMT Member



Date: 12/02/20

Portfolio  
Holder/  
Chairman

Publication Date (DST use):

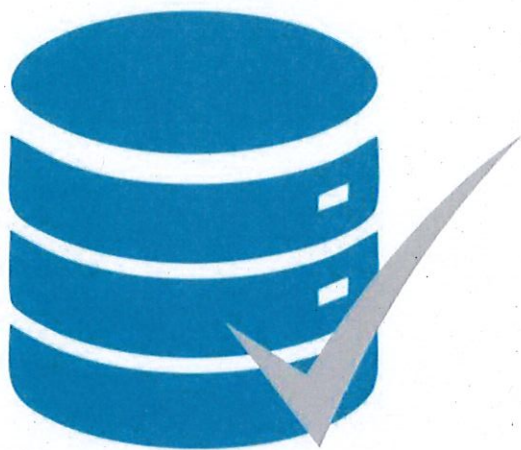
Decision template revised June 2013

**THIS DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE AND MAY BE IMPLEMENTED FIVE  
WORKING DAYS AFTER ITS PUBLICATION DATE, SUBJECT TO BEING  
CALLED IN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**



# Data Quality Policy

## 2019



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# Document Control

Document Title: Data Quality Policy

## Summary

Publication Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2019
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Performance Management Framework 2019</li><li>▶ Data Protection Policy</li></ul>
Strategy Owner (Name/Position)	Chief Executive
Strategy Author (Team)	Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Applies to	All Council services, elected members and staff

## Review of Strategy

Review Date	Redrafted October 2019
	Updated December 2019 – minor formatting and language amendments





## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. South Ribble Borough Council is committed to high standards of data quality. Every care will be taken to ensure that the data and information used to support decision-making is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete in line with the corporate Data Quality Policy.
- 1.2. South Ribble Borough Council recognises the importance that reliable information has on its ability to deliver and manage services, inform users and improve performance. Good quality, accurate and timely data is essential in the provision of reliable performance and financial information to support decision-making at all levels.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The document relates to:
  - All information that is reported or entered onto a manual or computerised system within the Council, whether centrally or locally maintained.
- 2.2. This document applies to anyone who needs to provide, use or access this data as part of their duties, including:
  - All employees, including those working from home or other remote/off site locations;
  - Elected members;
  - All other workers (including casual / agency workers, secondees and contractors) using the council's equipment and computer network;
  - Any other person permitted to use South Ribble Borough Council's computer systems.
  - Owned and managed by partner agencies where data is supplied to South Ribble Borough Council as a community leader and lead authority responsible for operating the performance management framework on behalf of partners.
- 2.3. Arrangements to secure data quality for all other workers (including casual / agency workers, secondees and contractors) will be through inclusion of relevant clauses in procurement contracts and, for partner agencies through data sharing protocols with key partners.
- 2.4. The policy outlines good practice and identifies the roles and responsibilities of both the Council and its employees in terms of data quality.

## **3. Our Policy**

- 3.1. South Ribble Council needs reliable, accurate and timely information to manage our services and account for our performance. In other words, we need to ensure that the information we use to make decisions, is of a high quality
- 3.2. There should be a balance between the requirement to enforce high standards of information and data quality and the costs and resources required to deliver it. To achieve this balance we need to determine our information requirements and put in place appropriate arrangements to secure the quality of data.
- 3.3. The council recognises that the level of tolerance regarding data quality can fluctuate depending on the perceptions or the requirements of the users. The council is dedicated to achieving the highest standard of data quality applicable, in all circumstances.
- 3.4. As data has become more accessible through digital and social media, there is a further need to ensure that any social media accounts and the 'data' we publish through these channels, meets our high standards of data quality and adheres to the Council's Social Media Policy.
- 3.5. The council wants to be accountable for the services that are provided and to ensure that we achieve consistently high standards of data quality. To accomplish this, the Council aims to present



information and data according to the key characteristics and guidelines of quality data outlined below;



### **Accurate**

Data should be sufficiently accurate for its intended purposes. Data should only be captured once, although it may have multiple uses. Data is most likely to be accurate when attained as close to the point of activity as possible. The need for accuracy must be balanced with the importance of the uses for the data, and the cost and effort of collection. Where compromises have to be made on accuracy, the resulting limitations of the data should be made clear to users.

### **Valid**

Data should be recorded and used in compliance with all relevant requirements, including the correct application of any rules or definitions. This will ensure consistency between periods and with similar organisations.

### **Reliable**

All data should be the product of stable and consistent data collection processes whether using manual, computer-based systems or a combination of both. Data should represent current positions.

### **Timely**

Data should be captured as quickly as possible after the event or activity and must be available for the intended use within a reasonable time period. Data must be available quickly and frequently enough to support information needs and to influence the appropriate level of service or management decisions

### **Relevant**

Data captured should be relevant to the purposes for which it is used. This entails periodic review of requirements to reflect changing needs.

### **Complete**

Data requirements should be clearly specified based on the information needs of the organisation and data collection processes matched to these requirements. Monitoring missing, incomplete, or invalid records can provide an indication of data quality and can also point to problems in the recording of certain data items.

**3.6.** There are three key areas of focus that outline our approach to data quality. These are

- ▶ **Awareness,**
- ▶ **Collecting and Reporting**
- ▶ **Evaluation.**

**3.7. Awareness** – Everyone is aware of why data quality is important and understands what is expected of them.

- Responsibility for data quality is clearly assigned and everyone understands their role as set out in section 6.
- Staff at all levels recognise why data quality is important and it is seen as 'part of the day job'.
- We make partners aware of the value we place on data quality and set high standards.

**3.8. Collection and Reporting** – Our processes and systems for collecting and recording data are fit for purpose and operate according to the principle of 'right first time'.

- Indicator definitions and associated guidance are readily available and well understood.
- Systems and processes are designed according to our data needs and have proportionate quality controls.
- Procedure notes, guidelines and training are used to ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to correctly collect and record data.
- Data is held securely and used and shared in compliance with all legal requirements.

**3.9. Evaluation** – We evaluate our data and the systems and processes behind it. We also check the Data Quality Policy is being adhered to.

- Performance data is subject to proportionate verification to check accuracy, validity, relevance and completeness.
- Arrangements for producing performance data are evaluated proactively and any deficiencies reported and remedied.
- Performance indicator outturns are supported by clear evidence to demonstrate their accuracy and are signed off at a senior level.
- There are arrangements for evaluating whether the Data Quality Policy is being adhered to.



## 4. Applying the policy

4.1. This policy applies to all employees of South Ribble Borough Council, as all staff have a responsibility for data quality. It is accepted, however that certain officers will have a greater lead responsibility for activities to secure a high standard of data quality. All Directors and Assistant Directors will have lead responsibility for data quality in their respective directorates. The Corporate Policy and Partnership Team has the lead responsibility for the formulation of policy and overall review. Corporate Policy and Partnerships will work closely with Internal Audit where appropriate to help improve data quality throughout the organisation.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Below provides a detailed explanation of the specific roles and responsibilities in relation to using, managing and improving the quality of South Ribble Borough Council's data.

### 5.1. All staff and Members

All staff must ensure compliance with relevant process documentation. This includes:

- Read, understand and follow this policy and any associated procedures that relate to the capture, use and management of Council data;
- Handle Council data in a way which is responsible and take reasonable steps to ensure that data is accurate and up to date in line with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Communicate any risks or concerns to line managers concerning the capture or use of data.

### 5.2. The roles of Elected Members

#### **Cabinet**

Cabinet is responsible for the strategic management and effective governance of all services. The Cabinet challenge performance data quality and are responsible for establishing a scheme of governance for the approval and formal review of relevant policies, plans and strategies.

#### **Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel**

Scrutiny Committee examine the decisions of the Cabinet and contribute to the development of relevant policies, plans and strategies. Scrutiny committee are responsible for the challenge of performance data quality.

#### **Governance Committee**

Governance Committee provides an independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes.



### 5.3. The Role of Officers

#### Chief Executive:

- Sets the operational management and strategic direction of the council
- Overall responsibility of all officers and must ensure that council process documents comply with good practice guidance, legal and statutory requirement

#### Directors

- Ensure that an overall culture exists, that values and protects information within the council
- Advising the chief executive on any information risk aspects and reporting annually within the council's annual governance statement
- Responsible for ensuring that the information relating to their service is accurate and procedures are in place to assure quality
- Act as data quality champions to take responsibility for data quality and the driving of data quality improvements within their respective service areas

#### Data Owners

(Including Assistant Directors/Service Leads)

Responsible for information in their service and all systems (used to collect and store data) to ensure ownership, access, usage and transfer to ensure business is transacted within an acceptable level of risk.

- Ensure staff understand the importance of quality data and have the necessary skills, and knowledge required to capture, process and deliver high quality data
- Performance definitions, procedure notes and defined methodologies for each indicator, ensuring calculations are the same each time and that business continuity is in place to cover for absent staff
- Make sure that data collection systems are robust, including undertaking risk based assessments of data collection and spot checks
- Validate and check Calculation and Input Officer data on the performance management system, ensuring that data complies with the Council's Data Quality Policy
- Validate 3rd party data, this will include ensuring that data complies with the Council's Data Quality Policy
- Act as Data Champions and comply with the Data Quality Policy and all relevant process documentation
- Highlight and share information on potential data quality issues. Address all data sharing complications
- Co-ordinate and oversee the performance data audit process and take part in required audits
- Attend data quality workshops and training

#### Calculation and Input Officers (Data Collectors)

Calculation and Input Officers must comply with all Council Information Governance policies and refer breaches to their respective Assistant Director or Service Manager.

- Collect, calculate, input, store and retrieve performance data to the highest quality
- Entry of initial data onto the performance management system ensuring that data complies with the Council's Data Quality Policy and relevant process documentation
- Retain sufficient information to support calculations and reported results (for purposes of audit)
- Identify and apply measures to improve the quality of data
- Reporting and following action plans where concerns in Data Quality have been identified by Audit/ Directors/Assistant Directors/ Service Managers/ Corporate Policy and Partnerships Team
- Never knowingly use inaccurate or incomplete data for reporting purposes, and highlight any known risks or issues to the Assistant Director/Service Managers
- Comply with the Data Quality Policy and all relevant process documentation
- Attend data quality workshop and training



#### **5.4. Corporate Policy and Partnerships Team**

As part of the Chief Executive's responsibilities to ensure compliance and processes, the role of the Corporate Policy and Partnerships team is to;

- Own the Data Quality policy;
- Ensure there is a performance management verification process. Performance reports will be checked by an independent officer prior to submission to the Leadership Team;
- Provide data quality workshops and training;
- Work closely with Audit, monitoring and following up internal/external recommendations to improve data quality;
- Provision of practical advice, support and guidance across the Council;
- Manage the Council's Performance Management system making sure that system developments are communicated and extensive training is provided;
- Highlight and share information on potential data quality issues. Address all data sharing complications;
- Continuously improve data quality, and undertaking risk based assessments and spot checks.

#### **5.5. Internal Audit**

- Responsible for providing assurance on the effectiveness of the overall controls of the framework that ensure data quality, securing and improving data quality as part of their responsibility for corporate governance and risk management.
- Performance management is undertaken as part of a risk based audit plan.
- Reporting and following up action plans where concerns in data quality have been identified to Leadership Team and Elected Members
- Provision of practical advice and guidance on establishing data controls for new systems developments and providing assurance on the effectiveness of data controls in existing systems.

### **6. Data Security and Sharing**

6.1. Information sharing is essential to partnership working. Therefore, it is crucial that South Ribble Borough Council has confidence that data shared with, and received from, partners is accurate and appropriate. The Council will provide a partner data sharing form (appendix 2), which sets out the requirements, expectations and responsibilities with partners and any third party.

6.2. The council will ensure that data is stored in a secure environment with appropriate security and system backups for all business critical systems. The access and use of data should be appropriate to data user and comply with the relevant legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information Act and Data Security). These policies can be found on the GDPR Hub and on the Information Services page on the Council's Intranet "Connect".

### **7. Related documents**

7.1. This Policy document provides an overarching corporate approach to the management of data quality to support decision-making. Service specific policies and procedures will flow from this corporate policy, where relevant and necessary, thereby ensuring that all corporate standards outlined in this policy are maintained across the Council. Specific documents related to this policy are;

- Performance Indicator Definitions and Procedure Template
- Partner Data Sharing Form
- Definitions (Glossary)
- Data Quality Action Plan
- Data Assurance Checks

### **8. Review**

8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently subject to any significant changes in relevant legislation, best business practice and regulations.

8.2. The policy will be reviewed by the Corporate Policy and Partnerships Team along with Shared Audit and Assurance Services. The review of the policy will be subject to sign off by the Leadership Team, and the Governance Committee.