

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

- Stroud District Council's Vision is:
"Leading a community that is making Stroud District a better place to live, work and visit for everyone".
- One of the Council's key areas of focus is that of pursuing excellence in service delivery and customer satisfaction. Integral to this aim is our ability to apply robust performance measures and management which is crucial to the drive to improve services.
- Effective performance management relies upon the use of quality data. Data must be 'fit for purpose' in terms of
 - Relevance
 - Accuracy
 - Timeliness
 - Validity
 - Reliability
 - Completeness
- It is recognised that poor data quality can lead to misleading information and therefore poor decision-making and poor service delivery.
- Performance information embraces a range of data including qualitative, quantitative, financial and non-financial information. Performance indicators may be set nationally and locally and are a means of reporting performance information. Performance information is also used to establish targets, direct resources and compare performance with others.
- The Council has taken significant steps to embed data quality into its Corporate Planning & Performance Framework which is shown in Appendix A. Accurate and timely data quality at each of the levels shown, connect and strengthen corporate planning performance.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to support the Council's Corporate Planning & Performance Framework, so that accurate and trustworthy data is used in the planning and decision-making process. Moreover, the Council has a statutory responsibility to publish performance information and in doing so has to provide assurance that data is accurate.

3. Policy Aims

The aim of this Policy is:

- To assure the quality of data produced within the Council
- To support the delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities by providing quality data to guide decision making and indicate direction of improvement
- To ensure relevant Officers are provided with clear guidelines to understand, own and produce reliable data quality
- To meet external audit standards and requirements
- To aspire to 100% accuracy – to be 'right first time' with all key data

4. Objectives

The aims of this Policy will be achieved by:

- Creating overt links between data collected and the objectives, priorities and decisions made by the Council
- Responsibility for data being clearly defined and understood by Managers, Members and relevant Officers
- Assisting those responsible for data provision and quality via support from the Council's Policy & Communications Team and Internal Audit
- Undertaking audit checks throughout the year to help designated Officers maintain the quality of data produced locally or nationally
- Having a robust framework in place so as to be able to respond effectively to the findings of internal and external audit checks
- Determining annually, as part of the audit check, the risk posed by the quality of data collected on the organisation's potential to deliver its objectives
- Reviewing the appropriateness of locally determined and collected data, to ensure it is appropriate to the requirements of the Council
- Ensuring that this Policy, procedures and guidance for responsible staff is accessible, maintained up to date and supported by the Policy & Communications Team
- Providing periodic formal training and support for those Members and Officers engaged in the provision of data quality and embracing ideas for improvement and best practice

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Who	Responsibility
Leader of Council	Portfolio holder for performance management framework and data quality
Performance and Audit Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Scrutinize all performance data
Strategic Director	Overall strategic responsibility at officer level
Heads of Service	Operational accountability for all data quality, including key performance indicators, budgets and systems within their Service area.
Data Champions	Ensure all data compilation is fit for purpose as defined within this policy
Policy and Communications team	Co-ordinate and provide support to all stakeholders

Timescale	Performance Management Mechanism
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy • Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (30 years)
Medium Term (3-4 year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Delivery Plan • Medium Term Financial / Asset Management Plan • Priority Strategies (e.g. Housing Strategy)
Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Value Performance Plan • Annual Budget Cycle • Service Plans • Individual Appraisals
6-monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Delivery Plan review • Service Plans reviewed by Strategic Team
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Value Performance Indicator Report • Scrutiny monitoring of Service Plans • Revenue and Capital Monitoring Reports • Proud of Stroud Sessions
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual 121's team meetings

6. Conclusion

This Policy sets down the principle foundations of data quality assurance within the organisation. In setting clear standards, supporting Members and Officers in service delivery and monitoring their application, consistent levels of data quality can be secured and improved over time.

It is also acknowledged that data quality can often be a complex issue and therefore by process of regular review and networking, the Council will continue to seek to embed a data quality culture throughout the organisation.

7. Publication and Distribution

This Policy is published on the Council's website and intranet and is suitable for general disclosure and publication.

Corporate Planning and Performance Framework



