

# Data Quality

Summary of issues arising from 2007/08 audit

Swindon Borough Council

Audit 2007/08

March 2009



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# Introduction

- 1 This summary sets out the findings from our work on data quality as part of the 2007/08 audit.

# Data Quality

- 2 Our work on data quality has consisted of a review of the management arrangements in place to deliver quality data, analytical review, and a review of the detailed processes in place to ensure the accurate calculation of four individual performance indicators.

## Management arrangements

- 3 We concluded that as in previous years the management arrangements in place to deliver quality data met the minimum standards required to achieve an unqualified/positive conclusion on the Council's arrangements for Value for Money.
- 4 Whilst some improvements in arrangements have taken place despite these the coordination of data quality at a corporate level remains weak in some respects ie:
- the corporate commitment to data quality has not been communicated widely to staff;
  - training on data quality is delivered at a local level and data quality is not included in the corporate induction process; and
  - there has been no corporate communication highlighting data quality as a key priority for the Council, outside of that with performance champions.
- 5 Also, some key recommendations arising from last year's assessment have not been implemented such as:
- the need for better communication of data quality action plans underpinning the corporate strategy;
  - introducing arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of progress; and
  - the introduction of spot checking of arrangements at service level.

## Recommendations

- R1** Corporate commitment to data quality should be communicated more widely to staff. This should include highlighting data quality as a key priority for the Council in corporate communications.
- R2** Data quality should be included in the corporate induction process.
- R3** Outstanding recommendations from the 2006/07 data quality assessment should be implemented as soon as possible.

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### Review of performance indicators

- 6 The individual performance indicators examined this year were:
- BV 78a - speed of processing new housing benefit claims;
  - BV 78b - speed of processing change of circumstances re housing benefits;
  - BV165 - pedestrian crossings: Disabled people; and
  - BV199 - cleanliness of public spaces.
- 7 The two housing benefit indicators were mandatory this year as they form part of the housing benefit block assessment for CPA. All auditor judgements were input to the Audit Commission's Electronic Data Collection Service on 12 November 2008.
- 8 The following table summarises the finding from the review of the four indicators examined in detail this year.

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**Table 1**

**Finding s from 2007/08 audit**

<b>BV indicator</b>	<b>Whether qualified</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Speed of processing new HB claims.	No	Some minor issues were identified from our testing but we concluded that the PI was fairly stated.
Speed of changing change of circumstances for HB.	No	As a result of issues identified from our testing the Council chose to re-publish this PI as 18.9 days rather than the original 19.9 days.
Cleanliness of public spaces.	No	Minor issues raised about completion of cleaning logs.
Pedestrian crossings: disabled people.	No	As a result of weaknesses in the data used to calculate this PI the Council agreed to change the reported PI figure from 88.4% to 60.8%.

Peter Smith  
Audit Manager  
March 2009

# Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
	Data Quality					
4	R1	Corporate commitment to data quality should be communicated more widely to staff. This should include highlighting data quality as a key priority for the Council in corporate communications.	3	Matt Gott/ Karen Sims	Yes	Agreed. We are planning a series of communications on data quality.
4	R2	Data quality should be included in the corporate induction process.	2	Matt Gott/ Karen Sims	Yes	Agreed. We will work with colleagues in training and development to put this action in place as soon as possible.
4	R3	Outstanding recommendations from the 2006/07 data quality assessment should be implemented as soon as possible.	3	Matt Gott	Yes	We are developing a new data quality strategy in conjunction with key partners and accompanying policy for SBC. The SBC policy will incorporate the outstanding recommendations from the 2006/07 DQ assessment highlighted in the report and will be put in place as soon as possible.

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