Epping Forest District Council

Corporate Strategy

Data Quality Strategy 2016/17-2018/19

Introduction

Good quality data is essential to support Council decision making especially decisions involving financial and performance related decisions. The Council's customers, partners and organisations monitoring the Council's progress, need to be able to rely on the data we produce to evaluate our performance. The Council is accountable for the money it spends and must manage competing claims on its resources. It therefore requires data which is accurate, reliable and timely to be able to meet customer needs and plan for the future.

Epping Forest District Council recognises the importance of data quality and the Council is committed to ensuring that it maintains the highest standards of data quality. This strategy sets out its approach to delivering those arrangements and the ongoing improvement of data quality.

Its purpose is to bring together in one place the range of existing processes and approaches which exist to manage data quality to ensure that everyone who produces or uses performance data within the Council understands what is expected of them, and that the Council's partners understand what they can expect from our data.

Scope of the data quality strategy

This strategy covers all data and information generated and used by the Council including performance management information, data relating to the delivery of services, financial and service management information and corporate governance information.

This strategy does not cover the use of personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998. The Council's arrangements for handling personal data are set out within its Data Protection Policy.

Arrangements for data quality relating to the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), is fully developed within this strategy reflecting their strategic significance to the Council.

Data quality objectives

The Council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to being consistent in its management of data quality both within the authority and where it works in partnership with other organisations.

The Council aims to ensure that all the data that it uses is 'right first time'. All officers with responsibility for collecting, collating and reporting data must ensure that the data provided can be relied upon. .

The Council is committed to the following data quality principles originally identified in the 'Improving information to support decision making: Standards for better quality data' publication by the Audit Commission in March 2007.

Data Quality Principles

The following principles represent the Council's approach to data quality:

Accuracy	Data must be accurate for its intended purpose, and be represented clearly and in sufficient detail to enable informed decision-making
Validity	Data must be recorded and used in accordance with relevant requirements, rules and definitions to ensure consistency
Reliability	Data must reflect stable and consistent collection methods

Timeliness	Data must be available for its intended use within a reasonable time period. It must be available quickly and frequently enough to support information needs
Completeness	Data must be recorded in its entirety, avoiding gaps in information and duplication of data
Relevance	Data must be relevant to the purpose for which it is used
Security	Data must be stored securely and confidentially where appropriate

Data quality arrangements

The Council operates a sound, well-established approach to the achievement of data quality, through the following arrangements:

1. **Responsibilities and ownership**

   The Council collates and uses a significant amount and range of data in the course of its work. The Council and all its employees have responsibility and therefore ownership of the data they collate or process, or have control over.

Responsibilities	
Role	**Responsibility**
Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder	Responsible for the strategic management of data quality.
Portfolio Holders	Individual Portfolio Holders are responsible for data quality issues with respect to Key Performance Indicators within their portfolios and for ensuring that appropriate data quality processes are in place.
Select Committees	Select Committees are responsible for the regular review of KPI data, including any potential issues of data quality.
Director of Governance	The Director of Governance is responsible for the overall collection and reporting of Key Performance Indicator performance data to Members and Management Board.
Chief Executive	Responsible for the operational management of data quality.
Directors/Assistant Directors	Responsible for ensuring that effective arrangements are in place within their areas of responsibility to ensure data quality requirements are met. They are also responsible for validating (Assistant Directors) or authorising (Directors) the Key Performance Indicator data in relation to those areas under their responsibility.
Service managers	Responsible for contributing to the integration of data quality arrangements into their areas of responsibility, and for ensuring that requirements for data quality within their areas of responsibility are met. They also ensure that staff have access to and are familiar with corporate requirements and directorate level procedures for data quality, and that role specific responsibilities relevant to data quality, are included in relevant job descriptions.

Performance Improvement Unit (PIU)	Supports the Council's corporate performance management and data quality arrangements. The PIU supports data processes for performance indicator monitoring, and provides advice and guidance regarding the collection and calculation of data for specific indicators.
All staff	Are responsible for the integrity and accuracy of any data that they collect, input, store, retrieve or otherwise, and therefore have ownership of that data.

2. Policies and procedures

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to check data. Verification processes are required to be adhered to by all officers involved in data collection processes and data is used in ways that ensure the establishment of a clear audit trail.

3. Systems and processes

Appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of data. Officers understand definitions relating to different types of data. A data quality lead is in place for all relevant systems. The processes concerning the production of KPI data is included at page 5 of this strategy.

4. People and skills

Officers are trained or appropriately supervised so that they have the appropriate knowledge, competencies and capacity for their role. All officers recognise the need for high standards of data quality and their individual roles in achieving this. Responsibility for data quality is part of appropriate job descriptions and the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.

5. Data use

Relevant focus is placed on securing data which is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. Data is presented in ways which are easy to understand, is accurate and can support recommendations and conclusions, both for internal and external use.

In collating performance data, all working papers must set out where data has come from and what action has been taken to ensure the quality of this data.

6. Third party data

We rely on source data from third parties (data produced externally) to report on progress on both the Council's and Partnership's work. To achieve our Data Quality objectives, we need to ensure that data from third parties that we use in our performance management is produced to the same high quality as data produced internally.

To ensure the third party data we use is robust we will undertake a mapping exercise of significant third party data streams, in order to identify data quality arrangements and produce risk analysis. The mapping exercise will:
a) identify significant data streams;
b) identify the business processes and/or performance measurement to which they relate;
c) identify EFDC ownership;
d) identify the data quality processes used; and
e) evaluate risk to EFDC.

The mapping exercise will be reviewed in line with the 3 yearly review of this Data Quality Strategy.

We have developed a number of protocols for data sharing with our key partners; for example, a police joint protocol for the exchange of information.

Data quality control, assurance and review

We continue to put systems and procedures in place to ensure good data quality. The Council's data quality arrangements are subject to internal control, assurance and review in the following ways:

(a) All data is fully checked and reviewed within directorates/service areas prior to being reported.

(b) Definitions apply to KPIs including the data, its source and the subsequent calculations. The KPIs are also subject to a controlled process of submission and verification.

(c) The Corporate Risk Register specifies major corporate risks that include issues related to data, for example, risks such as the loss of business data and information etc.

(d) The Council acts on enquiries made by service users in relation to the quality of data reported and undertakes appropriate remedial action where arising from review or assessment processes.

(e) Significant issues identified in relation to data quality are considered by the Corporate Governance Group and escalated as appropriate.

(f) Third party data streams used for performance measurement will be mapped during the first year of this strategy and their data quality arrangements identified to ensure the data is robust.

(f) This strategy is reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required.

Key performance indicator data

The Council measures and monitors its performance against a range of indicators identified as key to the Council's performance and improvement. This performance data is recorded through the Council's Performance Management system (TEN Performance Manager) and used to report progress to Members and Management Board. Guidance in the production of this data and the use of TEN is provided by the Performance Improvement Unit.

Responsibilities for KPI data

Role	Responsibility and ownership
Cabinet	The Cabinet is responsible for the establishment of the annual suite of KPIs, including the adoption of appropriate performance targets.
Portfolio Holders	Individual Portfolio Holders are responsible for data quality issues with respect to KPIs within their portfolios, and for ensuring that appropriate data quality processes are in place.
Select Committees	Select Committees are responsible for monitoring performance against KPIs which fall within their areas of responsibility.
Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee	The Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee is responsible for the regular review of KPI data and any potential issues of data quality.
Management Board	Management Board is responsible for annually agreeing a suite of KPIs, their targets, tolerances and improvement plans. It receives quarterly and end of year KPI performance reports and identifies improvement opportunities.
Directors	Service directors are responsible for KPI data quality within their Directorates. They are responsible for authorising KPI returns and for ensuring the timely completion and submission of KPI information.
Director of Governance	The Director of Governance is responsible for this Data Quality Strategy, and the overall collection and reporting of KPI performance data to Members and Management Board.

The Performance Improvement Unit	The PIU manages the KPI production, verification and reporting framework and the TEN system.
KPI completing Officers	Provide timely, accurate and reliable data entry using the Summary Control Forms (SCF) and TEN, and clear evidence to support the data provided.
KPI verifying Officers	Verify the data and supporting evidence provided by the Completing Officer using the SCF and evidence provided.

KPI system

1. Officers involved in KPI data processes follow adopted procedures for KPI performance data collection and reporting, which require that a proforma return and full audit trail must be compiled for all KPIs on a quarterly basis.

2. Officers responsible for collating and reporting data must provide clear evidence to support the data submitted, and this data must clearly show the figures used in the calculations.

3. All KPIs have specific definitions and agreed calculation rules.

4. Data collation, KPI calculation and statistically returns must reflect the individual KPI definitions.

5. KPI submissions are made via the TEN performance management system administered by the PIU.

6. The KPI authoriser must be of Assistant Director or Director level.

KPI production process (see Figure 1)

1. The PIU triggers the process for quarterly data submission according to predetermined arrangements.

2. When requested by the PIU, the completing officer compiles the data and annotates the evidence for verification and audit purposes. The Completing officer then completes all required fields on TEN; a Summary Control Form (SCF) in line with the KPI definition and agreed calculation, attaches the annotated evidence, and submits them electronically to the Verifying Officer.

3. The Verifying Officer checks and verifies the data submitted to TEN and the SCF for accuracy and completeness, and submits the form electronically to the authoriser.

4. The Authoriser checks that TEN has been fully updated; that appropriately annotated evidence is attached; and the SCF is fully completed and accurate; and submits the form electronically to the PIU.

5. The PIU checks the SCFs and TEN data submissions for accuracy and completeness and produces performance reports for consideration by Members and Management Board.

6. The PIU maintains appropriate evidence of the KPI data submission process for audit purposes.
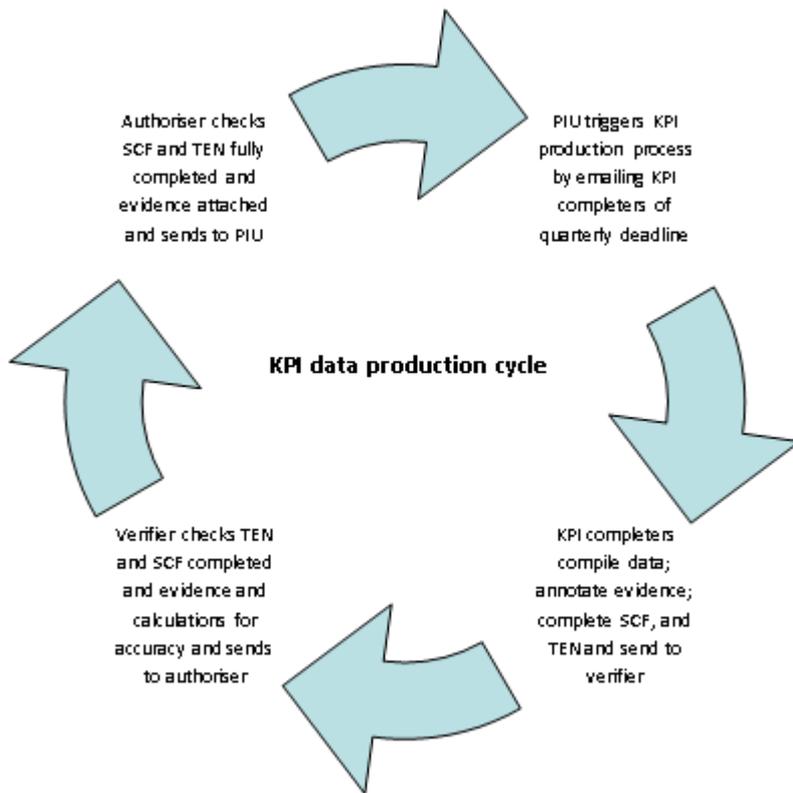
Authoriser checks SCF and TEN fully completed and evidence attached and sends to PIU

PIU triggers KPI production process by emailing KPI completers of quarterly deadline

KPI data production cycle

Verifier checks TEN and SCF completed and evidence and calculations for accuracy and sends to authoriser

KPI completers compile data; annotate evidence; complete SCF, and TEN and send to verifier

Figure 1

Monitoring and review of the data quality strategy

The Data Quality Strategy is reviewed every three years. The next review will take place in 2018/19 or sooner if necessary.