



GOVERNMENT

**Data Quality
Review
2007-08**

Bury MBC
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AUDIT

Content

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If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Adrian Lythgo who is the engagement lead to the Council, telephone 0113 231 3148 or email adrian.lythgo@kpmg.co.uk who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact Trevor Rees on 0161 246 4063, email trevor.rees@kpmg.co.uk, who is the national contact partner for all of KPMG's work with the Audit Commission. After this, if you still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access the Audit Commission's complaints procedure. Put your complaint in writing to the Complaints Team, Nicholson House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SU or by e mail to: complaints@audit-commission.gov.uk. Their telephone number is 0844 798 3131, textphone (minicom) 020 7630 0421.

Executive Summary

The Audit Commission has developed a three-stage approach for assessing data quality, the first stage being a review of management arrangements for data quality. This review determines whether the Council has in place proper corporate management arrangements for data quality, and whether they are being applied in practice. This is the third year in which we have undertaken work on data quality.

The findings support our conclusion on your arrangements to secure value for money in relation to the specific criterion on data quality. This requires the Council to have *'a track record of using high quality information on costs to actively manage performance, improve value for money and target resources'*. This conclusion will be issued with the 2007/08 audit opinion on your accounts.

Stage One

The work on management arrangements focuses on corporate data quality arrangements for your performance information. Our work will help drive improvement in the quality of performance information, leading to greater confidence in the supporting data on which performance assessments are based. The review is structured around five themes:

- Governance and leadership;
- Policies and procedures;
- Systems and processes;
- People and skills; and
- Data use and reporting.

These themes break down into thirteen Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). We have assessed your arrangements against each KLOE and have scored you against each theme as defined below:

Level	Description
Inadequate	Below minimum requirements - inadequate performance
Adequate	Only at minimum requirements - adequate performance
Performing well	Consistently above minimum requirements - performing well
Performing strongly	Well above minimum requirements - performing strongly

We have assessed your overall performance as performing well. You have performed well in respect of your arrangements over all five themes.

We have provided our key findings in Section One and have raised 7 recommendations, summarised in Appendix 1. We report on the implementation of prior year recommendations in Appendix 2

Executive Summary

Stage Two

During Stage Two of the process we followed up issues arising from the analytical review of 2007/08 BVPI and non-BVPI data, used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out by the Audit Commission. This analytical review informed our selection of a sample for testing at Stage Three.

Stage Three

When deciding how many and which PIs to review at Stage Three, in addition to those identified for review by the Audit Commission, we used the results from Stage One and our cumulative audit knowledge and experience to determine the total number of PIs for review. As a result of this, we have identified 3 BVPIs and non-BVPIs to review. In addition, it is mandatory to review two housing benefits PIs (BV78a and BV78b) at Stage Three. The following were therefore reviewed:

- BV82ai- Percentage of household waste recycled
- BV183b- Average length of stay in hostel accommodation
- IPF- Cost per library visit
- BV78a- Speed of processing new claim to Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit
- BV78b- Speed of processing change of circumstances to Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit

The results of these spot check reviews indicate that the data quality underpinning your PIs is largely adequate. Only BV183b required an amendment to be made to the outturn. The results of our data quality spot checks are summarised in Section Two.

Best Value Performance Plan Report

In prior years we audited your Best Value Performance Plan in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999 and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice. From this year there is no requirement for this to be audited.

Section one

Management Arrangements

We have assessed your **overall level of performance** as **performing well**. You have performed well in respect of your arrangements across all KLOEs.

The table sets out key drivers behind each theme, and details areas where you are currently meeting requirements and areas where further development is required.

Theme	Performance	Key issues
Governance & Leadership	Consistently above minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responsibility for data quality has been clearly assigned. ✓ The Council has documented its overall corporate data quality objectives. ✓ The Council has effective arrangements in place for monitoring and review of data quality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles and responsibilities for all individuals involved in the data quality process should be formally defined. • All relevant individuals should have formally defined personal data quality objectives and targets. These should be assessed as part of the corporate appraisal process.
Policies & Procedures	Consistently above minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A corporate data quality policy is in place. This is supported by a suite of up-to-date operational procedures. ✓ Policies and procedures are followed by staff across the organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should update its data quality policy to include clear procedures for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of partnership data.
Systems & Processes	Consistently above minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The PIMS system is in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of the data used to monitor performance. ✓ The council has controls in place to ensure that information systems produce the quality of data needed to report on performance and to keep top management aware of necessary action in relation to data quality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards should be specified for shared data or data supplied by third parties.
People & Skills	Consistently above minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Council has some arrangements in place to ensure that staff with data quality responsibility have the necessary skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority should undertake a needs analysis in order to understand the current data quality training needs across the council. Partners should be considered as part of this process.
Data Use	Consistently above minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Council has put in place arrangements that are focused on ensuring that data supporting performance information is also used to manage and improve the delivery of services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should formalise validation procedures with partners and ensure that the relevant evidence and documentation is kept as part of a full audit trail on the PIMS system

Section two

Data Quality Spot Checks

Our Stage Two and Three analytical review work identified that the PI values reviewed largely fell within expected ranges. Some PIs data fell outside of the Audit Commission defined plausible ranges. However, all these PIs when reviewed were substantiated by evidence. We carried out spot checks on five of your PIs (including the two housing benefit PIs). As a result of our audit work one PI was amended. No reservations were issued on any PIs as summarised in the table below.

PI	Description	Value stated	Conclusion
BV82ai	Percentage of household waste recycled	15.81%	Fairly stated
BV183b	Average length of stay in hostel accommodation	9.08 weeks	<p>Amended to 9.23 weeks</p> <p>KPMG identified an issue regarding the authority counting the length of stay in hostel accommodation in terms of nights as opposed to days. Guidance states that the measurement of length of stay should commence on the day that the household enters hostel accommodation and ends when they leave i.e. if a family enter a hostel on June 1st and leave on June 2nd then this is counted as 2 days.</p> <p>As a result the PI was recalculated as per the guidance. An additional 50 days were spent in hostel accommodation (an additional day per household). The outturn was amended to 9.23 weeks.</p>
IPF	Cost per library visit	£3.22	Fairly stated
BV78a	Speed of processing new claim to Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit	24.1 days	Fairly stated
BV78b	Speed of processing change of circumstances to Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit	11.6 days	Fairly stated

Recommendations

This appendix summarises the recommendations we have identified relating to your data quality management arrangements. We have given each a risk rating (as explained below) and agreed with management what action you will need to take.

We will follow up these recommendations as part of our 2008-09 audit.

Priority rating for recommendations		
<p>Priority one: Addressing these issues is essential to assist in moving you towards an improved rating.</p> 	<p>Priority two: Addressing these issues is desirable to assist in moving you towards an improved rating.</p> 	<p>Priority three: Addressing these issues will assist in moving you towards an improved rating.</p> 

No.	Priority	Recommendation	Management response	Officer and due date
1	● (two)	Governance and leadership The Council should formally document the responsibilities of PI Compiler, PI Owner, PI Coordinator and PI Reviewers to ensure the roles are applied consistently across the organisation.	We will review the existing data quality management process and develop more formalised and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all involved in data management across the Council and partner organisations .	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009
2	● (three)	Governance and leadership The Authority should ensure that all relevant individuals have formally defined personal objectives and targets in relation to data quality, and are assessed against these as part of the corporate appraisal process.	Personal objectives and development plans for officers involved in data management to include element of data quality management targets which are reviewed regularly across sections and corporate levels. This will be developed through the service planning and employee review processes.	Benjamin Imafidon April 2010
3	● (three)	Policies and procedures The Councils data quality policy should clearly outline procedures for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of partnership data.	Existing data quality policy to be reviewed and revised to include formalised procedures / processes for an effective data management process (collection, recording, analysis and reporting) to support data provision from partners.	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009
4	● (three)	Systems and processes Building on the Bsafe protocol, the Authority should ensure that formal data sharing protocols are in place for all key third parties, detailing the responsibilities of partners to provide data which is 'fit for purpose'.	The BurySafe data sharing protocol to be evaluated to ensure it covers specific data requirement to support both national strategies and local performance management frameworks. Data protocols and responsibilities to be agreed and signed off with all third parties.	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009
5	● (three)	People and skills The authority should undertake a needs analysis in order to understand the current data quality training needs across the council. Partners should be considered as part of this process. Data Quality training programmes that are subsequently should be evaluated and adapted to reflect the findings.	Data quality training needs assessment to be carried out to include all involved in data management across the Council and Partners to inform the overall data quality training needs programmes.	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009
6	● (three)	Data Use The Council should formalise validation procedures with partners and ensure that the relevant evidence and documentation is kept as part of a full audit trail on the PIMS system	Current Council's annual data quality audit (data validation process) to be formalised to include partner organisations; ensuring regular updates to audit trails and supporting documents for all data submitted on to the corporate performance management system (PIMS)	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009
7	● (one)	Data Use The Council should ensure that all indicators comply with the correct definition and therefore avoid amendment when reviewed.	Internal arrangements for data audit and validations to be strengthened through planned regular, and on going spot checks on the accurate application of data definitions to produced results for performance improvement process	Benjamin Imafidon March 2009

Prior Year Recommendations

This appendix summarises the progress made to implement the recommendations that we identified in our previous Data Quality reports. We have given each of our observations a risk rating (as explained in Appendix 1). In summary:

Year	Number of recommendations that were:		
	Included in original report	Implemented in year or superseded	Remain outstanding (re-iterated below)
2006-07	5	2	3
Total	5	2	3

No.	Risk	Issue and recommendation	Management response	Officer and due date	Status at November 2008
1	● (three)	<p>Governance and Leadership</p> <p>The Authority should ensure that training is provided to all Members on the importance of data quality and the specific approach to managing the associated risks. This could be introduced as part of the Member's development programme.</p>	<p>Training on performance management in general and data quality in particular will be included in the 2007/08 Member Development Programme</p>	<p>Harry Downie/ Bernadette Hayes from April 2008</p>	<p>Recommendation fully implemented</p> <p>Performance Management and data quality now mandatory elements of the member training programme. Roll out of this programme began in September 2008. The course is titled 'Getting the best out of services – Members' role in raising performance and holding decision makers to account'. One of the explicit training objectives is to 'appreciate the need for good data quality'.</p>
2	● (three)	<p>Governance and Leadership</p> <p>The Authority should ensure that all relevant individuals have formally defined personal objectives and targets in relation to data quality, and are assessed against these as part of the corporate appraisal process.</p>	<p>Standards and expectations already in place. Generic competencies to be introduced, in consultation with Departmental Coordinators to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • year end data verification checks are carried out • results and commentaries are input onto PIMS by due dates <p>These will be monitored corporately through PIMS and in departmental employee reviews.</p>	<p>Benjamin Imafidon (in consultation with Departmental PI Coordinators) March 2008</p>	<p>Recommendation partially implemented</p> <p>There is evidence that certain individuals have specific responsibilities in relation to data quality documented in their job descriptions. Where this is the case we would expect this to be addressed in the annual appraisal. There is no corporate commitment to formally consider quality as part of the annual appraisal process at present.</p>

Prior Year Recommendations continued

No.	Risk	Issue and recommendation	Management response	Officer and due date	Status at November 2008
3	● (three)	<p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>The Authority need to ensure that the data quality policy, procedures and guidance are formally reviewed at least annually, with relevant staff fully involved in the process.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures (including the Data Quality Policy) will be reviewed formally each year. Quarterly meetings with Departmental Co-ordinators will provide an opportunity for more frequent feedback should the need arise</p>	<p>Benjamin Imafidon March 2008 and ongoing</p>	<p>Recommendation fully implemented</p> <p>The Councils data quality policy was not updated for 2007/08 but remains fit for purpose. Certain data quality procedures were updated- for example the PIMS annual sign off guidance was refreshed. There is evidence of the relevant staff being consulted in this process. For example, PIMS submission dates have been changed after consultation with departments.</p>
4	● (three)	<p>Systems and Processes</p> <p>The Authority should ensure that formal data sharing protocols are in place, detailing the responsibilities of partners to provide data which is 'fit for purpose'.</p>	<p>This issue will be raised through the PM partnership network. The protocol will follow the principles outlined in the council's Data Quality Policy .</p>	<p>Benjamin Imafidon March 2008</p>	<p>Recommendation partially implemented</p> <p>The Council does have a formal data sharing protocol in place with the BSafe partnership. This is not directly applicable to all other areas of the Councils business. There is evidence of dialogue with key partners on this issue but no formal agreements on data quality have documented.</p>
5	● (three)	<p>People and Skills</p> <p>The Authority should implement arrangements to ensure all staff receive appropriate training on data quality issues and the PIMS system. At present, training is generally provided at department level and on an ad-hoc basis. Arrangements should also be in place to periodically evaluate and adapt the training to changing needs.</p>	<p>All relevant staff were re-trained following implementation of the recent PIMS upgrade. Training needs will be kept under review and further training provided: as additional functionality becomes available through PIMS, as part of the induction for new PI compilers and Coordinators, in the light of issues arising from quarterly monitoring or employee review and when requested by departments. Training needs and practice will be evaluated annually with Departmental PI Coordinators</p>	<p>Benjamin Imafidon (in consultation with Departmental PI Coordinators) January 2008 and ongoing</p>	<p>Recommendation partially implemented</p> <p>There is a programme in place for delivering PIMS training across the authority.</p> <p>No arrangements are currently in place to evaluate the wider data quality training needs at present.</p>