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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

14 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE & SCRUTINY

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Report prepared by Clare Wood

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1. DATA QUALITY POLICY UPDATE

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the updated Data Quality Policy for the Council.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Change & Scrutiny

1.2.1 **It is recommended** that Cabinet agree the updated Data Quality Policy at Appendix A and the accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix B; and

1.2.2 Agree Data Quality Actions for the inclusion in the Corporate Improvement Plan at Appendix C.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 Public services need information that is fit for purpose with which to manage services and performance. For example, service providers need good information to make judgements about the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of their services. At the same time there must be a balance between the use and importance of the information and the cost of collecting the required data to the necessary level of accuracy and reliability.

1.3.2 Successful bodies have recognised data quality as a corporate priority and have taken action to embed arrangements for managing the quality of the data they collect and use.

1.3.3 The Government is committed to increasing transparency and accountability at a local level. At a national level the localism bill and ethos of the national localism agenda aims to enable local people to hold politicians and public bodies to account over how their council tax is being spent and decisions made on their behalf. By reviewing Data Quality arrangements and carrying out checks on a regular basis

should ensure that the data provided to decision makers and residents is reliable, accurate, valid, timely,

1.4   Updates to Maidstone's Data Quality Policy

1.4.1   The Data Quality Policy was last updated in March 2009 within the inclusion of risk management. Although the current policy is in line with the current best practice when comparing our policy to other local authorities it was apparent that the inclusion of additional elements for example a definition of data and the key principles of data quality would aid understanding.

1.4.2   Updates to this version of the policy include:

- A definition of 'data';
- An outline of the key principles of data quality to enhance understanding;
- Changes to the procedures around Service Planning and providing supporting documents; and
- Sections on partners, contracts and monitoring, reviewing and reporting have been added.

1.4.3   Consultation on the revised policy has been undertaken. The policy was emailed to a sample of data managers and data entry officers, who were asked to read it and respond to consultation. A total of 29 people responded to the consultation and some minor changes were made as a result.

1.4.4   As set out in action plan at Appendix C and page 8 of the revised Data Quality Policy the policy will be fully reviewed every two years and any updates to the policy presented to Cabinet for approval.

1.5   Data Quality Actions

1.5.1   Appendix C sets out actions identified as part of the review of Data Quality. The areas which were identified for improvement as part of the review were training and raising awareness. It is recommended that these actions be integrated into the Corporate Improvement Plan and reported through this mechanism.

1.6   Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.6.1   Not reviewing the Data Quality Policy is not recommended, as failing to take this seriously could mean the reliance that the Council can place on various information as part of the decision making process will be significantly reduced.

1.6.2 However, the Council needs to be mindful that the systems that are put in place are not overly bureaucratic, complicated or confusing for the officers who are involved

1.7 <u>Impact on Corporate Objectives</u>

1.7.1 Data quality impacts on the efficiency of services provided by the Council and value for money.

1.8 <u>Risk Management</u>

1.8.1 If data quality is not considered effectively across the Council this will impact on the decision making process.

1.8.2 By using inaccurate data the Council would be at risk of reducing the efficiency of services and will not be achieving value for money for local residents.

1.9 <u>Other Implications</u>

1.9.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	X
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	X

Financial

It is essential that the Council is clear on the information that is collected and this is used to assess performance against key priorities. In the long run accurate and focused data collection should go towards creating greater efficiency savings within services. However, the

Council will continue to develop the policies and procedures on data quality where it is cost effective to do so.

Staffing

By following the procedures and guidelines set in place for data quality less staff time should be taken up with auditing and checking the figures provided.

Legal

Inaccurate data could raise legal issues.

Asset Management

Good data quality will support asset management, as several measures focus in this area.

1.10 Relevant Documents

- Third Party Data Sharing Protocol
- Data Quality Responsibility Statement
- Data Quality Audit Template

1.10.1 Appendices

Appendix A – Data Quality Policy – Updated August 2011
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment for Data Quality Policy
Appendix C – Data Quality Action Plan

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes ⬜   No ☒ X

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because: ………………………………………………………..

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Wards/Parishes affected: ……………………………………………………………..

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