

**Data Strategy (including Data Standards Policy)**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Peter Carpenter
Report Author	Job Title: Business Improvement Manager Contact: Helen Mole email: h.mole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881685
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	None
Relevant Council Priority	High Quality Services
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet RESOLVE :-**

That the proposed Data Standards Policy be agreed and implement guidance policy for all employees.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 During 2024, it was understood that the data the organisations captured, stored and used could be improved, so we embarked on engaging with managers, service teams, and corporate leadership to investigate this further. This confirmed the need to prioritise our data to improve data management and quality across the organisations.
- 2.2 Considerable progress has been made, and in order to build upon our current position this Data Standards Policy has been developed.
- 2.3 The Business Improvement Team (BIT) has engaged with service teams, managers and leadership, researching extensively around data improvement alongside ongoing collaboration with Local Government Association (LGA) to build the content covered in this policy.
- 2.4 The policy details clear guidelines and best practices to ensure consistency, quality, compliance, increased data security, efficiency, interoperability, trust, and transparency, in data management.
- 2.5 The BIT will continue in facilitating and supporting the organisations move to being a data driven authority. Further detail can be found in the supporting information.
- 2.6 The Data Standards Policy supports the existing Customer Digital Strategy 2022 - 2026 to provide the following:

- 2.6.1 A clear guidance framework for standardising and managing our data for consistency and quality across both organisations.
- 2.6.2 A standard to improve the quality of our customer centric data to improve accessibility and availability.
- 2.6.3 An accountability framework for roles and responsibilities regarding the management and processing of our customers data.
- 2.6.4 Improved data quality standards for better insight and performance management.
- 2.6.5 A standard to support a 'single source of truth' or 'golden record' for our customers

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 Data quality is needed for improvement, organisation wide to ensure we meet customer demand and expectations.
- 3.2 The policy will provide a guide and framework to move from a fragmented and siloed approach to how we manage our data, to a more consistent and formalised process.
- 3.3 Using consistent data formats will enable collaborative and joined up working to improve efficiencies, cross service and system working and data security
- 3.4 Culturally we will move to become a data driven organisation, through engagement, collaboration, knowledge, and training.
- 3.5 There potentially will be operational implications moving forward relating to HR and ICT, but these will be managed as encountered, within services workforce planning, service business plans, widescale collaboration and aid in the forthcoming local government reform and devolution preparation.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Estimating the financial costs of improving data, namely standardising data formatting, in both existing and future technical systems is challenging. Research has shown the circumstances and current positions of other local authorities on improving data journey are all varied therefore have no similar comparisons.
- 4.2 System adjustments depend on specific requirements, obtaining accurate quotes is difficult without comprehensive details, which will only become available as the process progresses.
- 4.3 Given these uncertainties, an estimate of £10,000 per system is proposed as a reasonable approximation to start addressing data cleansing issues in our core Systems, which hold almost 90% of our data.
- 4.4 This estimate of £50,000 acknowledges that actual costs may differ based on the complexity and scope of necessary requirements.

- 4.5 Currently the main systems are:
- Civica X Press (Elections)
  - Civica Open Revs (Revenues and Benefits)
  - IDOX – Uniform (Planning/Building Control & Env Services/Legal)
  - Abavus - (Env Services)
  - TechOne (Finance)
- 4.6 Regulatory Compliance (Adopting common data standards helps ensure compliance with regulations like GDPR and therefore non-compliance can lead to fines and reputational damage).
- 4.7 Operational efficiency: standardised data can streamline processes, reducing costs and improving decision making, however initial implementation needs to be driven and properly resourced.
- 4.8 Data Security – data governance reduces risk of data breaches which can result in financial and legal liabilities.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Data Protection Law specifically requires data protection policies to be held by organisations where proportionate.
- 5.2 The detail of the policy may vary from organisation to organisation but the Information Commissioner is clear that adopting an effective Data Standards Policy provides a robust framework to assist organisations to take practical steps to ensure compliance with Data Protection Law.

**6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.1 The policy links into the Councils priorities by:
- 6.1.1 To support the improvement and quality of our data standards which will provide the valuable insight required to measure performance against our council priorities.
  - 6.1.2 Improving data will improve decision making.
  - 6.1.3 Enabling High Quality Services.

**6.2 Climate Change Implications**

None

**6.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.3.1 If implemented effectively, the policy should have a positive impact on EDI as the data we hold would be more accurate and timely and any changes/updates to data would be easier to apply, ensuring that we hold the relevant and up-to-date

information on our residents, making it more likely we could deliver appropriate services.

6.3.2 A more standardised and streamlined process could reduce manual errors and improve efficiency, which would benefit people with a protected characteristic as their data will be accurate and a less disjointed view of our residents, especially the most vulnerable, may allow the organisation to undertake appropriate and proportionate preventative measures.

- Effective standards would also allow the organisation to better meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, as meaningful data would allow the organisation to:
  - understand and respond to the needs of communities and the workforce
  - uncover and address discrimination, biases and inequalities
  - understand the impact of policies and practices on people who share particular protected characteristics.

6.3.3 The policy also prioritises the robust management of data and through applying the requirements of GDPR, equalities related data, including that classified as 'special category data' would be both effectively used and meaningfully protected. As the organisations data use grows, further equality assessment will be undertaken, in collaboration with Information Management, to ensure that equality and ethical questions are considered and addressed as appropriate.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Please see Section 3 (Operational Issues)

## **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Data Standards Policy 2025 – 2028

Data Standards Policy Information Pack

### **Links:**

Customer Digital Strategy 2020 – 2026 [BDC](#)

LGA Data Maturity [LGA Maturity Model](#)

Business Improvement Team -

[businessimprovement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:businessimprovement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

February 2025

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Peter Carpenter	19/2/25
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter	19/2/25
Legal Services	Claire Green	11/02/25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green	11/02/25
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles	11/02/25