Data Management Policy

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Manchester City Council

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Introduction

For the Council to become a data-driven organisation it must embrace data as a Corporate Strategic Asset in all services. It requires us to create a data policy and a delivery plan that covers managing the collection, cleansing, reconciling, and reuse of vast amounts of data across all the Council. We will also have a Digital Strategy, an ICT (Information & Communication Technology) Strategy and our corporate Information and Data Governance approaches to support us in this.

If we do this well, we can then make sense of data through analytics. This in turn will improve decision-making capabilities and improve operational efficiencies. This will also mean we have a good evidence base and data-driven approach to service delivery. Ultimately this will lead to better services being delivered for our residents and improving outcomes for them.

A good data management policy should ensure that all data initiatives follow a well-defined approach that is both repeatable and measurable. Uniformity and consistency are critical for ensuring that all enterprise systems and solutions using and creating data follow commonly understood processes across the organisation.

The Council will also ensure that when managing our data related projects, we follow best practice on data ethics in line with the Government Data Ethics Framework. We will follow the 3 principles of transparency, accountability and fairness and look to evaluate projects we undertake against the following headings:

- Define and understand public benefit and user need
- Involve diverse expertise
- Comply with the law
- Review the quality and limitations of the data
- Evaluate and consider wider policy implications

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The purpose of this policy

It is important that the City Council looks after and manages the data it holds. We will be transparent about the data we hold and ensure we look after it correctly. We will make sure our employees in all our services know how to collect, maintain and manage our data efficiently and effectively.

This allows customers, residents, communities, partners, and businesses to build their trust in us and work together with us. We also need to ensure we use our data ethically.

Having well-managed data allows us to run our services efficiently and effectively, reducing our costs. Legislation also exists to provide protection from inappropriate use, rights of access, managing security – Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (LGTC).

The scope of the Policy
- A growing recognition that data collected by public bodies must be responsibly managed to maximise its full potential, and justify its collection, production, and maintenance costs. This policy will cover all data collected by the Council and held in electronic format.
- Increasing pressure from customers for easier and quicker access to the right information at little or no charge e.g., FOIs (Freedom of Information) and SAR (Subject Access Request). Our data held should be relevant, transparent where appropriate and used for the purpose it was collected.
- Integrations between systems and services are more common nowadays. Delivery of efficient services depends heavily upon the quality of the data provided and collected. The data held in our systems will be of good quality, relevant and maintained appropriately and comply with our corporate standards.
- There is a much bigger emphasis on the need to rationalise and combine data to improve efficiency and add value with increased partnership and collaborative working. We will try to hold data once and reuse when appropriate and relevant to do so, and only collect data we need.

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The benefits of good data management

There are benefits of having good Data Management policies and procedures in place to ensure that all data held within the Council is treated as a valued asset and resource.

For data providers (customers, residents, businesses, staff) it leads to an increased confidence and trust that their data will be used according to the reasons it was collected for, without risk to their confidentiality, and in compliance with all our statutory and non-statutory obligations.

- It helps provide a clear understanding of the use of the data
- It results in better quality, linked and understandable data from the use of common definitions, including geographic references where appropriate e.g., UPRNs (Unique Property Reference Numbers), common formats, effective validation processes and standardised, documented procedures.
- It leads to better control over the data by the clear definition and use of the procedures for the care of data.
- Also, if we have improved knowledge and understanding of the data we hold, its availability and use there should be a subsequent reduction in the corporate risk of duplication or loss.
- The result of all this will then lead to improved business processes and good service delivery across all areas, including better and more efficient use and re-use of data, and standardisation of common datasets that are frequently used by us.
- We will also have increased confidence that the Council is complying with statutory and non-statutory obligations if we ensure there is a regular maintenance of centrally produced and managed guidance and training on data management principles
- This will lead to having better control over access to data, internally as well as for both internal uses and external partners or customers
- With good quality, reliable data we can deliver our services to our residents in a timely and efficient manner. This will result in better outcomes for them.

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Our data management principles

Principle 1. Data ownership

One of the key principles of good data management practice is to be clear on who owns the data.

- Normally this is the organisation that originally commissioned the collection of the data, and it is who retains managerial control of the data.
- The Data Controller (owner) has a legal duty over the data held, it implies that they have a right to use the data, maintain it and then ultimately destroy it subject to various controls in legislation.
- In the Council, this means that we all should take ownership for the data we collect and use on our systems, both corporate and service specific.
- This starts at the top with our Senior Responsible Officers for our systems having overall responsibility, but also includes everyone else in the Council who updates, collects, and stores data and uses the systems.

Principle 2. Data quality

The creation, maintenance and development of quality data requires clear processes to be defined. Responsibility for this will be made clear to all system and data users when access is granted to a system.

- Good data management practices ensure that data held is capable of meeting current and future service needs and that it can be used for further analysis.
- The ability to integrate data with other datasets adds extra value but only if it is clean, ready to use and complete. If not, significant resources must be allocated to cleanse, validate, and complete or remove data. This adds to the overall total cost ownership.
- A clear, documented process will help to support the reasons for the ongoing use of the data and justify the reasons and costs of collecting the data in the first place.
- Periodic audits or reviews of our core data in our systems will be undertaken and data quality metrics established to help drive improvements and maintain standards.

Principle 3. Data Systems

All systems operated by the Council in any service will be procured, implemented, and maintained to be compliant with agreed standards and principles including how we approach our Master/ Enterprise Data Management.

- Core data sets will be held in defined ways and standards. For example, address data should always be held in a standard format and reference approved national and local data sets.
- Where new systems are implemented data structures and data fields will be documented so we understand what data we hold and its use.
- Wherever possible we will aim to hold core sets of data once and reuse rather than creating different versions of the truth in different systems
- Systems will be implemented with appropriate levels of validation to ensure data collection is high quality, reducing duplication and data gaps. This will then be embedded into ongoing processes across all services.
- When systems are procured, they will always include the functionality and be configured to ensure data can be appropriately archived, removed, deleted, and kept secure.
- All Council systems will allow user access to be defined and controlled so that we minimise the risk of inappropriate access to data.
- All implemented systems will provide adequate in-built reporting for our normal day-to-day operations and our statutory obligations and then also allow us to build user-defined reports where necessary.
- All systems should allow us to connect their database to any Corporate Reporting tool. This enables us to use our data for performance management to help drive and inform decision making.
- Any new system implementation will include clear responsibilities for the data migration approach.
- Systems should be designed to eliminate data duplication by integrating data wherever possible through interfaces to other systems.
- All relevant system data will be reconciled and available for analytics and insights.

Principle 4. Data Skills

It is important that all staff who create, use, maintain and extract data are trained to have the correct level of skills so that they handle data appropriately and use it to deliver good services to residents.

- All staff accessing our Council systems currently are required to complete Data Governance and Cyber security training. This ensures they have a basic understanding of these areas.
- We need to ensure that our staff have the appropriate level of access to the systems they need to use to deliver their services.
- They should understand how to safely report and store any data captured.
- When individuals are given access to a system it will be accompanied by suitable training and documented processes so that they understand why the data is being captured in the format and what it will be used for.
- Data Usage and Quality training should be delivered to ensure all users are supported.
- Data Experts will be identified in business areas to help support colleagues where complex data skills and manipulation are required.

Principle 5. Data Use

We will maximise the value of data sets by reusing them wherever possible.

- Data becomes our information when it is fit for purpose and analysed or joined with other data sets
- Intelligent use of data helps inform and support our decision making
- We aim to be responsive to change if our intelligence and evidence supports this.
- We will rationalise and combine data to assist and support collaboration and partnership working
- We will develop processes for the proactive use of our data
- Understanding the costs associated with the collection and production of information will help us prioritise our activity.
- We will use our data to help us deliver our services to our residents and improve their outcomes
- The data principles listed above must be applied to the creation, management, processing, sharing and deletion of all data across all systems and services in the Council.
- Recruiting Managers must ensure that a responsibility for data management is reflected within relevant Role Profiles and tested at application/interview stage, proportionate with the roles level of involvement in data management issues.

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Our approach to excellent data management

Our approach to deliver and establish Excellent Data Management in the Council –

- A Delivery Project and Plan will be produced in an iterative approach, adopting agile methodology. This will identify owners, objectives, timelines, and resources led by the Head of PRI (Performance Research and Intelligence)
- Identify roles and responsibilities within the Council on data management across all services
- Support Digital and agile working by maximising the use of existing tools to help users manage and use information more effectively
- Provide training and development opportunities for all levels of the workforce on data management and data systems
- Maximise the value of data by implementing data quality standards to improve our operational and strategic insights
- Training courses to be developed for varying levels of usage and systems where relevant
- Procurement processes to be amended to embed principles of our corporate standards in the approach to the procurement and selection of new software applications
- ICT strategy and Enterprise Architect function to underpin and support the implementation of new systems and replacements/ decommissioning
- CIARG (Corporate Information Assurance Risk Group) and Information Governance Steering Group to support the policy through the continued governance approach
- Key data quality metrics to be established for Core systems and communicated to SMT (Senior Management Team), CIARG and other relevant channels
- Data Expert / Champion roles to be defined and rolled out across business areas
- Progress on delivery of plan to be reported through the Digital, Data, and Insight workstream in the Future Shape Programme and regular updates to CIARG.
- Information Asset register entries to be refreshed
- Links from Data Management to Information Governance pages to be established