

# **LAA Data Quality Strategy**

**Cambridgeshire Together  
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## Document references

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## Change History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
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## Cambridgeshire Together LAA Data Quality Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.2 This strategy aims to help achieve and maintain the level of partnership management information data needed to effectively report, assess and review performance.
- 1.3 Consistent, accurate, timely and comprehensive information is vital to support good decision-making and ultimately the delivery of improved outcomes in line with the Cambridgeshire Vision. The quality of our data is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of the LAA.
- 1.4 To do this a standardised approach to data quality is needed, with a clear understanding of what is expected and who will deliver it. This document outlines the approach needed to ensure all provide the highest possible standard of data.

## 2. What is meant by Data Quality

2.1. Data quality in this context is best based on the Audit Commission standards:

- Accuracy - Ideally data should be captured once ('right first time') close to the point of activity.
- Validity – Data should be compliant with rules and definitions to ensure consistency. All data should be provided using a methodology, which is consistent with the definitions stated in the revised 198 National Indicator Set. (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicatorsupdate>)
- Reliability – Identified information managers/officers (see Appendix 2) should be confident that information provided tells an accurate story and not one influenced by inconsistent or inaccurate collection methods.
- Timeliness – Data should be captured and reported while still current to inform real time management
- Completeness – Data should reflect the whole picture not part of it. Incomplete or missing data needs to be flagged up.
- Relevance – Data is appropriate and fit for purpose, for example at the correct spatial level (i.e. County, District, PCT, Police etc.).

## 3. Importance of Data Quality in the LAA

- 3.1. By its very nature the LAA is a partnership built up of public sector bodies all of which have information and data at their centres. Having a LAA Data Quality Strategy for Cambridgeshire in place provides a consistent method of ensuring data quality within the partnership.

- 3.2. Although an individual body is ultimately responsible for the data it manages and ultimately submits to the LAA, a common understanding is needed to ensure all members of the partnership are submitting data, which has been obtained using the same methodology, or at least data that has been exposed to the same data quality measures.
- 3.3. This is nowhere more important than when data is being aggregated or disaggregated. To get an accurate picture of performance across the partnership like needs to be compared and combined with like.

## 4. Principles of the Data Quality Strategy

- 4.1. There are seven steps that underpin good data quality, which are:
  - Awareness
  - Definitions
  - Input
  - Verification
  - Systems
  - Output
  - Presentation
- 4.2. It is important to consider these sequentially because if any of these steps are not adhered to, the risk of inaccuracies will increase, and adherence to subsequent steps will not rectify this.
- 4.3. **Awareness**
  - 4.3.1. Data quality is the responsibility of every member of the partnership entering, extracting or analysing data from any of the LAA's information systems. Each partner should be aware of his or her responsibilities with regard to data quality. The commitment to data quality needs to be communicated clearly throughout the partnership. Partners are responsible this communication within their own organisations.
  - 4.3.2. The County Council's officers will have overall responsibility for data quality on the LAA Performance system (CorVu) but this does not exempt others from the responsibility to ensure that their data is accurate and up-to-date.
- 4.4. **Definitions**
  - 4.4.1. All partners should know how their data contributes to the calculation of performance indicators and understand how lapses can either lead to errors or delays in reporting, both of which will limit the effective management of the LAA.
  - 4.4.2. This means that everyone should have an understanding of any NI affected by the data they contribute, for example aggregated data, including how the NI is constructed (i.e. using a nominator and denominator) and what the Communities and Local Government definition is.

4.4.3. Also of importance are the targets being used for particular NIs. Organisations may have local targets for a NI, which differ from those set for the LAA. When assessing performance it is vital that partners know which target the NI is being judged against.

4.4.4. Every NI should have a named officer or officers (where more than one partner has an identified LAA data responsibility) who is responsible for collecting and reporting the information. This will ensure that there is consistency in the application of definitions and use of systems for providing the data.

## 4.5. **Input**

4.5.1. To successfully manage the performance of the LAA, data needs to be accurate. Related to consistency, data should if possible be 100% accurate every time it is added to the system. Guidelines will be drawn up to help partners ensure that the information is as valuable as possible.

4.5.2. To ensure relevance and information for regular reporting (quarterly), data should be entered when requested rather than retrospectively. Where data provided has not been formally 'signed off' it needs to be highlighted that it is provisional to ensure that all users are aware of this.

4.5.3. To avoid confusion and double counting, each partnership or organisation has one officer responsible/ for input, or at least the management of the data upload for each indicator. Identifying the NI owner will help track, who is responsible for up dating it.

4.5.4. Where possible data should be submitted at the lowest spatial level possible.

4.5.5. Inputters will be notified when their data is needed through the performance management systems email alert function (when the CorVu system is fully functional). Not only will this help to keep the LAA reporting timely it will also help with data quality by using standard templates.

## 4.6. **Verification**

4.6.1. Data requirements should be designed along the principle of 'getting it right first time'.

4.6.2. Errors will inevitably occur, especially in the early stages of the process when people are still trying to get used to the indicators and the method of data collection. To try and negate as many errors as possible, a verification procedure will need to be implemented, aligned with the frequency of data reporting, i.e. quarterly.

4.6.3. The procedure will involve a review of recent data against expectations. In the future audits will be undertaken collectively by partners including: spot checks that ensures that source data has been assessed against the six data quality dimensions (accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, completeness and relevance); source data is correctly represented in the indicator; the correct indicator definition and the correct calculation method have been used.

- 4.6.4. Particular attention needs to be paid to data provided by sources outside of Cambridgeshire Together. A number of NIs is calculated using information provided by partners or contractors and each partners' intention must be to work alongside them to ensure such data is accurate. If third party suppliers cannot prove that data has been through an agreed standard of verification it may need to be treated as high risk. If this is the case, either more checks are needed or a health warning issued with the data.
- 4.6.5. The data quality toolkit being developed by the County Council may be adapted to be used in a partnership scenario. This will provide a checklist of procedures as well as a self-accreditation tool to gauge the level of data quality and the risks associated with poor data.
- 4.7. **Systems**
- 4.7.1. National Indicators for the LAA will be collected, measured and managed using CorVu, the County Council's recently procured web-based performance management system.
- 4.7.2. In addition to internal performance management, the system will allow the partnership to record a range of performance measurement information from all partners in a central database and analyse and report to the members of Cambridgeshire Together Board, the reference group, the information managers and ultimately the public.
- 4.7.3. The system will mean that thematic blocks, priorities and measures / indicators can be analysed on many different levels to assess the success of the partnership as a whole (aggregation) or to drill down and investigate individual measures (disaggregation) as well as analysing results against one particular geography.
- 4.7.4. CorVu will enhance the value of the LAA by:
- ensuring data is collected (work flow), without duplication and analysed consistently with agreed data quality standards adhered to;
  - highlighting the relationship between the Local Area Agreement and the Cambridgeshire Vision and illustrating the golden thread running through both;
  - demonstrating how measures relate to the achievement of objectives
  - providing an easily understood and accessible story of performance in the LAA;
  - providing real time information and predicting trends which can be used to identify action that could change the way a measure is performing rather than just reporting what has taken place;
- 4.7.5. Partners will be trained where necessary to ensure they are comfortable with entering data into the CorVu system.

## 4.8. Output

- 4.8.1. As part of the Partnership review a governance framework has been proposed, that includes a performance framework for Cambridgeshire Together. This outlines the expectations for the use of performance information to inform planning, resource allocation and the management of risk.
- 4.8.2. The expectations in the framework will only be met if the information gathered relevant, data is to be extracted regularly and efficiently and communicated without undue delay.
- 4.8.3. Until data is 'signed off' it will remain embargoed and will not be shared without consent of the owner. This will avoid situations where data is released before members or senior management have seen it.

## 4.9. Presentation

- 4.9.1. Performance is presented quarterly, with a risk assessment and conclusive evidence of interventions and actions, in such a way as to give an easily understood and accurate picture of the LAA's performance. This will also include some form of interpretation and health warning to add value to otherwise potentially ambiguous figures.
- 4.9.2. Where appropriate, the source of reported information should be identified, especially where third party data is used, for example ONS population figures. This may also include data, which is used to benchmark and compare members of the partnership with other bodies.
- 4.9.3. Good data quality needs to be balanced with the cost and effort of collection, importance and intended use of the data concerned. In some cases data may be considered fit for purpose in spite of known limitations. For example, it may be appropriate to accept some degree of inaccuracy (i.e. estimated or provisional data) where timeliness is important.

## 5. Responsibility

- 5.1. Each partner will be ultimately responsible for the data quality of the information coming out of his or her organisation.
- 5.2. This will include the responsibility for maintaining in house systems, updating NIs where appropriate (e.g. numerators and denominators), appointing a responsible officer (data champion), adequate training, data quality checks and 'sign off'.
- 5.3. However, the members of the partnership are encouraged to seek advice from other members to improve efficiency and develop a consistent approach.

## 6. Disclosure/ Common ground/ communication

- 6.1. It is vital that all members of the partnership are open and willing to share information in good faith.

- 6.2. A commitment to data quality is essential as the value of the information held in the system and used to manage the LAA is only as robust as the smallest piece of data.
- 6.3. A common understanding is needed where partners all agree to update the system regularly with high quality data. This may mean that partners have to report against LAA targets rather than local ones and at a time, which does not necessarily coincide with their own reporting patterns.
- 6.4. Frequent information management meetings will help to facilitate this openness and bring to light any concerns partners may have. Not only will this bring the groups attention to potential problems it will also take the role of a user group offering support and advice.
- 6.5. In return the LAA Performance Manager will keep partners abreast of relevant changes to the LAA indicators, such as changes to baselines or targets, changes to methodologies, definition alterations etc.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1. Partners are responsible for carrying out their own reviews of data quality of data being submitted to the LAA.
- 7.2. This may take the form of spot checks to randomly select data and ensure it still matches its definition etc or checks prior to sign off and submission.

## Appendix 1

### LAA National Indicator - Measure Template

Organisation:

Division/Service:

Key activity to deliver service objective:	
Measure description:	Frequency of collection:
<b>LAA NI</b>	
Please document the process of obtaining data for the above measure. Include any manual manipulation of data.	Sources used to retrieve data i.e database/spreadsheet or manual
•	•
Formula - how is the data calculated?	
Which officer is responsible for providing the data or updating the data sources?	
Which officer (If any) verifies the data as correct?	
Data procedure/system last reviewed?	Date: DDMMYYYY
Comments	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Post title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_