

Making Open Data Real: A Public Consultation

Reading Borough Council Consultation response

Questions *and responses*

Page 6

1. Do the definitions of the key terms go far enough or too far?

Yes they go far enough

2. Where a decision is being taken about whether to make a dataset open, what tests should be applied?

Public Interest / demand

3. If the costs to publish or release data are not judged to represent value for money, to what extent should the requestor be required to pay for public services data, and under what circumstances?

To cover costs of production - time and resources required

4. How do we get the right balance in relation to the range of organisations (providers of public services) our policy proposals apply to? What threshold would be appropriate to determine the range of public services in scope and what key criteria should inform this?

- *Size of organisation*
- *Number of users*
- *Cost*
- *Data Quality*

5. What would be appropriate mechanisms to encourage or ensure publication of data by public service providers?

- *Code of practice*
- *Briefings*
- *Engagement*

Page 25

1. How would we establish a stronger presumption in favour of publication than that which currently exists?

The changes proposed on page 23 could assist this aim:

- *Data should be open by default in existing legislation (Setting transparency standards could also help)*
- *New requirement that all public bodies and providers of public service publish data about the services they deliver*
- *Establishing an enhanced right to challenge needs to be carefully considered*
- *FOIA review of fee regulation and cost limits*

However, the proposals relating to ICT will be more difficult to implement as many organisations and Local Authorities will be tied into long term contracts and these capabilities may not be possible/ cost may be prohibitive:

- *Ensuring through procurement rules that data collected by public service providers is stored in ICT systems that minimise the cost and difficulty of publishing data online*
- *Mandating a phased introduction of data by default delivered through new generation of ICT systems, and accompanying policies*

2. Is providing an independent body, such as the Information Commissioner, with enhanced powers and scope the most effective option for safeguarding a right to access and a right to data?

Yes

3. Are existing safeguards to protect personal data and privacy measures adequate to regulate the Open Data agenda?

Yes

4. What might the resource implications of an enhanced right to data be for those bodies within its scope? How do we ensure that any additional burden is proportionate to this aim?

It is difficult to quantify the resource implications, however there is a potential for the resource implications to be significant

5. How will we ensure that Open Data standards are embedded in new ICT contracts?
By engaging with suppliers and purchasers

Page 28

1. What is the best way to achieve compliance on high and common standards to allow usability and interoperability?

As proposed on page 26:

- *Formalising through a code of practice*
- *Clarity for citizens on what can be expected on publication and quality of data, including compliance with public data principles*
- *5 star rating as included in the recommended code of practice on data transparency*
- *An open data compliance monitoring process could provide clarity*
- *The collection of user feedback and satisfaction information in a standardised format would enable comparison and transparency*

2. Is there a role for government to establish consistent standards for collecting user experience across public services?

Yes

3. Should we consider a scheme for accreditation of information intermediaries, and if so how might that best work?

No Comment

P30

1. How would we ensure that public service providers in their day to day decision-making honour a commitment to Open Data, while respecting privacy and security considerations.

The introduction of the public sector transparency board model at a local government level via the local public data panel

2. What could personal responsibility at Board-level do to ensure the right to data is being met include? Should the same person be responsible for ensuring that personal data is properly protected and that privacy issues are met?

Yes

3. Would we need to have a sanctions framework to enforce a right to data?

Yes - providing it is proportionate

4. What other sectors would benefit from having a dedicated Sector Transparency Board?

Possibly the Police & Health

P31

1. How should public services make use of data inventories? What is the optimal way to develop and operate this?

All options proposed have some merit:

- *Establishing a framework for public service providers to have common, consistent and transparent data inventories outlining what data sets are held and whether they are open or not, using standards set by central government.*
- *Clear methodology to support prioritised inventories*
- *Clear process to support reduction in collection of unnecessary data and streamline volume of data collected*
- *Developing data.gov.uk*

2. How should data be prioritised for inclusion in an inventory? How is value to be established?

High volume, demand in the public interest. Value can be established by adopting consistent criteria

3. In what areas would you expect government to collect and publish data routinely?

- *Spending*
- *Contracts*
- *Salaries*
- *Performance - service delivery*

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4. What data is collected 'unnecessarily'? How should these datasets be identified? Should collection be stopped?

These data sets should be identified through consultation and the Single Data List, yes where feedback indicates this

5. Should the data that government releases always be of high quality? How do we define quality? To what extent should public service providers 'polish' the data they publish, if at all?

It should be high quality, however not be at the expense of being released in a timely manner. Quality can be defined using the data quality standards and relate to information that is accurate, valid, timely, relevant & complete. Data should not be 'polished', if substantive changes are required these should be issued as soon as possible.

P33

1. How should government approach the release of existing data for policy and research purposes: should this be held in a central portal or held on departmental portals?

A central portal would make it easier to locate or signpost as appropriate.

2. What factors should inform prioritisation of datasets for publication, at national, local or sector level?

The following factors should inform prioritisation

- *High volume*
- *Accessibility*
- *Format*
- *Interpretive / comparative data to compare performance*

3. Which is more important: for government to prioritise publishing a broader set of data, or existing data at a more detailed level?

To prioritise publishing a broader set of data.

P36

1. Is there a role for government to stimulate innovation in the use of Open Data? If so, what is the best way to achieve this?

Yes, commissioning an open data benchmarking initiative as proposed seems one way to proceed

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