

SMMT RESPONSE TO CABINET OFFICE CONSULTATION ON OPEN DATA AND CONSULTATION ON DATA POLICY FOR A PUBLIC DATA CORPORATION

OCTOBER 2011

Introduction

1. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is one of the largest and most influential trade associations in the UK. It supports the interests of the UK automotive industry at home and abroad, promoting a united position to government, stakeholders and the media. The UK automotive industry is dynamic and globally competitive. Our sector is a vital part of the UK economy with £40 billion turnover and £8.5 billion value added. With over 700,000 jobs dependent on the industry, it accounts for 10% of total UK exports and invests £1.5 billion each year in R&D. The industry plays an important role in the UK's trade balance, with vehicle manufacturers exporting almost 80% of production. The UK is home to the world's largest number of low volume vehicle manufacturers.
2. SMMT welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation *Making Open Data Real: A Public Consultation*. SMMT works closely with a range of government bodies both as a supplier and user of government data. A key part of SMMT remit is to work with our members and government (DfT, DVLA, VCA, VOSA) on all matters related to registration and licensing of motor vehicles. SMMT maintains a database of all vehicles in use in the UK ("Motorparc") and another database of first registration of new vehicles called "MVRIS" (Motor Vehicle Registration Information Service), which takes data from DVLA's "AFRL" (Automated First Registration and Licensing System) and paper V55 forms. This MVRIS database provides vital business information not only for our members, but for all organisations involved in the British Motor Industry, including a number of government departments including HM Treasury (Monetary Policy Committee), DfT, BIS. SMMT works with DVLA and our members to implement changes and improvements to the registration and licensing of vehicles arising out of UK legislation, budgetary changes and EU regulation. SMMT and DVLA work together closely both on a daily informal basis and through a number of forums including the First Registration User Group and the Industry Liaison Group.

Comments

3. SMMT supports the government's ambitions to improve transparency in data access, and recognises the pressures on government in providing data, for example for increasing number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. However, SMMT has some issues it wishes to highlight, which are outlined in this response, and would be happy to discuss its comments in further detail. Contact details are outlined below.
4. SMMT values its long-term relationship with the DVLA. The relationship was established in 1972, at government's request, to assist with the formation of an accurate national registration database of vehicle registration and licensing information. This system and relationship supports government through cost efficiencies, data accuracy, smoother implementation of regulatory changes and as it seeks to modernise its processes for the recording of registration data.
5. SMMT has a role in ensuring quality of data – primarily provision of quality data for government databases but also improving the quality of data received from government and hence the wider domain.
6. The complex data sets SMMT receives from government contains information which can impact on vehicle security and crime. One example would be the receipt of data which matches VIN numbers with vehicle registrations. Unrestricted access to such sensitive data would pose significant data protection and security issues.

7. Currently, the Department for Transport (DfT) publishes some DVLA statistical market reports. A possible improvement could be centralisation of the availability of these reports, perhaps through a central website, to increase accessibility and openness whilst maintaining security and trusted partner relationships.
8. As aforementioned, SMMT would welcome discussing its comments in more detail and also further opportunities for industry to work with government agencies on data sharing.