Report for: INFORMATION

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	*NO - Part I*
Title	Transparency and Open Data
Responsible Officer(s)	David Scott, Head of Governance, Partnerships, Performance and Policy
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Christopher Targowski, Cabinet Policy Manager, 01628796431
Member reporting	Cllr George Bathurst, Principal Member for Policy
For Consideration By	Policy Committee
Date to be Considered	18 April 2016
Implementation Date if Not Called In	N/A
Affected Wards	All

REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report provides an overview of the steps already taken by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead on transparency and open data.

2. Reflects the wishes of the Council to continue the default position of making as much data publically available for scrutiny and comment as practical and useful, with a focus on publishing more information.

3. Reviews the Royal Borough's transparency policy.

4. Investigates how other organisations can help the Royal Borough present and use the data released more effectively.

5. Looks at best practice from Government, Councils and other organisations on transparency.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?	
Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
1. Transparency and open data can lead to better services for residents, as it facilitates joined up, leaner and more efficient services, if the data is analysed correctly. **2.** Transparency leads to greater democratic	Immediately

accountability.	

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy Committee:

i. Notes the report and provides any feedback on transparency and data in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

ii. Agrees that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Transparency Policy reflects the current wishes of the Council. (Appendix A).

iii. Confirms their agreement to review the data the Royal Borough currently publishes and to bring forward options.

iv. Confirms their agreement to continue to work with other organisations to help present and use the data more effectively.

v. Confirms their agreement to consider best practice in transparency and bring forward options.

vi. Agrees that a report is brought back to the policy committee in July 2016 to provide an update on recommendations iii, iv and v.

2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

History of Transparency in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

2.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was the first Council in the country to publish expenditure over £500 for residents and others to scrutinise. This subsequently became Government Policy and was applied to all councils. The Royal Borough has continued to promote open data and transparency through its Big Society portfolio of projects which has resulted in all expenditure of over £100 now being published and energy consumption of buildings being available to be scrutinised by the public. Members have specified that all information should be published and available to residents unless there is a reasonable case why this should not occur. The council complies with the Local Government Transparency Code issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2015, which sets out the minimum data that local authorities should be publishing, the frequency it should be published and how it should be published.Transparency in the Royal Borough is underpinned by the Council Information and Data Transparency Policy.

Council Information and Data Transparency Policy

2.2 The Council Information and Data Transparency Policy, reported to Cabinet on the 27th May 2010 states: "To be transparent is to be candid, open, obvious, understandable, and frank. RBWM believes that the act of transparency is a key condition and driver for the delivery of council services." The Royal Borough continues to apply these principals when delivering services to Residents. The policy goes on to state: "As a public funded organisation, the council has a duty to the residents that it services to be transparent in its business operations and outcomes. We recognise that the very act of transparency forces those who are employed at the council to question whether they are delivering value for money and

are being effective in the provision of services to residents of the borough.' The Royal Borough will continue to focus and fulfil this duty of transparency. This view is still held by the Royal Borough today. The full policy is listed in appendix A.

Information currently released by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

2.3 As well as publishing responses to Requests for Information received under the Freedom of Information Act and spend over £100, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead publishes a huge amount of additional information. These are listed on the website (http://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200370/transparency/777/transparency/4) under the headings of:

- Spending and Finance
- Councillors' Allowances and Funding
- Human Resources Information
- Council Performance, School Performance
- Council Land and Buildings
- Democracy and Decision Making
- Plans, Policies and Strategies
- Public Health Information
- Data and Information.

2.4 It is proposed that a review is undertaken to make sure that all relevant data that could be published by the Royal Borough is being published. For example while top level management information is published through the IPMR, should additional management information also be published? As important as it is to release the data in its raw form, it is also important to make use of the data to allow for better policy making and service delivery. Better presentation of data could also make it easier for residents to have a greater understanding of the data. This greater understanding and access for the public could reduce the number of Freedom of Information requests that the Council receives.

Using other organisations to help the Royal Borough present and make use of our existing data

2.5 While the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been at the forefront of transparency, it is important to work with other organisations to continue to improve both the transparency of data and also the effective use of this data. It is proposed that officers work with other organisations such as the Southern Policy Centre, South East Strategic Leaders and the Local Government Association to help the Royal Borough with its presentation and interpretation of data. As an example, the Southern Policy Centre has a top priority to enable public policy makers to enhance their use of the substantial quantity of data now available to them. This includes both 'open' data, which is publicly available, and 'closed' data, which it may be possible to open up. The Southern Policy Centre was formed in 2014 as a cross party think tank and educational charity. http://southernpolicycentre.co.uk/. Further information can be found in a proposal in Appendix B. Linked to working with other organisation is reviewing best practice and ideas from other Councils and organisations.

Consider best practice and ideas from National Government, Councils and other organisations

2.6 At a national level the Cabinet Office have three aims for open data including:

- Economic growth derived from data led businesses.

- Accountability of government to citizens.
- Better public services.

The business case for open data was outlined specifically around the fact that data is everywhere and is getting bigger. Most organisations collect information on almost everything. The key to the business case is unlocking the potential of this data. That potential may not be realised at present but by opening it out to, and enabling people to have access to it, it is thought that innovation will occur around uses for this data that will have potential benefits. Data can be turned into knowledge that will help drive improvements to the quality and efficiency of services, systems and decisions. Opening up or sharing the data can make it even more useful as individuals and organisations can mash different pieces of information together to create even more complex knowledge and launch new ventures that solve complex problems.

2.7 Examples of how open data and transparency can be used;

- A project called Whereabouts London is a map that helps re-imagine neighbourhoods according to the issues which they are interested in rather than where people live. The map can help local authorities design shared services or infrastructure.
- Skills Route which is a tool that helps young people and their parents understand the range of options that are available after finishing GCSE's and what their choices are for higher education and their future career.
- Bath and North East Somerset have developed a web application that provides real time space availability information for their largest car park.
- Bristol City Council, rather than simply publishing the data, wanted to showcase its potential value. It launched a competition, B-Open, designed to promote transparency and increase citizen/community engagement. Businesses and community groups were invited to come up with ideas on how the data could be used to create applications, websites, mobile products or installations that would enhance people's interaction with the city. Further information can be found in appendix C.

Any options presented would reflect the wording in the current policy "We will not spend tax payers' money on presenting or collating this data."

3. Key Implications

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date delivered by
Number of best practice proposals recommended to the policy committee	0-1	2-4	5-7	8+	20th July 2016

4. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Council Information and Data Transparency Policy 27th May 2010

Appendix B – Southern Policy Centre, Proposal for a policy workshop and data analysis project with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Appendix C – Case Study, Bristol City Council: Bringing open data to life

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local Government Transparency Code 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408386/150227_PUBLICATION_Final_LGTC_2015.pdf

Southern Policy Centre
http://southernpolicycentre.co.uk/

6. Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr Bathurst	Principal Member for Policy			
Cllr Burbage	Leader of the Council			
David Scott	Head of Governance, Partnerships, Performance and Policy			
Andrew Scott	Interim performance manager			
Simon Fletcher	Strategic Director Operations and Customer Services			
Alison Alexander	Managing Director/ Strategic Director Adults, Children and Health			

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Christopher Targowski	Cabinet Policy Manager	01628 796321

Council Information and Data Transparency Policy 27th May 2010

To be transparent is to be candid, open, obvious, understandable, and frank. RBWM believes that the act of transparency is a key condition and driver for the delivery of council services. Information would be published as supported by a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead policy on transparency, set out below:

- We will provide access to the public for all appropriate information in order that they can use, investigate, interrogate and to use, usually but not exclusively within a web based environment.
- We will not spend tax payers' money on presenting or collating this data. It will often be presented in a raw state with a relevant introduction as to its origins and purpose - to allow the user to understand where this data has come from, when it was posted and what it actually represent.
- If we have not already provided the information that the public were asking for, we will provide this information upon request, unless there is a substantive reason as to why we are not able to. By substantive reason we mean if there are direct, reasonable legal implications that would lead the council to break a statutory confidence, issues over personal information (especially medical or safeguarding issues) or information about contracts in negotiation. The presumption will always be to disclose.
- For the avoidance of doubt all commercial information, including contracts, information around contracts and spending associated with bought in goods and services that is not currently in negotiation is to be transparent.
- We will continue to look at new ways to ascertain how information is used by residents and what information is considered to be value by residents. This analysis will enable RBWM to target specific information at residents and others whilst not excluding information that may have a minority interest.

As a public funded organisation, the council has a duty to the residents that it services to be transparent in its business operations and outcomes. We recognise that the very act of transparency forces those who are employed at the council to question whether they are delivering value for money and are being effective in the provision of services to residents of the borough.'

Proposal for a policy workshop and data analysis project with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Public policy

A top Southern Policy Centre priority is to enable public policy makers to enhance their use of the substantial quantity of data now available to them. This includes both 'open' data, which is publicly available, and 'closed' data, which it may be possible to open up.

Our model for achieving this is through a structured workshop approach. It involves the following stages:

1. Identify the authority's policy problem.
2. Analyse decision-making to understand who needs to be involved in the workshop.
3. A policy workshop with our experts goes into more detail and identifies specific problems and areas for improvement.
4. We work with nquiringminds (a data analysis and software company supported by Innovate UK with extensive public sector experience) to interrogate how data could be used to address these issues.

In summary, we bring our research and policy decision making expertise together with some of the best data experts in the UK. The value of data led decision making is clear, but often the bridge between policy problems and underused data is not there. Our workshop model crosses that bridge and provides real world solutions.

As the Open Data Institute (ODI) Node for Hampshire we're also able to promote this work to a global community of data experts. Their expertise is available to us through the Node network. We can also offer free ODI membership to councillors and officers who are interested.

Our background in open data

To name two recent examples, our work in the field includes:

Research: We have a one year programme funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to explore the use of open and anonymised data to develop highly localised widening participation strategies. This project is being carried out in conjunction with the Web Sciences Institute at Southampton University and the Southern Universities Network.

Events: The SPC has been recognised as the Hampshire ODI node of the government funded Open Data Institute. We have worked with Hampshire County Council's Open Data Hub and KnowNow Information to hold an open data seminar including practitioners from other parts of England and, by Skype, Australia.

info@southernpolicycentre.co.uk

Case studies

The following case studies have been put together to illustrate what can be achieved:

1. **Understanding health pressures for better planning**

Problem: It's accepted that there are pressures on healthcare, but official knowledge of where pressures will be in the future is limited.

Solution: Nquiringminds took a variety of data sources, including some previously unavailable information, and produced a dashboard tool using data analytics that allows users to see the consequence of policy changes and time on GP services.

Outcome: A map has been produced to forecast pressure points in Hampshire over the next five years. The information is being used to inform healthcare reform in the area.

Source: http://nquiringminds.com/project/healthcare-data-solutions-health-infrastructure-predictive-analytics-of-pressure-points-and-exploration-of-scenarios/

2. **Increasing cervical cancer screening rates in Trafford**

Problem: Improving cervical cancer screening rates is an important plank of preventative healthcare.

Solution: The Trafford Innovation Lab took data relating to cervical screening rates from GPs, overlayed a variety of open data sources, and used the result to target resources.

Outcome: The mapping and data sources have been taken up and are being used to target cervical screening promotion.

Source: http://www.infotrafford.org.uk/lab/portfolio

3. **Helping Southampton City Council target its investment in housing refurbishment**

Problem: Southampton was unclear about where and what type of investment was needed to make its homes more energy and lighting efficient.

Solution: Targeted sensors developed by nquiringminds were used to better measure a variety of data sources, and algorithms were produced to allow that data to be rigorously analysed.

Outcome: The council is currently using these results in the targeting of its refurbishment investment.

Source: http://nquiringminds.com/project/domestic-energy-and-housing-sensors-predicting-refurbishment-needs-for-council-owned-housing-2/

You can read many more impact stories OD Impact, supported by our partner organisation the ODI: http://odimpact.org/

info@southernpolicycentre.co.uk

Governance

The Southern Policy Centre is a cross party, independent institution. We are also not for profit, but nonetheless must cover our costs. The service as outlined above will be charged according to a fixed day rate, which we are happy to discuss. We are confident that our pricing is competitive, partly because we are a lean company with minimal overheads.

The second stage of the product -- data research, analysis and development -- is run in conjunction with Nquiringminds. Nquiringminds have one of the best track records for delivering useful data products to the public sector. As they are partly funded by a core grant, and because of our strategic relationship with them, this stage is also competitively priced.

The whole product will be charged at a single price with a clear breakdown of costs.

The SPC has a broad-based Advisory Board. The Advisory Board Chair is Rt Hon Prof John Denham who acts, in practice, as an Executive Chair overseeing the day-to-day management of staff and projects.

John can be contacted on denhamj@southernpolicycentre.co.uk or on 07973 273595

Local Government Association

Case Study

Bristol City Council: Bringing open data to life

The vision

Bristol City Council has a bold vision to promote transparency and engage individuals, communities and businesses through digital technology. It is tapping into the social, economic and cultural advantages of a “connected city” that values information sharing and fosters growth in the new technology sector.

The city has a thriving digital economy and large-scale ambitions to grow this further. The council has been prepared to invest, take risks around the digital agenda and be an early adopter of new technologies.

Open data

Bristol’s open data strategy took off in 2010. The council had a strong champion for its open source/open data work in the form of Councillor Mark Wright, a software engineer and executive member. At a public meeting in June 2010 he said: “There are only two types of data in Bristol City Council: confidential data which we can’t share, and open data which will be made available.”

This call to arms gave momentum to the council’s work around open data. However, a number of challenges came to light:

- some data gets sold and has a value to the council
- some data is expensive to collect
- some data is incomplete, incorrect or held in a way that would not make sense to an external audience.

Work on publishing open data began, and Bristol’s B-Open datastore was launched via data.gov.uk. The council initially published 30 datasets containing demographic,

environmental, geographic and political information, and decided to review the interest and uptake of these datasets before releasing more specialist or complex information.

Community projects

Rather than simply publishing the data, the council wanted to showcase its potential value. It launched a competition, B-Open, designed to promote transparency and increase citizen/community engagement. Businesses and community groups were invited to come up with ideas on how the data could be used to create applications, websites, mobile products or installations that would enhance people's interaction with the city.

The launch of B-Open attracted representatives from major players in the city's digital creative sector, including Aardman and the BBC, and many smaller ones. Fourteen entries were received and funding was provided for three winning projects:

- Blossom Bristol – a phone-based game where people plant virtual crops in the city and watch them flourish or fail depending on real environmental factors.
- Hills are Evil – a dynamic map overlay helping people with restricted mobility find the best accessible route between any two places.
- I Love My City – representing spending at a hyper-local level.

The council also worked with the University of the West of England to look at creative ways to express open data. The artist YoHa created interactive pneumatic contraptions powered by the 'expenditure over £500' data – such as a seat that went up and down depending on how much was spent in the latest transaction.

Makala Campbell is Digital Projects Producer at Knowle West Media Centre, a media arts charity that supports cultural and social regeneration in Bristol. She has been working with the council's futures team to develop some of the data visualisation projects, and says: "I think it's fabulous and also vital that the council embraces and supports the strengths this city has in both creativity and technology."

Some of the applications can be seen at: http://data.gov.uk/apps/tag/Bristol-City-Council.

Freshers Fayre at Knowle West Media Centre

Investing in transparency

While this work has focused on transparency and accountability, there has been some impact on efficiency. For example, better data gathering and information systems have reduced duplication. Moving the council's public interface to a single portal means that people don't have to register separately for different services and information is easier to find. It has also led to better communication between service areas. However, the efficiency savings are difficult to quantify and this information has not been collected.

Bristol City Council has not been afraid to provide financial and other support that fosters the digital economy, seeing it as a long-term investment. A modest spend on the B-Open competition generated a large amount of publicity for the council's open data work in the local press. Kevin O'Malley, Bristol's Future City Team Manager, says: "It highlighted what we were doing around open data to the public and opened local organisations up to the idea that this data had some value."

e-Democracy

Bristol has an active e-democracy programme which includes e-petitioning, webcasting of meetings and an online discussion forum. The council is now looking at how social media can be used to promote and foster public involvement in decision-making.

There is data on the number of views/hits to webcast meetings in 2012:

- 37,346 total unique visitor addresses
- 18,842 return visitor addresses
- 18,504 one-time visitor addresses.

These figures count unique visitors by IP address, so the many visitors that may come from one organisation, or the council itself, are only counted once.

Another development involves live blogging and discussion forums alongside webcast meetings. In some meetings, such as scrutiny, the live online debate is sometimes brought into the meeting and councillors can directly address points made by the audience. While no information is available on who is using these services, in 2012 of 20 broadcast events there were 1,911 requests for a replay of part of the meeting, 1,479 comments sent, and the average viewer watched for just over one hour.

Making transparency work

For citizens, the benefits of Bristol's information revolution include more joined-up services that meet need, economic investment and jobs, and more opportunities to engage and participate in council decisions.

Citizens engaging with council information and data using online technologies.

The city council has created the post of 'intelligent council programme manager' whose remit includes making the best use of open data and ensuring that the public, private and voluntary sectors can make the most of information. The future city team works to enhance the city's digital infrastructure, dealing with issues around inclusion and innovation and offering a single point of contact for businesses to discuss their digital needs.

Kevin O'Malley says: "One of our goals in Bristol is to recognise that the relationship between the council and citizens is changing. Councils need to move towards becoming 'lead citizens'. We need to share the information we have and listen to our citizens, making sure they are empowered to make decisions with us."

For further information please contact Kevin O'Malley, Future City Team Manager, Bristol City Council: kevin.omalley@bristol.gov.uk.

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For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000. We consider requests on an individual basis.

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