



Local Transparency Programme



The Transparency agenda sets out to open up government and public services. Open data is not only about supporting local transparency and accountability but is also a driver for engagement, transformation, innovation and growth. Open civil society, technical advances on the internet, greater accountability and efficiencies in delivering public services drive the opening up of public sector data. Open data means the data is free to access, use and reuse and is available via the internet based on the open government licence.

The LGA promotes an open and transparent local government to meet local needs and demands. It encourages a meaningful approach to open data to

- Design services around user needs
- Engage and empower citizens to shape their communities and services
- Drive efficiencies and public service transformation
- Promote economic, cultural and social growth through the innovative use of data
- Be transparent and publicly accountable.

Councils are encouraged to make data openly available in ways that lead to greater take-up for use in self-assessments, self-service and development of data services and online tools in a growing online service market place. The LGA promotes information above data and knowledge above information by encouraging authorities to make data understandable and putting them into context so that they link to policy and outcomes. But more importantly transparency is a means for engaging with citizens, communities and business

Making transparency work for you

The LGA set-up the local transparency programme to

- promote a greater understanding and responsibility for the opening up of data within local authorities
- manage £2 million of breakthrough funding to release open data
- build skills and capabilities to publish and make better use of open data
- identify good practice in publishing and using the data in services and business applications and encouraging uses in the community
- support the sector with guidance and development of data standards
- foster a collaborative approach to help authorities reduce costs in publishing their data
- promote the better use of data through existing and new online applications, tools and services (including LG Inform and LG Inform Plus)
- advocate the opening up of key government datasets, in the interest of local authorities and local communities.
- continue its lobbying for ways to cover costs for collating, maintaining and publishing data to given standards where the publishing of comparable data adds further value

Further information about local transparency is available on <http://www.local.gov.uk/local-transparency>. You can also e-mail transparency@local.gov.uk.

Annex:

Principles for a local transparency policy

A local transparency policy will be based on the a presumption in favour of

- All data created by local government as part of its statutory duty should be open by default, unless certain restrictions apply for the protection of personal data, national security, policy advice, commercial confidentiality and third party intellectual property rights.
- The pace of this transition should be driven based on local needs and demand.
- Data should be presented in ways that are understandable to citizen and community groups and placed into context so that they link to policies and outcomes.
- Data should be published in formats that are reusable by machines, non-proprietary, standardised and linkable to common reference data so they can be compared
- Data and information should be easy to find on local websites and signposted on data.gov.uk. The data should be made freely available under the Open Government License.
- Data is an important asset and should be efficiently and effectively managed so that the burden on data publishing is reduced.
- Small data is as important as big data. Start small and publish data that is of relevance locally; standards and linkages will follow.
- Encourage use of data locally by getting developers, data providers and policy makers, community leaders, service providers and users together to develop meaningful applications that focus on the outcomes what users want and need.