



Local Government Open Data Breakthrough Projects Evaluation Report

Project title:

The automation of the publishing of Open Data and internal Management Information data in a standard, machine readable, linked format

Lead organisation:

Leicester City Council

Submission date:

22nd August 2014

Type of project:

Open Data Platform development

Total grant:

£38,600

Summary of the project

Leicester City Council had previously invested in the development of a data warehouse and integration technology to automate the sharing of information between teams within the council. This project is to primarily build on our existing technology and partnerships to create a logically separate data warehouse for open data which will be automatically made available to the public and support the publication of an initial set of information.

The project has developed a basic website linked to our data warehouse where the public can access our Open Data in its current format. The aim is to convert this data to a machine readable format – for example CSV (comma separated values), KML (keyhole markup language) and use the OData protocol (see <http://docs.oasis-open.org/odata/odata/v4.0/odata-v4.0-part1-protocol.html>) as an abstraction and permissions layer for our internal business intelligence.

The project will continue after the initial work has been completed. We will publish further datasets and provide the public with a mechanism to make requests for specific datasets.

Challenge/opportunity:

Leicester City Council recognises that allowing public access to the data that it holds will add value to that information in ways that will benefit the Council and the wider community. The project was initiated to address the following issues:

- A method to automate the publication of the data and ensure that it is kept up to date. This will have the benefit of reducing the current manual processes involved in publishing the data.
- To make the data available in open formats to make it easier for third parties to develop applications and widgets that use our information
- To provide metadata which gives value to the data
- To provide a mechanism for requests for data
- To ensure published datasets cannot be combined to allow identification of an individual (the Mosaic Effect).

Data published and uses:

We engaged with the community through a Civic Hack event (see <http://www.civichack.org.uk/>). This event produced a number of ideas for sharing data more widely, but the knowledge of data held by local government was limited. As a result of this the City Council considered that making data more widely accessible on its website and providing it in a downloadable format will enable both users and developers to understand the variety of data that is held by the Council. This in turn will encourage reuse of this data in ways that will benefit the overall community.

Leicester City Council have published 46 datasets comprising:

Consultations	Elected Members' Allowances
Election Results (2011) – 2 datasets	Electoral Register – Purchasers
Council Decisions	Senior Employee Salaries
Senior Management Team structure	Staff Pay Multiple
Redundancy Return	Employees by Grade, Gender & Ethnicity
Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
One Clean Leicester	Compulsory Purchase Orders
Contracts Awarded – 2 datasets	IT Tenders
Payments to Suppliers over £500	Mobile Phone Contracts
Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Grants	Consultancy and Agency Spend
Non Domestic Rates – 3 datasets	Council Tax Banding
Bailiff Contract	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Information
Housing Register – Homelessness	Libraries
Parks	Sports Centres
Deprivation Statistics	Dentists
CCTV	Translation Services
What's On (in Leicester)	Safety Camera
Roadworks	Parking Tickets – 2 datasets
Bus Lane Enforcement	Transport Strategies and policies
Potholes	

We envisage that the Open Data we publish will be useful to members of the public, academia and the development community.

Approach to publishing data

The focus of this project has been on the technical infrastructure and developing mechanisms to automate publishing the data. Our approach has been to initially focus on the datasets that were available from <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/about-us/data/>.

The developed web pages provide the users with the ability to view the information, download the data and, where there is a location, to present it on a map. We will also be providing the information in a graphical format (charts).

For the future we are planning to convert, where possible and practical, all the datasets in machine readable, open standard formats to enable interoperability. We will also be presenting the data geographically and developing Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for developers to reuse the published data.

Benefits and impact

It is expected that publishing the data in open formats and expanding the datasets available will save money in the long term by providing better online access to the public, academia and the development community. In particular, we wish to enable third parties to use our

data within their own websites, widgets and applications that will add value to our information.

The use of the OData protocol will provide a standard language in which our Open Data will be published, rich in metadata that will add value to what would otherwise be an unstructured document. This also provides access to unrestricted data that will enable the public to consume data for whatever creative uses the public has.

We anticipate that our approach to providing greater access to the data that we hold will reduce the number of enquiries that we receive requesting that data. It will also help those requiring the data to have instant access instead of waiting for the Council to respond. We aim to improve the way we interact with the public by providing more information on-line which should in turn reduce the number of enquiries that we receive by e-mail, telephone or in person.

Further information:

For more information about Leicester Open Data, please visit <http://data.leicester.gov.uk> or contact Marlo Valente on 0116 4541151 - email marlo.valente@leicester.gov.uk