



Birmingham City Council

Open Data Policy

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1. OVERVIEW AND PUBLICATION PARTICULARS

Document History

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Overview

Authority ¹	Birmingham City Council – Head of Corporate Information Management
Owner ²	Birmingham City Council – Head of Corporate Information Management
Scope ³	This Policy applies to anyone who has access to Birmingham City Council's information systems, including but not limited to employees, temporary and agency staff, contractors, third parties working for the council, partners in joint ventures with the council and elected members of the council. It concerns all electronic systems used to hold and/or process Birmingham City Council's information.
Review period ⁴	This document will be reviewed at least annually or more often if justified by a change in circumstances.
Related Birmingham City Council documents	
Related Service Birmingham documents	
BS ISO/IEC 27001:2005 BS 7799-2:2005 control references	<hr/> <hr/>

This policy document describes Birmingham City Council's policy towards publishing on the web council-held data for reuse on the web and the standards to which it will adhere when it publishes this open data.

The policy is intended to allow for effective decisions to be taken by council officers on data which is required to be published in open formats online as well as non-personal data that the council additionally chooses to publish.

¹ AUTHORITY: The person or organisation who is responsible for enforcing this policy

² OWNER: The organisational position of the person who has rights to authorise changes to, or disposal of, this policy

³ SCOPE: The organisations or persons to whom the policy applies

⁴ REVIEW PERIOD: How frequently the policy should be reviewed

2. CONTEXT

The provision of council data in open and linked forms is part of a wider set of policy initiatives on data and its exploitation. These initiatives exist in several separate but interdependent contexts.

The UK Transparency Agenda

The current and previous governments have been active in promoting the open publication of public sector data.

Local Government Transparency Code

The Government has published its revised Local Government Transparency Code, following consultation towards the end of 2013 to replace its earlier recommended practice. The main legislative change is that the code becomes a mandatory requirement, rather than recommended practice as previously. The code came into effect from May 2014 and local authorities are expected to publish the stated datasets, in open and machine-readable formats, within six months of this date.

- Information to be published quarterly
 - expenditure exceeding £500
 - Government Procurement Card transactions
 - procurement information
- Information to be published annually
 - local authority land
 - grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise
 - organisation chart
 - trade union facility time
 - parking revenues
 - controlled parking spaces
 - senior salaries
 - constitution
 - the pay multiple

The 'Right to Data'

The 'Right to Data' came into effect from 1st September 2013 following changes to the Freedom of Information Act. The provisions are:

- Any request to release a dataset must be in electronic form which allows re-use where reasonably practicable
- Datasets containing copyright material (where the public authority holds the copyright) must be available for re-use under a specific licence
- Requested datasets must be added to publication schemes

A public authority will have a duty to comply with the requirements of the FOI Act, including the new provisions for datasets.

The City Council's Agenda

The provision of open and linked data features significantly in the Leader's Policy Statement (LPS) issued in June 2014 and the subsequent action plans. The availability of timely and good quality open data is required to support a number of key initiatives, including the Smart/Digital City and the devolution of services to communities. The LPS states that the Council will:

- Establish organisational arrangements and funding streams for the Smart City Commission Board, to begin delivery of the Smart City Roadmap in the next three years
- Procure and establish an open data portal and identify and start the release of open data sets

Service Development Opportunities

Open data also offers opportunities for the council to work in more efficient ways and to stimulate economic activity. As the council is looking to new models of service delivery, directorates should position themselves to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves e.g. when undergoing major service redesign and arising from major systems development.

The sharing and open access to datasets using common technical and data standards amongst public sector organisations will turn data into intelligent and smart information. This has the potential to accelerate business growth and increase entrepreneurial opportunities.

This is intended to encourage social innovation by citizens and communities. A Smart City is not measured by the amount or type of technology it deploys – it is a measure of how citizens, business and communities engage and utilise it to achieve their goals and objectives.

The Open Data Project Board has identified a number of datasets that, in addition to those mandated by the Government, where there is potential to release the data to support demands from the user community as well as responses to requests for datasets under the 'right to data'.

Wider Developments

In recent years there has been an increasing expectation that non-personal data held by public sector organisations will be openly published on the World Wide Web. This is partly in response to demand from sections of the web community to develop the next range of Internet based services, which will provide access to meaning rather than just to documents. This forms part of a wider initiative to develop Internet services which can automatically retrieve all related information on any subject (the "Semantic Web").

3. PRINCIPLES

Data that may be published online will fit the working definition of Public Data as described by the Data Transparency Board. It reads:

"Public Data is the objective, factual, non-personal data on which public services run and are assessed, and on which policy decisions are based, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery."

This, in turn, fits the NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED classification in the classification system that all BCC assets must be classified under. NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED has the following description: "Information that is freely available/published by BCC and made available to the public. "

The principles of the Open Data Policy are:

The policy applies only to non-personal data and aggregated or anonymised data which cannot be used to identify individuals.

There will be an assumption that data likely to be useful to the public or other users will be published automatically by council services.

The publication of open data should be authorised formally by the relevant Information Asset Owner.

Data will be published on an advertised web-based platform which will include appropriate tools to help users to exploit the data.

Open data will be published with the relevant metadata to help ensure the effective exploitation of the data.

All data will be published in multiple physical formats which will allow easy reuse, with csv as the minimum default format. Services may publish data in pdf format, but this should be in addition to csv. The council will explore the publication of its data in Linked Data formats.

All data will be published with a UK Open Government Licence.

The availability of datasets will be advertised in the appropriate locations, currently HM Government's register of open data at <http://data.gov.uk> and at <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/open-data>

Where appropriate, datasets will be made available according to a schedule which will be published with the data. Additionally, dataset versions will be clearly labelled to ensure that the public can see how up to date it is.

Datasets will be published using Unique Resource Indicators as unique identifiers to allow easier access across multiple systems.

The provision of open data is a key success factor and should be included within service redesign work and major systems replacement.

Where datasets are published a clear mechanism for reporting errors by the users will be made available.

4. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Decisions on the publication of open data will be made by the appropriate Information Asset Owner. Responsibility for maintaining content lies with individual service areas and the responsibility also lies with them for the release and maintenance of Open Data.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Open Data principles lies with the Corporate Information Management team in Birmingham Audit.

Data made available as open data should be published on the web-based platform which it is designed for. Open data may also be published on service areas' own pages but should have links from the Open Data Home Page / portal.

The Open Data Home Page will contain a statement that the data is being made available under the Government Open Licence and will have no disclaimers or qualifications. Open data published on service area websites will not include any copyright or licence statements which conflict with the use of the Government Open Licence.

The Open Data pages will contain advice or additional information which will help potential users of the data to understand the nature of the data, its source or validity or any other aspects of the data which might help its being reused effectively. Wherever possible and appropriate, this will include metadata.

The currency and validity of the published data sets on the Open Data pages will be reviewed regularly by Open Data Project Board and any issues raised with the Information Asset Owner or designated data custodian.

The Open Data pages will contain a link to the appropriate person or council function who can deal with queries, issues or complaints about the data which has been published.