

Transparency Board Minutes 12.06.13

TRANSPARENCY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th Jun 2013 at The Cabinet Office

Transparency Board Members:	Officials (Regular Attendees):
Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office	Angela Latta, Data Strategy Board
Professor Nigel Shadbolt	Glenn Preston (Ministry of Justice)
Andrew Stott	Carol Tullo (The National Archives)
Heather Savory	Paul Maltby (Cabinet Office)
Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society	Linda Humphries, Government Digital Service
	Olivia Burman (Cabinet Office)
	Joanna Shayer (Cabinet Office)
	Matthew Lloyd (Cabinet Office)

Apologies:	Officials (Presenting):
Sir Tim Berners-Lee	Ian Makgill (Ticon)
Dr Rufus Pollock	Jonathan Raper (Placr)
Lord McNally, Minister of State, Justice	Iain Walker (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)
Dame Fiona Caldicott	Peter Lawrence (Cabinet Office)
Matthew Hancock, Minister for Skills	Ollie Buckley (Cabinet Office)
	Sue Bateman (Cabinet Office)

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office, welcomed all attendees. He mentioned the forthcoming simplification of the governance landscape in the Transparency and Open Data area, in line with the government response the Shakespeare Review.

ODI Start Ups: How Start Ups use Government data

Ian Makgill of **Ticon** presented. Ticon is a start up company utilising government data, specifically spend and transaction data. The presentation put the following challenges to government:

- Departments should publish data in the right place at the right time consistently.
- There should be no threshold on the reporting of spend data.
- Data standards need to be clarified and enforced, eg. All spend data should specify whether or not each transaction includes VAT.
- Government departments should be “prepared for open”. They should be ready to engage with businesses over data requests.
- Local Authorities should not publish on websites protected by a general copyright.
- Personal information is used to block the release of too much data.
- Government should not develop its own data. Innovation should be left to private enterprises who can do it better.
- GPS Spend Analysis Data should be published.

Ian's solutions:

1. Don't consider data published until it is on data.gov.uk.
2. Report all spending without a minimum spend threshold.

Jonathan Raper, CEO of Placr, a start up company, based at the ODI, working with transport data, urged government to release the following key datasets to aid both his and other companies:

- Access to publicly-funded Journey Planning through Traveline (and transport direct in parallel).
- The National Street Gazetteer Address Data.
- Access to rail cancellation data collected by Train Operators (currently given to NRE but not opened up).
- Release of rail fares Routing Guide in electronic format (currently only in paper form).

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. Standards need to be communicated, understood and implemented more effectively across government departments.
2. Departments should be pushed harder to open up significant data sets. This would drive competition into the market place.

Release of FCO Data

Iain Walker, Finance Director at FCO presented on what FCO have done to try to improve open data releases and work through the particular challenges that FCO face in implementing the agenda. Steps taken:

- Appointed Head of Transparency and provided resources.
- Committed to meet AITI standards.
- Sector board created (has met twice so far).
- Improved adherence to Quarterly Written Ministerial Statement corporate commitments.
- Security issues are being worked through and issues optimised.
- Open Data Strategy is being refreshed.
- Working to increase the amount of 3* data that is online.

Challenges:

- Data held and sold by ALBs such as the British Council.
- Continuing issue of security concerns.
- IT systems approaching an upgrade.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. Progress and renewed focus was welcomed.
2. It is necessary for FCO to engage with Cabinet Office in order to strengthen the commitments in the Open Data Strategy.
3. It was emphasised that Iain would have to be robust in ensuring that security concerns are not used as an excuse to block broader data releases.

International: G8 Announcements

Sue Bateman updated the board on the development of the Transparency aspects of the G8 summit announcements, the main output of which would be the Open Data Charter:

- She emphasised the potential global impact of this commitment when it is signed by all parties next week.
- It has been led by the UK but has been developed in consultation with all G8 partners.
- 5 main principles of the Charter:
 - o Data will be 'open by default'.
 - o Quality and quantity will be emphasised.
 - o Data should be usable by all.
 - o Governance of agenda will be improved.

- Emphasis on the use of data by innovators.
- Annex of best practice will be included in charter.
- Each country will commit to an action plan by October 2013.
- Open data will be on the agenda for the next 3 G8 summits as the action plans will be monitored until the 2015 deadline.
- The fact that it will be announced at the Leaders' Summit is positive and shows that it is at the top of leaders' agendas.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. The Board emphasised the importance, high profile and outstanding quality of the agreements that have been negotiated between heterogeneous parties.
2. It is important that agreements are followed up on and expanded upon into the OGP conference and beyond.

International: OGP Conference Update

Ollie Buckley updated the board on plans for the OGP conference which will take place in London on 31st October to 1st November 2013. There are currently 59 countries represented:

- Objectives will be set for:
 - Open Government. To demonstrate how open government positively impacts on people and to broaden the conversation.
 - For the OGP. To establish credibility and sustainability, momentum and vibrancy.
 - To forward the domestic agenda. To accelerate progress on the domestic transparency agenda, demonstrate world-leading status and promote British businesses.
- Themes will be used. Current ideas are:
 - Health
 - Cities
 - Extractive Industry and Land transparency
- The conference will be structured as follows:
 - Plenary – major announcements and showcase event.
 - Content and Substantial Programme – agreements structured within themes.
 - 'Festival' and peripheral events – individual specialist themed workshops etc.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. Emphasis should be on creating very specific, measurable commitments.

Shakespeare Review, Domestic Strategy and National Action Plan

Pete Lawrence discussed the National Information Infrastructure and working towards the National Action Plan, to be published in October 2013.

- Departments will be expected to create and publish an inventory of data holdings and score it against the criteria articulated in the Shakespeare Review. These will be open for comment and assessment by users.
- Departments' Open Data Strategies (ODS) will be renewed and published on data.gov.uk. Following updates, departments progress against WMS and ODS commitments will be tracked live on data.gov.uk by autumn 2013.
- A member of the Transparency Team will sit on each Sector Panel as part of renewed engagement with departments.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. The inventories are essential for ensuring that Open Data Strategies go further than they currently do and to enable user communities to see what is available.
2. Sector boards need to meet with the right regularity to ensure continuous engagement with data releases and the agenda as a whole.

Any Other Business

European Amendment to the directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information

Carol Tullo updated the Board on the current status of the amendment to the existing directive on the re-use of public sector information. The final text reflects the UK's policy aims in establishing that:

- All public sector bodies should release their information for re-use.
- Marginal cost is the default.
- An 'impartial review body' oversees complaints.
- As much cultural material is to be published for re-use as possible.

The Directive was due to be adopted through the European Parliament and Council by the end of June and 2 years from 18 July 2013 will be provided for transposition. Chair commented on the direction of UK policy and encouraged consideration of options for earlier transposition in the UK.

EU Data Protection Framework

Glenn Preston spoke about a new EU data protection framework which MoJ currently lead on. This is a complex and broad re-working of the framework. He offered to speak at a future meeting about the implications of decisions being made for the development of the open data agenda.

Postcode Address File

Paul Maltby discussed the Postcode Address File. Although it will not be made fully available, agreement has been met on the following measures:

- Micro-businesses will be given a free licence for a year to develop their products.
- It will be free for charities to utilise.
- The paid-for licence would, through a future review, become a permissive rather than a restrictive licence.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. The agreements reached are a step forward but have not delivered the result needed to promote growth/innovation or to underpin the National Information Infrastructure. Although the Royal Mail has not been prepared to go further, it is important to note that Local Authorities hold 80% of the relevant data in the PAF and the majority of Regional Gazetteer Representatives have expressed the view that they will not be prepared to offer this data to the privatised Royal Mail for free, but that they would exchange it for an Open PAF commitment from the Royal Mail.

Close

Chair thanked the Board for their contributions and closed the meeting.