

Transparency Board Minutes

09.09.13

TRANSPARENCY BOARD

Transparency Board Members:	Officials (Regular Attendees):
Francis Maude Minister for the Cabinet Office	Simon James Deputy Director, Information Rights and Devolution, Ministry of Justice
Nick Hurd Minister for Civil Society	Carol Tullo Director, Information Policy and Services, The National Archives
Lord McNally Minister of State, Justice	Paul Maltby Director, Open Data and Innovation Group, Cabinet Office
Matthew Hancock Minister for Skills	Linda Humphries Government Digital Service, Cabinet Office
Dame Fiona Caldicott Caldicott Review	Chris Fleming Science Capability & Networks, GO-Science
Professor Sir Tim Berners-Lee , Open Data Institute	Joanna Shayer Private Secretary, MCO, Cabinet Office
Professor Sir Nigel Shadbolt , Open Data Institute	Olivia Burman Domestic Transparency Team, Cabinet Office
Sir Mark Walport , Government Chief Scientific Advisor	Matthew Brown Domestic Transparency Team, Cabinet Office
Dr Rufus Pollock , OKF	
Heather Savory , ODUG	
Steve Thomas , Experian	
Andrew Stott , DirDigEng	

Ministers and Officials (Presenting):	
Damian Green , Minister of State, Policing and Criminal Justice	Claudia Arney (Chair, Public Data Group)
Amanda Smith (Police Transparency, Home Office)	Dr Vanessa Lawrence (Director General, Ordnance Survey)
Oliver Buckley (International Transparency Team, Cabinet Office)	Neil Ackroyd (Director of Data Collection and Management, Ordnance Survey)
Ed Parkes (Domestic Transparency Team, Cabinet Office)	John Carpenter (Head of Product Management, OS)
	Malcolm Scott (Official, BIS)

Apologies:	
Professor David Rhind , Advisory Panel Public Sector Information	Mike Bracken , Government Digital Service
Stephan Shakespeare , Shakespeare Review	Bill Roberts , SWIRRL

Introductions

The Chair (Minister for the Cabinet Office) welcomed all attendees including Dame Fiona Caldicott, and the new members who had joined as a result of the recent simplification of the governance landscape.

The future of Police.uk

Damian Green, Minister of State, Policing and Criminal Justice presented on the current and future development of police.uk. He highlighted that:

1. All data on police.uk is open data.
2. The site has received 56 million visitors since Jan 2011 and two fifths of users say they're now more likely to take steps to improve their personal safety.
3. The site has recently been enhanced with more detailed crime categories and with the reporting of justice outcomes data. Users can draw, save and share personalised crime maps, and receive email alerts. Police.uk has also been used as a government engagement tool, for example as a vehicle for the Stop & Search consultation.
4. There is now a Police.uk forum on data.gov.uk and efforts are being made to widen membership of the Sector Panel. Underlying data is made available under the open government licence wherever possible. A list of site developments planned over the next six months has been published.
5. Police.uk data has been used by the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis to create a colour coded map of different crime types. It is also used by SpotCrime, a US crime mapping company, for its UK site. Developers are using bike theft data to support web-based bike recovery services.
6. The current contract ends in September 2015. The question of moving to an open data only model is being explored but it will be important to ensure:
 - a. Data provided by privately run sites is trusted by the public as accurate and objective;
 - b. Data must be predictably and reliably updated;
 - c. Data must be made available to citizens across the UK in an accessible, user-friendly format.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. It was noted that police.uk is a world-leading example of good practice in the linking of open data, policy development and public sector accountability.
2. The issue of crowding private enterprise out of the market place was raised and although it was stated that there were no comparable services able to take over this function in the short term, it was suggested that a possible future roll-back of the functions of police.uk should be considered when private enterprise is ready.
3. It was noted that if some of the data on the site, such as information on local police officers, is not open there may be problems for private developers in creating an effective parallel site.

Ordnance Survey open data: update

Vanessa Lawrence, Neil Ackroyd and John Carpenter of Ordnance Survey (OS) presented on OS's open data activities.

The areas highlighted were around:

1. Products – data, APIs and licensing.
2. Engagement – feedback loops with different groups, users' training and master classes, joint competitions aimed at all levels of ability, a data request and appeal process, and the importance of geodata sponsors in public bodies.

Specific points made were:

1. The products in OS OpenData had been agreed with some senior representatives of the open data community;
2. There had been a high degree of interest at the outset, and demand was increasing, but not as rapidly as had been hoped;
3. In OS's experience, as well as releasing data, it has been essential to provide simple APIs for non-specialists to use the data;
4. In addition, promotion of the uses and benefits of open data was necessary. OS has a developer programme and the Geovation programme to encourage and support the take-up of OS OpenData, in collaboration with both private organisations and public

sector bodies. A Developer Challenge in conjunction with Tech Hub (based in Tech City) will be launched in the autumn.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. That access to addressing data is fundamental for businesses, citizens and the UK economy. Live data was also highlighted as extremely important.
2. That good engagement by OS is taking place with stakeholders, but given the size of the market it is important we continue to review our licensing of this data to ensure we have optimised the benefits to the UK.
3. That there are both opportunities and risks around crowd-sourcing activity in relation to data in this area.
4. The Board will send a letter to OS, outlining the specific asks. Specifically:
 - a. OS to develop a roadmap of Open Data products and engagement plans covering the next two-year period. This will detail the changes taking place and progress being made in this area.
 - b. Provide further clear, definitive guidance on public bodies' provision of data derived from OS data, so that public bodies are enabled to publish more data. In particular the data community has requested that OS implement a process which automatically applies all individually agreed PSMA derived data exemptions across all public sector bodies to streamline the release of public sector data.
 - c. A case study in how OS has enabled councils to make their Public Rights of Way information available as open data, so everyone can benefit from the experience they gained.
 - d. Revisiting the need for the OS version of its Open Data Licence and considering whether the revised OGL model that operates across the rest of government might be appropriate for OS data.
 - e. OS to think about ways to open up more data to the UK commercial market to provide wider opportunities for new businesses and growth.
 - f. The Board invited OS to attend a session dedicated to consideration of OS open data plans.

The Board will discuss the Open Addressing review, carried out by Cabinet Office and BIS, in November.

National Information Infrastructure

Olivia Burman (OB) and Ed Parkes (EP) updated on progress in developing the National Information Infrastructure (NII):

- EP explained that the strategic context for NII was borne out of the Shakespeare Review and that the UK should identify the most important datasets it holds and focus on ensuring they are available as open data.
- Work over the summer period has been focused on publishing departmental inventories of datasets. There are now over 3600 unpublished datasets listed on data.gov.uk.
- OB explained the high-level process in place. The next stage was key – obtaining feedback from communities, including aligning to the current data request process of the Open Data User Group (ODUG). A public meeting was set up for 10 September for anyone who wanted to find out more, and get involved.
- OB highlighted the tight timetable, but also that this would be an iterative process which would be revised on a regular basis. The first version would form part of the UK National Action Plan at the Open Government Partnership Summit at the end of October. Not all of the datasets identified on the NII will be openly available at that point.
- EP explained that the activity could also transform the way in which departments function. There was anecdotal feedback given that Ministers refer to data.gov.uk to answer questions.

- EP said that for most departments and their arm's length bodies (ALBs), this was a learning process where departments identified which datasets were the most important and why. Cabinet Office would capture best practice to share with bodies.

Observations and objectives set by the Board:

1. Impressive progress has been made and this activity is extremely important. The timetable is very challenging and forensic work should take place to ensure that the NII is underpinned by evidence.
2. The Transparency Team should consider how to assess the 'unknown unknowns', i.e. how many more datasets might departments have and what the volume of data available is.
3. This process should also involve discussions with departments about the quality of already published datasets, i.e. ensuring that they continue to be available through data.gov.uk; and that low quality data should not be used as a reason for departments not to publish.
4. Ministers are keen to work with departments to unblock any barriers they might be facing.
5. The quarterly Written Ministerial Statement, along with a new dashboard approach on data.gov.uk, should form the basis of the reporting required of departments.

International: Open Government Partnership (OGP) Conference Update

A written update was circulated before the meeting which the Board found very informative. It was noted that any further feedback should be sent directly to Ollie Buckley and Paul Maltby.

Information Economy: Data Capability Strategy

Matthew Hancock, Minister for Skills presented a progress update on the development of the Government's Data Capability Strategy (DCS). This is due to be published at the end of October and is a key commitment within the Government Information Economy Strategy that was published in June 2013.

The DCS is being developed by BIS in partnership with business, academia, national and local government. It will set out how the UK can be at the forefront of extracting knowledge and value from data.

The main strands of the report are:

1. Strengthening Skills
2. Research & Development
3. Infrastructure

BIS are working with Cabinet Office on arrangements to publish the DCS alongside the UK Open Government Partnership National Action Plan at the end of October.

EU Negotiation of a New Data Protection Framework

Simon James, MOJ, presented an update on EU Data Protection activity, indicating that the strategic context has changed considerably since the Data Protection laws were first enacted, and therefore changes are being proposed.

Observations and objectives set by board:

1. The implications for open data should form a central part of the UK's role in this area. This Board should form a sub-group to consider the implications of these changes to areas such as pseudonymisation in the area of research, personal data and its use in the collection and use of personal data online; and for citizen personal data initiatives such as Mi-data.

Any Other Business

The Board approved the bid from Companies House for £60,000 to deliver their accounts data as open data.

Close

The Chair thanked the Board for their contribution and closed the meeting. The next meeting would take place at the end of November.