



## ADVISORY PANEL ON PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION

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**Date:** Monday 17 May 2010

**Time:** 10:20am-3:10pm

**Venue:** Ministry of Justice

**Chair:** Professor David Rhind CBE

**Deputy Chair:** Peter Wienand

**Secretariat:** Grazia Zaffuto

**Attendees:**

**Members:**

Neil Ackroyd, Representative Member, Trading Funds

Mike Batty, Expert Member

Stefan Carlyle, Representative Member, Information Providers

Chris Corbin, Expert Member

Eric Davies, Representative Member, Library and University Community

Keith Dugmore, Expert Member

Michael Jennings, Representative Member, Local Government

Hilary Newiss, Expert Member

Michael Nicholson, Expert Member

Shane O'Neill, Expert Member

Bill Oates, Representative Member, Wales

John Ponting, Expert Member

Patricia Seex, Contributing Member

Prabhat Vaze, Expert Member

**Non-members:** Carol Tullo, Director of Information Policy and Services, The National Archives

Nigel Shadbolt, Chair of the Local Public Data Panel

Nick Benson, Head of Legal, Met Office

Phil Evans, Director of Government Services, Met Office

John Williams, Standards Manager, The National Archives

Emma Markiewicz, Government Relations Manager, The National Archives

## 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of APPSI.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Professor Nigel Shadbolt who was on the agenda to give a presentation on the Local Public Data Panel.
- 1.3 The Chair also welcomed two additional attendees: Emma Markiewicz, Government Relations Manager, The National Archives and John Williams, Standards Manager, The National Archives who were invited to hear the presentation on the *Local Public Data Panel* and the presentation on *Making Money from PSI: How the Met Office do it*.
- 1.4 Apologies were received from the following APPSI members: John Gray, David Lamme, Hector MacQueen, and Phillip Webb. Apologies were also received from Marcia Jackson, Head of Standards, The National Archives and Jim Wretham, Head of Information Policy, The National Archives.

## 2. Minutes and actions of the last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting on 17 February 2010 were approved as a correct record; and it was agreed that all actions had been completed.

## 3. Update on the Local Public Data Panel

**Speaker:** Professor Nigel Shadbolt, Chair of the Local Public Data Panel

- 3.1 The Chair of APPSI congratulated Professor Shadbolt and Sir Tim Berners-Lee for driving the open data initiative. He said that, APPSI members were interested to hear about the work of the Local Public Data Panel and were willing to offer the Panel advice on the challenges it is currently facing.
- 3.2 [Professor Nigel Shadbolt](#) is Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Deputy Head (Research) of the School of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton. He is also the Chair of the Local Public Data Panel, convened by John Denham, former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Panel includes individuals who work within Local Government such as Tim Allen, Programme Director for Analysis and Research at the Local Government Association and Roger Hampson, Chief Executive of Redbridge Borough Council. The Panel also includes activists such as William Perrin, Government web innovator and community activist and Chris Taggart, web developer and founder of OpenlyLocal.com. The aim of the Panel is to oversee the release of this local data, champion the release of local public data and information sharing, accelerate progress in agreeing common standards for data released into the public sphere, and making local public services better understood and more accessible.
- 3.3 The speaker explained the context for the Local Public Data Panel. He said that the Panel formed part of the former Government's plan to open up access to public data and information held by public sector bodies. He was therefore appointed by the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, along with Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the world-wide-web, in June 2009 to make data more open and accessible on the web. This culminated in the official launch of data.gov.uk on 21 January 2010, a new government website offering free access to a huge amount of public-sector data for re-use. The site had a similar ambition to the US version data.gov but had important differences - in particular it was a self-describing catalogue of UK datasets and was promoting open linked data standards as one of the preferred publication

methods for data. At its launch the site offered three times the number of data sets than the US version.

- 3.4 Although the data.gov.uk site has been static during the government pre-election period, a significant number of datasets will be added to the site in the near future. Data.gov.uk now has over 3,200 datasets on it and one of the key data sets released on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, was OS OpenData.
- 3.5 The speaker said that the new government is committed to a new right to government data that will allow members of the public to request and receive government datasets in open and standardised formats. The data.gov.uk has paved the way for this initiative, as one of its greatest accomplishments is its 'Public Data Principles' that enables public data to be published in reusable and machine-readable formats under an open licence, thus committing government to follow a culture of transparency and accountability.
- 3.6 The fact that data.gov.uk supports Linked Data means there is the opportunity for greater added value, as it enables people to exchange links to information and the context for that information.
- 3.7 The speaker pointed out that, the Local Public Data Panel was working on developing a better understanding of the plethora of initiatives and services provided by Local Government as well as the types of data that local authorities already provide to central government. The complexity of the workings of Local Government has meant that the Panel is still working to establish the right mechanisms for achieving this goal, which forms part of the Panel's terms of reference to: *'Identify local public data and their potential uses that are likely to have the greatest impact on empowering citizens or improving local service delivery, and develop an agreed approach to their content and format.'*
- 3.8 The speaker is clear that, in order to make local public data freely available for re-use, it is important that local authorities and the public are shown innovative examples of the uses of local public data. For this reason, one of the Panel members, Chris Taggart, of [OpenlyLocal.com](http://OpenlyLocal.com), launched a new project to make the May local election results available as open data. The [Open Election](#) project offered an opportunity to substantially enhance public access to local election results data, allowing it to be easily identified and reused within a variety of contexts. Other current activities of the Local Public Data Panel have included:
- Identifying those local authorities/public bodies already leading the way on open data;
  - Assisting local authorities/public bodies to work through technical policy issues relating to making data openly available;
  - Holding a forum with developers/activists to better understand what data activists want and how they can work with the local sector to get what they need; and
  - Developing best practice and standards for public sector data.
- 3.9 The speaker is clear about what needs to happen under this new government administration, most notably a strong regulatory body is required to mandate open data principles; and the anomalies around FOI and the reach of public sector information need to be resolved. He also set out the following actions in his presentation:
- clear, published commitment on releasing data, and there needs to be consistency between similar bodies
  - agencies need to release transaction data and not just statistical aggregates
  - this needs to extend through central Government into local government and other public services

- agencies need always to publish for re-use the underlying data for web services that they supply like Directgov, NHS Choices and the Camden “where’s my nearest” service
- bodies should proactively release data, but there should also be the ability to challenge bodies to release more.

3.10 The speaker set out a number of challenges faced and worries raised when asking for public data to be made public and asked for APPSI’s views. They were as follows:

**Cultural and organisational**

- Data hugging
- We have released it – sort of...
- Licence impediments
- Legacy commitments

**Capability**

- What assets have we got?
- Who can do this work?
- How to share best practice
- Minting URIs

**Worries about**

- Confidentiality
- How it will be interpreted?
- Quality of information
- Lost value
- Disrupted workflow
- New IT procurement

**Policy**

- Extending the principles to all public bodies
- Consistency in what is published and its formats
- Range of exceptions need to be appreciated
- Confidentiality, accuracy, liability and reputation

3.11 The following key points were made during the discussion:

- There are a lot of new drivers for releasing financial public data, in particular the announcement made by the new Chancellor on 17 May to include pensions and PFI debts as part of the Government’s reporting mechanism.
- There is value in the cautious sharing of personal data to improve public service and better understand economic and social trends but it will be difficult to persuade the public of these benefits.
- APPSI’s Wales Representative said it was important that the devolved administrations are included in data.gov.uk.
- It can be difficult to measure the economic value of public sector information but the speaker said that it is possible to audit a public sector organisation such as Ordnance Survey to assess the efficiencies, cost savings and social value from making its data freely available for re-use. The speaker also believes it is possible to measure the cost to local authorities to provide data to central government.
- Common and simplified licensing terms are required to drive this open data initiative. The speaker thanked The National Archives for creating a set of enabling licensing terms for data.gov.uk and hopes that these terms will form the basis for data made freely available by the wider public sector.
- One member commented that a definitive national address register should be made available for commercial re-use. The speaker said that he and Sir Tim Berners-Lee would have liked the Postal Address File released as open data. Another member commented that there is no

way of assessing whether economic benefits can be gained from a single national address register; and the address database used for the Census cannot be translated to a national address register because it has been designed to meet the business requirements of the Census.

- Another member commented that it is important to develop a good long-term understanding of different datasets.
- APPSI's local government representative said that a business case needs to be put to local authorities - at the political as well as professional and technical level - which will clearly demonstrate the benefits that will emerge from making their data available for re-use (not least driving up their quality), as they are currently not well organised to respond to this agenda (information is not treated as an asset, there is no professional discipline round its management, and The National Archives survey of websites had shown variable understanding of copyright and licensing). This is particular important at this time, as local authorities expected to face c. 25% cuts in the next four years. Data and its re-use would be critical in helping to address this through:
  - Re-designing their outward relationships with citizens and businesses
  - Streamlining the vertical relationships with Whitehall departments and the regulators
  - Strengthening the horizontal working relationships with other local organisations
  - Streamlining their internal processes.
- Moreover, it was important for the Local Public Data Panel to take into account that local authorities handle more people data than place data and that many of their services were delivered through contracts with third parties. There was therefore an even greater need to address the concerns about personal data and contractual data, perhaps through the sort of 'compacts' private sector organisations such as the supermarkets have with customers and suppliers. It was important that these covered the 'rules and processes' by which data was used as well as the data themselves.

3.12 **ACTION:** It was agreed that the Chair of the Local Public Data Panel and APPSI would keep in regular contact.

#### **4. Making money from PSI: How the Met Office do it**

**Speaker:** Nick Benson, Head of Legal, Met Office

4.1 The Chair of APPSI welcomed Nick Benson, Head of Legal, Met Office and his colleague, Phil Evans, Director of Government Services, Met Office.

4.2 Nick Benson, the speaker said:

- Met Office is owned by the Ministry of Defence; it became a Trading Fund in 1996. As a Trading Fund, the Met Office has a public task and a commercial task. Its public task is to produce and distribute public weather service products as agreed with a representative customer group from time to time. Its commercial task is to produce and sell value added products and services to customers who want such products and services in addition to or as an alternative to the public weather service products.
- Met Office distributes its public weather service products (PSI) for free and unlimited use and re-use via broadcasting (TV and radio), its website accessed at [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk), Twitter and YouTube as well as new initiatives such as the Met Office iPhone application. It

is committed to increasing the reach and re-usability of its PSI and it is taking advertising on its website in order to subsidise the associated costs.

- Customers can purchase regular supplies or streams of PSI and other meteorological data through Met Office's wholesale catalogue; its wholesale prices are based on the marginal cost of producing and distributing the large quantities of data; and in order to create a level playing field for the Met Office with its commercial competitors the Met Office's business arm pays the full fee for access to all data made available through the wholesale catalogue. So the business arm must recover that fee through the prices it charges to customers for its commercial/value added products and services.
- Value added products and services are sold to private sector and public sector customers with a range of interests and responsibilities including energy, aviation, defence and international affairs. Some public sector customers choose to pass on the products they pay for to the public for free (e.g. Defra with climate change reports).
- As a Trading Fund, the Met Office must use the profit it makes from carrying out its commercial task to pay a dividend to MOD and thereafter to improve its infrastructure and resources. This and the continual scrutiny of its customers, including the public weather service customer group help to ensure that all its services, including its public weather service improves at limited extra cost to the tax payer.
- The speaker pointed out that, as a Government business, the Met Office is scrutinised and regulated by numerous other Government bodies including its owner, MOD, HM Treasury, OPSI and OFT.
- In conclusion, the speaker asserted that, the Met Office makes money from PSI by satisfying all its stakeholders and that makes it a proud and successful Trading Fund.

## 5. PSI policy update

**Speaker:** Carol Tullo, Director of Information Policy and Services, The National Archives

5.1 The Director of Information Policy and Services at The National Archives provided APPSI with the following update:

### General Election 2010

- The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke was appointed Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice on 13 May 2010; Lord McNally (Lib Dem) and Nick Herbert MP (jointly with the Home Office), Jonathan Djanogly MP and Crispin Blunt MP (all Conservative) were subsequently appointed as Ministers of State for Justice. Policy details have been published for the coalition agreement, which includes the extension of the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to provide greater transparency (under the 'civil liberties' heading). The Conservative main manifesto and technology manifesto pledged to introduce a 'Right to Data Act'.

### Licensing

- Work continues on the simple, transparent and enabling licensing model that coincided with the beta launch of data.gov.uk, working with the Cabinet Office. The licence is interoperable with the Creative Commons model and allows others to re-use data freely and simply on the site. The new licence model will be extended to most Crown copyright material later this year. The National Archives has established a small working group to take this work forward and is also liaising with Australia and New Zealand on their government licensing

models. The main issues are no warranty; sub-licensing; governing law; and the right to amend the licence terms.

### Ordnance Survey

- The National Archives has been working with Ordnance Survey (OS) and the Cabinet Office to agree an aligned licence model for the OS OpenData sets with that on data.gov.uk. The National Archives has also been analysing the Government response to the OS consultation, published 31 March 2010, and has developed an action plan to take forward its work with OS. Work continues on defining “public task” as part of the regulatory role.
- The Government’s response to the OS consultation, published on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, stated that, “To inform the continuing development of making public data public, The National Archives will produce a consultation paper on a definition of the “public task” for public data, to be published later this year.” The Director of Information Policy and Services said that, this consultation was a requirement of the former government and we should therefore assume it is not going ahead unless otherwise directed by the new administration.

### Devolved administrations

- The Queen’s Printer for Scotland Report was published in April 2010, which included a review of PSI activity and APPSI’s role. Scottish ministers have acknowledged and shown support for the new integrated legislation site: “*The Minister supports the work that the office of the Queen's Printer for Scotland are doing toward single publication of Scottish legislation on the internet.*”

**ACTION:** The APPSI Secretariat will send a link to this report to APPSI members in her next email update.

### Location Council

- At the Location Council meeting on 19 March 2010 there was support for an aligned approach with the data.gov.uk infrastructure. This represents a better solution for users and for departments who will simply have to load their data onto one registry. Further meetings on this have taken place (between Defra, Cabinet Office and The National Archives) on 4 May 2010 and an updated paper is being prepared for the next Location Council meeting on 18 June 2010.

### Licensing Forum

- The Licensing Forum is a cross-government quarterly forum established to share good practice and provide practical help with issues, and also to cascade emerging policy. It has approximately 60 members. At the last meeting on 30 April 2010, speakers included representatives from the Shareholder Executive who presented on policy options for the Ordnance Survey consultation results; Home Office representatives who presented on the recent hacker day, held jointly with Rewired State; and Marcia Jackson and Jo Ellis from The National Archives who discussed the new licensing terms for the re-use of public sector information.

**ACTION:** The Director of Information Policy and Services said that in future APPSI would receive a report following the Licensing Forum’s quarterly meetings, as set out in the Forum’s terms of reference at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/policies/licensing-forum.htm>.

## OPSI website changes

- Non-legislative content on the OPSI website is being migrated (on 17 May 2010) to the new Information Management area on The National Archives website. The Information Policy team will continue to review and improve the PSI and Crown copyright content and guidance on the website.

## PSI complaints investigation

- A complaints investigation against a government body by a commercial publisher was completed by the Standards team at the end of April 2010. The draft report has been sent to both parties to ensure factual accuracy. The Chair and Deputy Chair of APPSI were notified of this complaint in advance of the meeting.

## Conferences

- This year's PSI Conference is scheduled for 26 October 2010 and will be held at 1 Victoria Street Conference Centre. The main theme and focus of the conference will be confirmed shortly. The Knowledge Council Conference will be held on 9 November 2010 at the Royal Institute of British Architects. This conference is aimed at senior civil servants and senior managers across the information and knowledge spectrum in central government.

5.2 During the discussion it was pointed out that the restrictions imposed on government activity during the period of time from when the election was announced until after the election, meant that government websites were not updated with information that is essential to the information structure of the UK. For instance, no new datasets were released on data.gov.uk.

5.3 **ACTION:** It was agreed that the APPSI Secretariat would draft a letter on behalf of APPSI to the relevant team at the Cabinet Office urging them to revise their guidelines for the future, as the system of regulation during an election period should be specifically directed towards government activity that could call into question political impartiality.

## **6. APPSI updates**

### Current PSI policy priorities – local government

6.1 APPSI's local government representative said that a meeting had taken place on 12 April 2010 between Tim Allen from the Local Government Association, Carol Tullo from The National Archives, and the Chair of APPSI. APPSI's local government representative and the APPSI Secretariat were also present at the meeting. Following a discussion on how to progress the re-use of public sector information in Local Government, the following two actions were agreed:

- **ACTION FOR TIM ALLEN:** Mr Allen will convene a meeting with senior audience, including representatives from LGA, IDeA, CEO of Westminster and local public services after the election to engage in dialogue about PSI re-use, with a view to maximising it for local authorities and public benefits.
- **ACTION FOR APPSI:** The Chair of APPSI and APPSI's Local Government representative will put together a 'issues and solutions' paper that would be of interest for any incoming government. The ambition of making a difference needs to form part of this paper.

6.2 **ACTION:** The APPSI Secretariat will send to all APPSI members a note of the meeting held on 12 April 2010 between APPSI, The National Archives and the Local Government Association.

## Government's response to the Ordnance Survey consultation

6.3 APPSI's Trading Fund Representative said that the main issues remaining to be considered, as detailed in the consultation responses with regards to OS, were the calls for a review with respect to determining a clear public task to stabilise the new business model and also requests for statements around a derived data policy. On the positive side, OS has appreciated the clarity it has received from the centre of government in recent months and would like this to continue. He also pointed out that staff at OS have enjoyed the positive responses to their work.

## PSI in the devolved administrations

6.4 The Wales Representative said that, in Wales public sector information does not exist as a strategic portfolio and it therefore broadly permeates between the Knowledge Services Group and the Knowledge Management team in the Welsh Assembly Government. Although the Welsh Assembly Government has not been formally invited to add Welsh government data on data.gov.uk, it is important that a case is made to Ministers for the need to include data from the devolved administrations on this site. Unless this happens, PSI re-use will remain an operational activity within the organisation.

6.5 The Chair of APPSI wrote to the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Government and the Welsh Assembly in January and February, setting out the desire of APPSI to improve the re-use of PSI in the devolved administrations. The Chair of APPSI gave members an update on developments in Northern Ireland and Scotland on behalf of the Northern Ireland Representative and the Scotland Representative who were not present at the meeting. The Chair said that John Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth in the Scottish Government had responded positively to his letter on 3 March 2010 and asked two of his officials – Craig Russell, Deputy Director Efficiency and Transformational Government, and Ben Plouviez, Head of Information Services – to meet with APPSI's Scotland Representative as a first step. Mr Swinney asked to be kept informed as to where the thinking that emerged could contribute to the Scottish Government's Purpose<sup>1</sup> and policy aims. The meeting took place on 23 April 2010 and was extremely positive. Mr Russell and Mr Plouviez are planning a Ministerial submission for the summer in which they will propose a drive to make the Scottish Government and other Scottish public bodies actively open to PSI re-use. They would like input from APPSI on the submission as it develops.

6.6 With regard to developments in Northern Ireland, the Chair of APPSI said that the First Minister and deputy First Minister responded to his letter on 26 February 2010 expressing gratitude for his interest in encouraging the re-use of PSI in Northern Ireland but indicating that they were unable to meet with him. Instead, APPSI's Northern Ireland Representative approached the Head of the Civil Service (HOCS), Bruce Robinson, and suggested that the Permanent Secretaries' Group (PSG) that he chaired would be the most appropriate forum for permanent secretaries to be made aware of recent developments in the re-use of PSI, and given the opportunity to consider how their respective Departments might be able to make their information available for re-use to an extent that has not been contemplated before. In response, HOCS asked APPSI's Northern Ireland Representative to produce a short presentation summarising the key issues for PSG. With a view to informing the presentation, APPSI's Northern Ireland Representative is currently engaging with senior officials from a variety of public sector bodies that hold and/or utilise significant datasets: Land & Property Services Agency (incorporating the old Ordnance Survey (NI)); the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency; and the Department of Finance & Personnel, which sponsors the 'NIDirect' and 'Opandatani' websites. In the course of his discussions it is clear that the promotion of PSI in Northern Ireland will have to overcome a number of significant barriers:

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Government purpose is "To focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."

- tightening public expenditure;
- the lack of a dedicated resource to lead, co-ordinate and promote PSI re-use; and
- the protective and conservative attitude of major data holders.

## INSPIRE

6.7 APPSI's representative on INSPIRE informed members that his secondment to the INSPIRE Programme had come to an end and he has now returned to his parent department, the Environment Agency. He said that, the first meeting of the Location Council User Group was held last week. The Chair of this User Group is Mick Corey and members include the Locus Association, Marks and Spencer, RSPB, and Yahoo. The discussion focused on how the Location Programme can engage with key stakeholders; and he also attended the meeting as a representative of the environmental and research sector.

6.8 APPSI's European Expert said that, by 15 May 2010 every member state was required to publish their annual INSPIRE Report. Two APPSI members who have contributed to the UK's report said that it was in its final form last Friday and should have already been sent to the European Commission.

## European PSI

6.9 APPSI's European Expert referred members to the paper he provided to them in advance of the meeting. In addition, he made the following points:

- The documents emerging from the European Commission's economic study meetings will not be published at this stage, as they have been commissioned by the European Commission as tender documents for the study.
- The European Commission is planning to publish a Green Paper on Digital issues and it will include PSI for the first time. [Afternote: *A Digital Agenda for Europe* was published on 19 May 2010. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/digital-agenda/documents/digital-agenda-communication-en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/documents/digital-agenda-communication-en.pdf)]
- There will be two UK representatives at the *European Public Sector Information Platform* on 8 June 2010 in Madrid: Jim Wretham, Head of Information Policy, The National Archives has agreed to participate on a panel that will consider Europe's information policy strategies and best practices in policies to release the economic potential of PSI re-use; and Chris Taggart, founder of openlylocal.com and member of the Local Public Data Panel, has agreed to participate on a panel that will consider the social value of PSI. [Afternote: due to a Civil Service strike in Spain on 8 June 2010, the meeting was moved to 9 June 2010].
- Michael Nicholson, representing the PSI Alliance and Chris Corbin, representing the European PSI platform will participate on the *Permanent Committee of the Cadastre meeting* on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 in Madrid.
- The *EURADIN Final Conference* will now be held on 15 June 2010 in Brussels.
- The *PSI Alliance Annual Conference* will be held on 16 June 2010 in Brussels, where Professor Nigel Shadbolt will be speaking.

## APPSI's work programme 2010-11

6.10 APPSI members agreed that the Chair of APPSI should write to the new Minister of State for Justice responsible for the re-use of public sector information soon after he or she is announced. In preparation, the Chair of APPSI asked members to submit to him and the APPSI Secretariat no more than 10 lines on the high-level issues that need to be addressed, including the definition of public task, governance and process. This letter will provide APPSI with an opportunity to give a strategic view whilst also providing essential support to the new government.

## **7. AOB**

7.1 The Chair of APPSI asked members for agenda items for the next APPSI meeting on 22 July 2010. It was suggested that someone from the Intellectual Property Office should present and lead a discussion the next APPSI meeting.

7.2 **ACTION:** The APPSI Secretariat agreed to provide APPSI members with a brief report on current activities in the area of intellectual property.

7.3 The Chair said that the APPSI Secretariat was working with selected APPSI members on APPSI's Annual Report 2009-10, which is due to be published in July 2010.