

**APPSI UPDATES:
PSI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Note by Michael Jennings**

Open Data

1. The opening up of data in local government is being taken forward by the Local Public Data Panel, chaired by Professor Nigel Shadbolt, with representatives from local authorities, central government and applications developers. APPSI received a presentation by Nigel Shadbolt on the work of the Panel at its last meeting on 17 May. The Panel aims to:

- (a) champion greater local public data provision
- (b) identify key local data; agree content and format
- (c) encourage innovative uses of local public data
- (d) promote data linking and information sharing

2. Initiatives underway include:

- (a) Local authority exemplars: to date - Bournemouth*, Brent, Hampshire, Kent, Lichfield*, Redbridge, Sunderland, Warwickshire* (* already linked to www.data.gov.uk)
- (b) Meeting with developers/activists
- (c) Open local elections data project
- (d) Guidance on the publication of expenditure over £500
- (e) Guidance on standards for the publication of local public data
- (f) Communications programme

See data.gov.uk/blog/2897 for further details.

3. Because of the pressures on the Local Government Association (LGA) in responding to the new Government's agenda – especially round education, health and social care, and a reduction in grant of 40% - it has not been possible to develop the general business case nor hold a political level event as intended following the meeting between the Chairman of APPSI and the LGA.

4. However some work has been commissioned on the business case in relation to geographic information, and the summary of this study on *The value of geospatial information in local public service delivery in England and Wales* was published by the LGA, IDeA (Improvement & Development Agency), and LGIH (Local Government Information House Ltd) to coincide with the Share to Save seminar held by the LGA and AGI (Association of Geographic Information) on 29 June. (For further information, type "geospatial information" into the Search box on the LGA website).

5. The Office of Public Sector has been working on the geographic information public task, derived data, and licensing, and also guidance for

local authorities on flexibility round the re-use regulations, and local government of course has keen interest in all of these.

6. The LGA has also published an interesting paper on Decision Miles, which shows the hundreds of miles needed to solve everyday problems facing local people and the councillors who represent them. This underlines that open data will not in itself help unless decision-making is brought nearer those directly interested in the information – indeed without this concomitant change, open data may only serve to increase frustration and alienation. (For further information, type “decision miles” into the Search box on the LGA website).

Public Mapping Service Agreement (PMSA)

7. Following the last Government’s follow-up to the consultation on Ordnance Survey, negotiations on a Public Mapping Service Agreement (PMSA) between the Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG), the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), and Local Government Association (LGA) and Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) on behalf of councils, police and fire & rescue authorities, and national parks, have been constructive, though not, at the time of writing, yet resolved. Local Government’s aim has been two-fold:

- (a) to ensure that proper governance arrangements are put in place to manage the PMSA and that local government is fairly represented, so as to provide intelligent user input into both the strategic and operational direction of the PMSA;
- (b) to ensure that the content of the PMSA (data, products, licence and service levels) are in line with users’ current requirements and causes minimal disruption in the changeover from the existing arrangements.

8. It is important that the PMSA develops over time to meet user needs and provide value for money.

National Address Gazetteer (NAG)

9. The intention is to build the National Address Gazetteer (NAG) into the Public Mapping Service Agreement. Discussions on technical design and organisational arrangements have been taking place between Ordnance Survey, and the Local Government Information House Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of local government’s Improvement & Development Agency) and its commercial partner Intelligent Addressing Ltd. At the time of writing a final deal has not yet been struck, but the aim is to secure arrangements in line with the PMSA target dates.

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