



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Orkney Islands Council

Open Data Plan

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Open Data

What is Open Data?

Open Data is a concept which has been adopted globally and involves making public service data openly available for everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control.

In a UK context the [Cabinet Office](#) has defined open data as public data which is:

- Accessible (ideally via the internet) at no more than the cost of reproduction, without limitations based on identity or intent.
- In a digital, machine readable format for interoperation with other data.
- Free of restrictions on use or redistribution in its licensing conditions.

It should be noted that open data is not about personal data. The open release of any information that identifies an individual is contrary to Data Protection legislation, except in limited circumstances such as where the individual had consented to its release.

Why is Open Data applicable to the Council?

The information that the Council creates using public funding has value, not only to the Council but to others. The Scottish Government has published an [Open Data Strategy](#) (the 'Strategy') and believes that public authorities in Scotland should be publishing this data so that others can also benefit from it. The Scottish Government is not asking the Council to create new data but to make available in a '[reusable](#)' format the information that the Council already holds. Consequently, the Scottish Government believes that the cost will be limited to converting the data to open formats and publishing this on the internet.

Open Data is at the core of the Scottish Government's [Digital Strategy](#), and its vision for a Digital Scotland includes a public sector that:

- Shares and opens up nonpersonal data as a source of innovation and efficiency.
- *A Digital Strategy for Scotland, 2017.*
- The better Use of Data is a central element of the draft OIC Digital Strategy 2020/23 currently being developed.

Legal Requirement to Publish Open Data

The Council's increasing use of digital technology means that providing services creates a societal expectation to manage our information more efficiently and effectively- which includes being able to share and re-use data appropriately.

This societal expectation is also one emphasised by the statutory and legislative obligations with which the Council must comply.

Legislation that requires public authorities, such as the Council, to publish Open Data includes:

- The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015.
- EU Directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information.

The Council requires to publish its Open Data Plan as part of its Publication Scheme.

In addition, developing open data policies and guidelines will also support the Council in following relevant guidelines issued by Scottish, UK and international government bodies, in particular:

- [The G8 Open Data Charter.](#)
- [Scottish Government Open Data Policies](#) and [Data transformation initiatives.](#)
- [UK Government Transparency Agenda.](#)
- [The Open Government Partnership.](#)

As well as this, developing and adhering to Open Data policies and guidelines will support the following British Standards:

- ISO 9001 Quality management systems ([ISO, 2015](#)) demonstrates an organizations ability to provide and improve consistent products and services.
- ISO/IEC 27001 Information Technology -- Security techniques -- Information security management systems ([ISO/IEC, 2013](#)) demonstrates that digital materials are securely managed ensuring their authenticity, reliability and usability.

The Council therefore has a range of statutory, economic and social obligations to invest in and implement open data policies and strategies across the organisation.

Benefits of Open Data

The Scottish Government has identified three key benefits to Open Data:

1. Increased transparency and accountability of public authorities.
2. Supporting innovation and economic growth in Scotland.
3. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

These benefits mirror the Council's:

- Commitment to transparency and accountability, as demonstrated by its publication of the [Council Plan 2018-2021](#);
- Aspirations to support 'Enterprising Communities' (Council Plan, page 15); and:
- The Council's commitment to 'best practice and continuous improvement' (Council Plan, page 10).

These benefits support the benefits which come from [optimising](#) our use of data, which was detailed earlier in this document.

Who will use our Open Data?

It is important to consider that the whole purpose of open data is that it can be used by a wide variety of different users, thus, we should monitor and review how data is being used. This will help drive how data is presented and how the Council can therefore interact with data users more effectively.

Below is a table displaying the wide scope which open data could have within the Council:

Potential Data Users

Council staff, Chief Officials and Officers.	Customers and service users.
Education establishments and students.	Children and young people.
Researchers.	Software developers.
Media organisations and individuals.	Special interest groups.
Visitors.	Suppliers.
Businesses, including those who use it themselves, and those who add value to data and resell it.	Other public sector organisations, including other local authorities and other areas of government.
Charities and other civil society organisations.	Elected Members.

Publishing Open Data in Reusable Formats

The Strategy requires the Council to publish the Data in a format that is 'reusable' so that others can deploy the Data without having to re-enter it into another system, such as a database or spread sheet. i.e. it should not necessarily be published as a PDF but perhaps as a spreadsheet with an open licence.

Such will include, but necessarily be limited to:

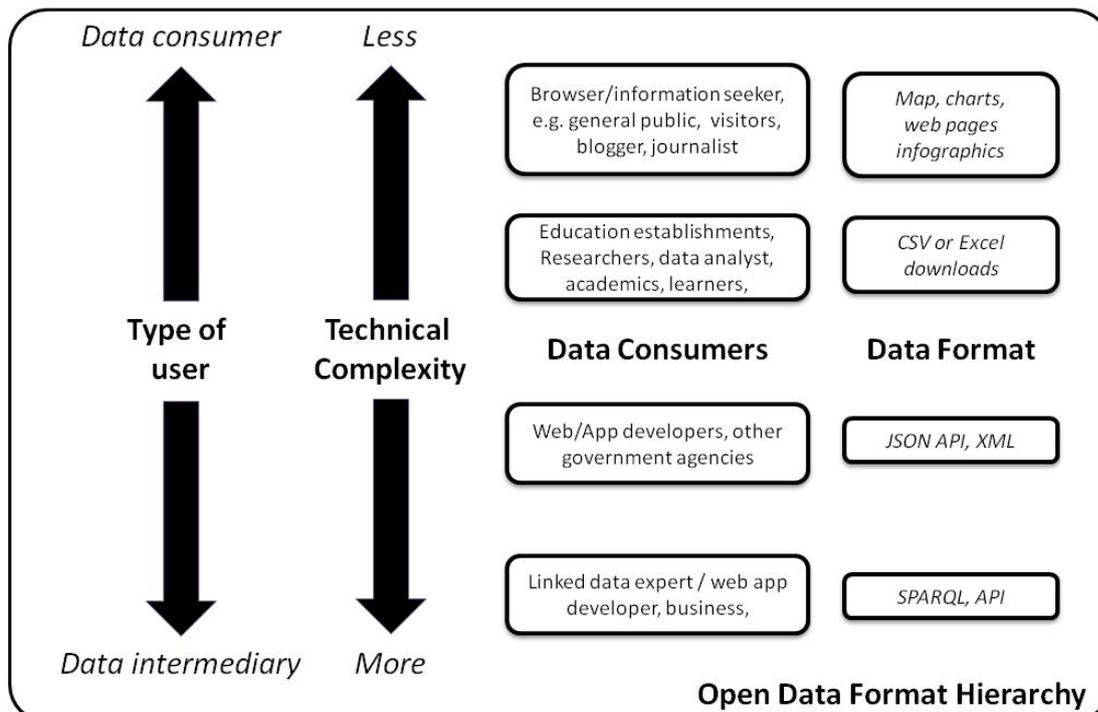
- CSV → Comma Separated Values
- XML → eXtensible Markup Language
- ODF → Open Document Format
- KML → Keyhole Markup Language (for Geospatial data)
- ICS → electronic calendar files
- XLS → Excel format
- PDF → Only in addition to another format

Strategic Data Warehouse

The Council’s deployment of a Strategic Data Warehouse may facilitate the reuse of data by making it easier to export data from Council databases to be published on the Council’s website.

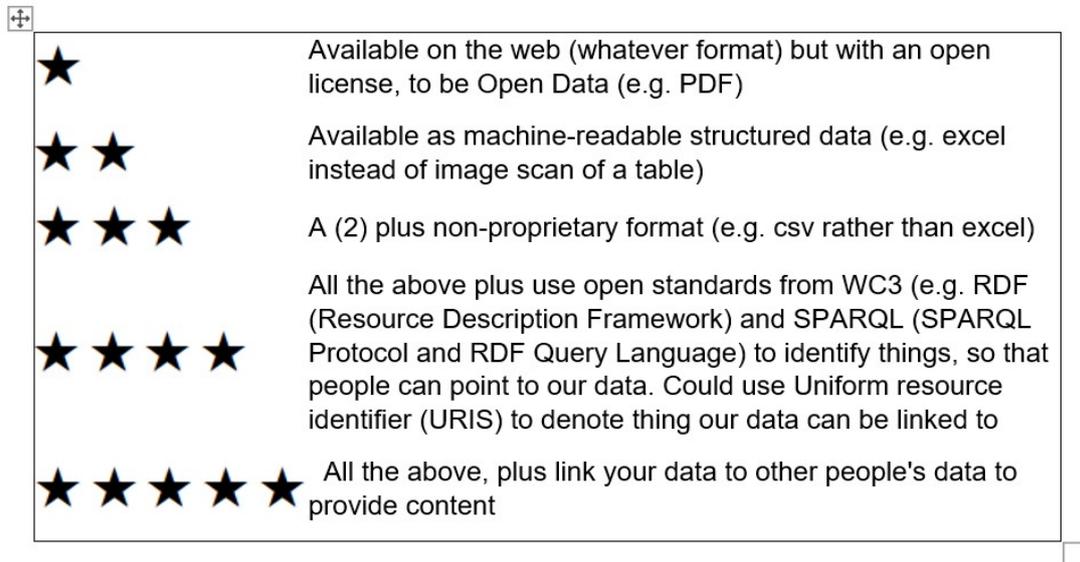
Open Data Format Hierarchy

As the Council has a potentially wide variety of data users with a wide range of technical skills, the Council needs to be able to ensure it can provide different users with different formats of data. The approach proposed by Open Data Scotland is useful to ensure that we do so, as the diagram below shows:



Evaluating our Progress

In line with the practices of other Scottish Local Authorities, such as The City of Edinburgh Council, Orkney Islands Council will adopt the universally acknowledged 5-star scheme developed by Sir Tim Berners-Lee for the deployment of open data. This scheme provides a model for assessing the maturity of the open data produced.



Over time the Council will aim to deploy data at a minimum star level and ideally at the 5-star level (linked to other people's data).

Accessibility and Usability

Open license

The Council permits the reuse of the Open Data it publishes and the link to the Council's licence is here: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/C/reuse-of-information-and-copyright.htm>

Metadata

A key element of open data is metadata: a set of data that describes and gives information about other data.

Metadata is important to assist in the discovery of data, and to ensure that the data is properly understood and used.

The Council will undertake the following actions to develop the metadata in its open data:

- Review the metadata standards that are currently in use in comparison with other comparable open data contributors.
- For each dataset create metadata describing the data fields.
- Consider the use of common keyword vocabularies.

- Review the completeness of all the metadata.
- Conform to INSPIRE standards for geospatial data metadata.

Keeping Data Current

The Council will implement appropriate and sustainable ways to ensure that open data is kept up to date and reflects changes in the source data. These will include:

- Manual monitoring and extracts (the least desirable approach).
- Automatic notifications of data changes followed by a manually initiated extracts.
- Scheduled extracts on a suitably regular basis – driven by the frequency of change in the source system.
- Automated extracts and uploads when data changes (the ideal solution, especially for frequently changing data).

User Engagement

For any sharing to work, effective engagement with the consumers is critical. Given the dynamic and interdependent relationship between data producers and consumers in the open data world, it is essential.

Recommendations regarding user engagement and Open Data

Introduce a communication method(s) (e.g. email) where users can provide feedback allowing them to:

- Inform the Council if they find mistakes or issues with the data.
- Have a mechanism in place where feedback can be acted upon and addressed appropriately.

Priorities for Open Data

Orkney Islands Council creates an immense amount of information and, even if no new information were created, it would take a great deal of staff time to publish it all. That is why the Council needs to prioritise what information it will make available. The Council should prioritise publishing the data that meet the three benefits identified by the Scottish Government and the [Council Plan – see “Benefits of Open Data” above](#).

The Scottish Government also advises public authorities to consider publishing in reusable formats the information that it already publishes in formats that are not reusable, such as tables in PDF documents.

The Scottish Government’s Open Data Resource Pack gives a few examples:

- **UK Prescriptions** - Innovate start-up companies were able to use Open Data about the use and cost of prescription medicines to identify where they could deliver drugs that had the same benefits but cost less. This helped these businesses grow but also saved the NHS millions of pounds.

- **Showing the public how taxes are spent** - Websites such as wheredoesmymoneygo.org have used Open Data to provide information to the public as to how their taxes are spent in geographical areas.
- **Scotland's Environment Web, Land Information Search** - This combines over 40 Open Data sets from a variety of sources. It can allow landowners and others who manage the land to find out what the land can be used for, such as whether it is suitable for growing trees.

Orkney examples include:

- **Fuel Poverty Survey** – the Council is carrying out a survey of all households in the county to identify where fuel poverty exists and what the causes might be, whether it relates to low incomes or high fuel bills. This data is used internally by the Council to know where it can make most effective uses of its resources to reduce poverty, but this information will also be helpful for others. Third sector organisations can use the data to put a case to funders for developing local services. The information could also be used by businesses to identify where there might be a market for their services, such as more efficient heating systems or insulation.
- **The Orkney Knowledge Laboratory** – Orkney Partnership's project to publish the many local consultations and the results of community engagements that have taken place and which 'now hold rich and valuable datasets about Orkney.' Publishing the information will provide 'a resource for the wide range of people and groups working to support, strengthen and sustain Orkney's communities, providing access to information about areas such as community needs; findings and recommendations from consultative activities; and feedback received. This valuable information - stored and collated in one central repository - will create a visible and accessible evidence base of actions taken, and impacts made, in the communities across Orkney, and in turn could be used to shape and inform the design and development of future initiatives and innovations.' (The Orkney Knowledge Laboratory: Project Overview, Prof Heather Fulford, Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University – 05/2019).
- **Information regarding the environment and Council Plans** – that show progress in meeting the Authority's aspirations for Orkney to have a thriving carbon neutral economy.
- **Data that relates to frequently asked FOI requests** - e.g. break-down of Council spending using cost codes.

OIC Digital Strategy 2020/2023 and Re-use of Council Data by the Council

A significant investment in officer time will be needed to draft the detailed Action Plan required to deliver this Open Data Plan to make Council data available for others to reuse. A Task and Finish Group with representatives from all services will be

established to carry out this work. If such an investment is to be made, the same Working Group could, at a later stage, consider how the Council can reuse the information collected for one purpose to improve the delivery of services and bring recommendations to the Council via the Information Service Programme Board (ISPB). The Digital Office has established a workstream to encourage the Council to achieve this aim entitled 'Make Better use of Data', and the Council's revised Digital Strategy 2020-23 will include exploring how the Council's data can be reused to improve services and efficiency. The same Task and Finish Group could also be required to identify data collected by the Council that could be reused to support the work of the Council.

Recommendations

A Task and Finish Work Group be established to include the following:

- Representatives from each service, including those responsible for data analytics and different information systems in the services.
- Those working on the Customer Service Platform, the Strategic Data Warehouse and the Orkney Knowledge Laboratory.
- IT Services.
- Information Governance Officer and Web Coordinator.

The Task and finish Group will:

Task	Timeline
Publish this Open Data Plan in the Council's Publication Scheme.	Now.
Map the data the Council already publishes.	
Develop plans to ensure that the data it already publishes is available to the public in reusable formats.	
Publish Open Data that best support the Scottish Government's Priorities and the Council's Plan for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.	
Develops recommendations to the ISPB for the Council to make better use of its data.	
Report to the Scottish Information Commissioner on progress in implementation of the Open Data Plan.	
Participate in the Digital's Office's 'Make Better Use of Data' workstream.	