

Open Data Governance Board Meeting
Tuesday, 28 November 2017 – Note of Meeting

Attendance: Dennis Jennings, Denis Parfenov, Dietrich Rebholz, Andrew O’Sullivan, Emer Coleman (Chair), Daithí Mac Síthigh, Sue Duke (by phone), Barry Lowry

Apologies: Ashling Cunningham, Sandra Collins, Cronan McNamara

Others: Dominic Byrne (Fingal County Council) and Rob Ovington (D/Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government - DHPCLG) – attended for their respective presentations.

Secretariat: Evelyn O'Connor, Marian Beakey, Fiona Morley Clarke, Krystyna Pycinska-Taylor

A number of documents had been issued to the Board in advance of the meeting as follows:

- Note of meeting held on 26 September, 2017
- Progress report
- Open Data Work Programme 2018
- Note on Strategic Policy in relation to portals (regional/national)
- AOB

The items on the agenda were discussed as set out below:

1. Presentation on Open Data in Local Authorities (Dominic Byrne, Fingal Co. Co.)

Dominic Byrne from Fingal Co. Co. gave an overview of work to date in implementing Open Data in the local authority sector where the 31 Local Authorities provide services across a broad range of areas. Future plans include the development of common schema for local authority data, the development of a protocol for the publishing of open data datasets by all 31 LA to the data.localgov.ie site, and coordinating the publishing process. The nomination of Open Data Liaison Officers across the local government sector was welcomed and a meeting of these Liaison Officer has taken place.

It was noted that open data and the use of data is a fundamental building block in the development of the smart city initiatives and Dominic gave examples of some of the projects currently in train to find solutions to issues such as illegal dumping, accessibility for those with disabilities and flooding.

2. Presentation by Rob Ovington (D/HPLA) on Open Data activities in the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Rob Ovington, GIS Manager gave an overview of open data progress in the department which currently has 237 datasets on data.gov.ie. These include the national planning application database which provides spatial and tabular data on planning applications in Ireland. Rob also outlined future plans for the department and gave an overview of some initiatives to date such as the development of myplan.ie which facilitates a seamless comprehensive national overview of zoning and NDAP (National Planning Application Database), the first national dataset of statutory planning applications) and GeoHive, operated by OSi which gives easy access to publically available spatial data. Some of the barriers he has experienced to publishing open data are lack of understanding of data licencing and concern around the potential misuse of data. Some clarity around the interplay between FOI Legislation, the PSI directive and Open Data would be welcome.

3. Minutes of 26 September meeting.

The Minutes were taken as approved and it was noted that these have been published on the portal.

4. Matters Arising from the last meeting

Progress Report

Evelyn O'Connor updated the Board on progress made since the last meeting. This included the nomination of some 70 Liaison Officers across the system who met on 24 October. Open Data training for public bodies continues to be rolled out by Urban Tide and the Open Data Engagement Fund for 2017/2018 has now been finalised with 13 applications (out of 24 in total) approved for funding/part funding.

The Open Data Unit has increased its outreach and engagement by participating in or hosting stands at conferences as well as continuing to meet with public bodies. They recently met with the Central Bank of Ireland and the Department of Community & Rural Development. The portal continues to be enhanced with the number of datasets now at over 5400.

It was suggested that future progress reports should include kpi's such as portal stats. by way of graphs so as to make comparisons with previous months easier. This will be considered by the Secretariat.

There was some discussion in relation to issues around archiving and storing data and the importance of preserving data. Issues around broken links and uri's with the frequent renaming of government departments and transfer of functions were also noted. With regard to storage of data, it was suggested that there might be some merit at looking at the concept of having a single data store to facilitate local authorities and smaller public bodies to store their data. This should be put on the Agenda for a future meeting.

Action 1 (Secretariat) Ensure note of meeting and progress report are published on the portal.

Action 2 (Secretariat) Secretariat to consider inclusion of stats via graphs in future progress reports

Action 3 (Secretariat) Put data storage on the agenda for a future meeting

5. Open Data Work Programme 2018

A draft work programme for 2018 was prepared based on the 7 themes in the Open Data Strategy. The Board are to revert to the Secretariat with comments on the work programme by mid-December.

Action 4 (Open Data Governance Board) Revert with any observations and comments on the draft Work Programme on Open Data 2018 by mid-December

6. Note on Strategic Policy in relation to portals (regional/national)

This paper was prepared on foot of discussions at the previous meeting. The Open Data Unit outlined the main points of the Strategic Policy in relation to regional portals. This includes the need to comply with the Technical Framework. Should a local Portal be created then this should be linked to the national Open Data Portal. It was agreed that the document would be published on the portal subject to a few minor amendments.

Action 5 (Secretariat) Publish policy paper in relation to portals on the portal

7. AOB

A recent UK announcement regarding the establishment of a new Geospatial Commission was noted. To further boost the digital economy, the UK government will work with the Ordnance Survey (OS) and the new Commission to establish how to open up freely the OS MasterMap data to UK-based small businesses in particular – a Budget of £40 million a year over the next two years is being provided to support this work.

It was noted that in Ireland the National Mapping Agreement gives public bodies access to OSi geospatial data. In addition, OSi has a specific “Data Exploration Licence”, to encourage research and foster innovation and is a suitable mechanism for SMEs to access OSi data. The licence is designed to offer short to medium term early stage support and access to OSi data to applicants in the process of developing innovative commercial or non-commercial applications/products. It was noted that Colin Bray from the OSi could be invited to present to the Board in 2018.

Andrew O’Sullivan advised that the CSO had been successful in a bid for EU Commission funding for a 5 star linked open data platform. The CSO are now working on a 5 star linked project with Cork City Council and a number of other countries in this regard. They can present to the board at a future meeting on this project.

Action 6: (Secretariat) to invite Colin Bray from OSi to the next ODGB meeting

Action 7: (Secretariat) Consider inviting CSO to present at a future meeting on 5 star linked data project.

8. Next meeting

It was suggested that the Board should meet quarterly in 2018. The Secretariat will circulate some suggested dates around the last week in each quarter.

Action 8: (Secretariat) to circulate suggested dates for quarterly meetings in 2018.

The Chair thanked Fiona Morley Clarke who is leaving DPER for her hard work and support over the past 18 months.

Open Data Unit, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
28 November 2017