

Transparency Board Minutes
19.11.10
Draft

TRANSPARENCY BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on 19 November at the Cabinet Office:

Present:	Also present:
Francis Maude (Chair)	Katie Davis (Cabinet Office)
Sir Tim Berners-Lee	Andrew Stott (Cabinet Office)
Professor Nigel Shadbolt	Cass Chideock (Cabinet Office)
Tom Steinberg	Rachel Fentem (No. 10)
Dr Rufus Pollock	Belinda Lewis (MoJ)
Sir Tom McNally	Charlie Villar (BIS)
Amalie Kjaergaard (Secretary)	Anthony Odgers (BIS)

Welcome and introductions

Welcome to Katie Davis who has succeeded Andrew Stott as Director of Transparency and Digital Engagement.

Update on work programme

Privacy and Transparency Review

The Board discussed how the Government should consider the potential for 'mosaic' identification of individuals when identifying datasets for publication. It was noted that the key test of a review would be that Ministers and Officials were given support in judging the risk posed by a specific dataset accurately so that they could consider how best to strike the balance between transparency and privacy.

Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team to provide an update on the Privacy and Transparency Review, including the final Terms of Reference for the review.

Due: next meeting of the Transparency Board.

Update on PMs commitments

Paper TB(3)2.2 was briefly covered.

Today (19 November 2010), all departments published details of their spending over £25,000 – with some going to £500 – for the last six months. This builds on the progress already made in publishing a huge amount of government data over the past 6 months, including:

- COINS spending data;
- salaries of senior civil servants earning more than £150,000;
- departmental organisation charts;
- new central government ICT contracts and central government tender contracts over £10,000; and
- Departmental Business Plans.

From now on, all of this information will be published on a regular basis by departments. Through the draft information strategies published in their Business Plans, departments have also set out what further information they will make available to the public, and by when. There are more radical reforms to come, including the:

- launch of ‘street-level’ crime data, to provide the public with detailed information about crime in their neighbourhoods in January 2011;
- publication of new items of local government spending over £500 on a council-by-council basis from January 2011;
- publication of new local government contracts and tender documents for expenditure over £500 from January 2011; and
- introduction of legislation to provide for a Right to Data which will ensure that datasets are published in a re-useable format and available for re-use by March 2011.

Right to data - changes to the Freedom of Information Act

We are continuing to work closely with OGDs on developing the policy for a right to data. In addition to changes to the Freedom of Information Act, there will also be revisions to the FOI Code of Practice and new administrative guidance to promote the release of datasets. Timetable for a Freedom Bill is still to be confirmed.

Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team to confirm plan for publishing a Green Paper on the Right to Data.

Due: late spring 2011.

Public Data Corporation

The proposal for a 'public data corporation' was discussed.

As outlined in the Cabinet Office Business Plan, Cabinet Office and BIS (together with HMT) are considering how best to drive the release of core reference data for free re-use from the Public Data Corporation. The Board discussed how Cabinet Office and BIS could most effectively work together to consider proposals as they are developed over the next period.

<p>Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team to provide regular updates to the Transparency Board as work progresses.</p>

<p>Due: Monthly ongoing</p>

Progress report and priorities for the next 6 months

Paper TB(3)4.1 was discussed and *Paper TB(3)4.2* was briefly covered.

The independent and non-ministerial members of the Transparency Board's presented paper TB(3)4.1.

In discussion on the progress made on the Transparency Agenda as set out in the paper it was noted that:

- The independent and non-ministerial members were fully supportive and had contributed to the Cabinet Office Transparency Team's 'Transparency Framework' as set out in paper TB(3)4.2.
- Leadership at Ministerial level is key to ensuring that the momentum and numerous successes already achieved are sustained and built upon.
- Five specific recommendations were seen as particularly crucial:
 - i. *Public by default* - a fundamental shift in behaviour toward data being by default public on the web if it would be released were it subject to an FOI request is required.
 - ii. *Control of the Trading Fund Data* - decisions about how the government's trading fund data is priced and licensed must be moved away from the control of the individuals who look after that data on a day-to-day basis.
 - iii. *The Right to Data* - a powerful 'Right to Data' should be introduced that enables innovators and researchers and people to obtain data that may have great value.
 - iv. *Ensuring ongoing publication via data.gov.uk using open standards* - incentives need to be institutionalised to prevent departments and agencies from ceasing the publication of key datasets in the future

and to encourage them to excel in the provision of data in open formats.

- v. *Departments to attend the Transparency Board* - individual departments to attend the Transparency Board to outline their Transparency Agenda and challenges with a view to gaining the help and support of Transparency Board members.

Action: It was suggested that the Department for Transport would be the first department to be invited. The Cabinet Office Transparency Team will consider the suggestion and when best to invite DfT to attend.

Due: Ongoing

Action: Minister for the Cabinet Office to provide Transparency updates to Cabinet on a regular basis.

Due: Monthly ongoing

Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team to engage with the Cabinet Office Public Bodies Team and The National Archives to understand what they are doing to ensure the safety of data at risk of being lost as a result of merging or scrapping of public bodies and to provide an update to the Transparency Board.

Due: next meeting of the Transparency Board

Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team with Transparency Board input to consider whether it would be useful to develop a data 'validator' and how best to go about this.

Due: next meeting of the Transparency Board.

AOB and frequency of meetings

Andrew Stott retires

Andrew Stott has decided to retire from the Civil Service at the end of the year after successfully launching the Coalition Government's Transparency Programme.

Action: At the request of the Chair, Andrew Stott will join the Transparency Board in a non-executive capacity.

Due: January 2011.

Frequency of meetings

Going forward the Transparency Board will meet every 6 weeks.

Action: Cabinet Office Transparency Team to set up a forward schedule for Transparency Board meetings to occur roughly every 6 weeks on a regular date and time.

Due: Immediate